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A place to learn and worship

*BYU's multi-use building may be LDS 'prototype'***By Edward L. Carter**

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PROVO — A new LDS chapel that also will be used for Brigham Young University classes was billed at its dedication Sunday as the wave of the future.

The University Parkway Center, located in the shadow of Cougar Stadium at 35 E. University Parkway, houses two LDS student stakes as well as BYU's English Language Center. The building is unique because it will be used for school on weekdays and for worship services or church activities Sundays and in the evenings, said BYU President Merrill J. Bateman.

Bateman, the first BYU president to serve concurrently as a general authority of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, said the building could serve as the "prototype for what the church does across the Earth."

Several campus buildings already are used for church meetings on Sundays, but the Parkway Center is the first specifically designed with a dual purpose in mind.

Elder Henry B. Eyring, a member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles and commissioner of the Church Education System, admonished those who would use the building to learn reverence, avoid conflict and seek truth through the Holy Ghost.

Eyring, who gave the dedicatory prayer, also hinted the building could hold many lessons to be applied beyond the campus of BYU.

"As I walked through the building just now, I had a remarkable experience," he told a gathering of several hundred people in one of the building's two chapels. "There is something in this experience that will be of tremendous importance for education and our religious reach across the world."

Bateman described the lessons learned as ecclesiastical leaders from the Church's Utah South Area and several BYU stakes coordinated with university leaders during the building's construction. He said the church's ecclesiastical and educational arms should be seamless.

"Since coming to campus as the president, I've had a very strong feeling that we need to combine the secular with the sacred," said Bateman, former presiding bishop and current member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

"The Lord's school doesn't have a dividing line. Life doesn't have a dividing line."

Construction on the three-story Parkway Center began in November 1997 and finished in August. Church groups and classes began meeting there this fall, utilizing the two chapels, a gymnasium, classrooms, offices, computer labs and a library.

The building's first floor houses the English Language Center, where non-native English speakers take classes. The second and third floors are occupied by the BYU 17th Stake, which formerly was spread out across Provo and Orem.

Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander, president of the church's Utah South Area, compared the construction of a building to the construction of a person's life. As with a physical building, life should be based upon a plan; a solid foundation; quality building materials; and a good builder, he said.

"I'm continually amazed at the close association Latter-day Saints have with their buildings," he said. "Our buildings surround our experience in the church somehow."



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Stuart W. Johnson, Deseret News