

You Are a Proclamation

J. THOMAS FYANS

I was so delighted with that beautiful music. Someone has suggested that music washes away the dust of everyday living. And we have surely been cleansed by your sharing of your talents with us today. Thank you very, very much.

I have had a long association with your president, President Holland, and I admire, love, respect, and sustain him with all my heart. I am thrilled, with you, that he is directing this university.

There is one slight question I should like to raise, however. There seems to be a problem of role identification on the part of part of your athletic program, President Holland. It is this: it appears as though the football team is passing and scoring as though they were the basketball team. Now this won't be too serious unless the basketball team plays and scores as if they were the football team. Well, role definition is so important, and that's what I'd like to talk about today: our roles in life.

Because of some very special kindnesses of President Holland and his sweetheart, Pat, when you were celebrating your Homecoming, I caught a deeper feeling of what you really are. I thrilled with you in watching the "Spectacular." The magnificence of the music, the adroitness of the dance, the cleverness of the

presentation lifted us as we contemplated your painstaking efforts of rehearsing, practicing, timing, perfecting, repeating, and changing.

What lessons are learned by those who participate in the giving of one's self completely, in cooperation with others, to attain a harmonious presentation that would gladden the observer. This is the process of building character. It is true whether on the playing field of the stadium, or on the baseball diamond, or when wearing the blue and white on the basketball floor, or when inspiring audiences around the world as ambassadors of this great university.

The challenges and problems of today are a schooling for tomorrow. Finding solutions to these problems prepares you for the future. Being true to the little things of today will prepare you to be true to the big things of tomorrow. Power comes from adversity.

What are some of the growth opportunities that you face today? Are you having roommate

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problems? Is your roommate staying out too late? (Of course, it would be your roommate who is doing this and not you.) Do you have to work long hours so that you can afford to stay in school? Do you have some dating situations that are particularly challenging? (The missionaries do, of course.) How you handle these situations is what you are.

Today you cope with the circumstances here on campus. Tomorrow you will experience the challenges of the world. You have a certain environment here at Brigham Young University. What will be the environment as you move from this campus?

James A. Michener, in looking at the decade of the 80s, makes this insightful observation:

We should witness some fantastic developments, quite in line with men walking on the moon. Imaginative men well-versed in scientific capabilities will be able to spell out the wonders we shall see in medicine, space, invention of new devices, and creation of new substances.

At the same time men and women will see with increasing clarity that the more science produces, the more humanity requires moral guidance, and this cannot come from science. It can come only from minds trained in the appreciation of the previous history of mankind, his struggles to achieve an orderly society, his constant seeking to attain a just world. The real frontier in the next decade will lie in the fields of moral judgment.

As for the individual, I see even more leisure time, even more emphasis on travel and sport, even more years of prolonged health. I foresee a pattern on which 70 percent of our people learn principally from television, with only 30 percent learning from books. But I judge that, whereas our presidents and senators may come from the charismatic 70 percent, the basic work of the world—the designing of aircraft, the building of a good sewer system, the editing of newspapers, the running of a good church—will still be done by those men and women who have been trained in books and who know

something of the traditions of mankind. [Parade Magazine]

In these words, titled “Our Unfinished World,” we receive an interesting insight into the challenges that face us.

God gave us a world unfinished, so that we might share in the joys and satisfactions of creation.

He left oil in the ground. He left electricity in the clouds. He left the rivers unbridged and the mountains untrailed. He left forests unfilled and cities unbuilt. He left the laboratories unopened. He left diamonds uncut. He gave us the challenge of raw materials, not the satisfaction of perfect, finished things. He left the music unsung and the dramas unplayed. He left the poetry undreamed, in order that men and women might not become bored, but engage in stimulating, exciting, creative activities that keep them thinking, working, experimenting, and experiencing all the joys and durable satisfactions of achievement. [By Allen A. Stockdale]

Life is a journey. Part of that life was lived before we came to mortality, another part will be lived after we leave mortality. Now, that we won’t look beyond the mark, let’s consider what is at hand—mortal life. A journey assumes moving to a destination. We would set a course; and if we were excited about this event in our lives, we would share it with anyone who would listen.

We proclaim those things about which we have some pride. Really we *proclaim* what *we* are.

The Church in this Sesquicentennial year has issued a proclamation. What is a proclamation? To proclaim is to “make known by announcing in a public place—to publish abroad,” according to Webster. So a proclamation is the act of proclaiming—an official proclamation. A proclamation consists of words—important words. The kingdom of

God consists of deeds and people. *You are the Church*—as you *are*, the Church *is*.

What is the content of the proclamation issued by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve on 6 April of this year?

First, the opening statement deals with the growth of the Church. From six members who participated in the formal organization procedures, this stone, cut out of the mountain without hands to roll forth until it will fill the earth, has grown to nearly four and one-half million members. Let's look at the growth pattern.

At the end of the first 50 years, there were 160,000 members of the Church. During the second 50 years there were 512,000 added to the rolls of the Church. Three times as many members joined the Church in the second 50-year period as in the first 50 years. In the third 50 years, 3,766,552 came into the fold—almost seven times as many came in the third fifty years as in the second 50 years.

It is anticipated that the Church will increase in membership by approximately one million in the next three years. This three-year growth is nearly equal to the total population of the church in 1947. Another way of stating this is that in the next three years, we will grow almost as much as we did in the first 117 years. The major growth of the Church will occur in your lifetime.

Church statistics really are not just figures. They are people. They are you. They are the person to your right, the one to your left, the one in front of you, the one behind you. You are an important part of that growth of the past, but you also have in your hands and hearts the future heights of growth to be attained. You will be instrumental in arriving at the ten-million mark. You will lift this kingdom to the fifty-million level and beyond.

Let your creative imagination and contribution determine the heights to which the kingdom will have arrived when you have been laid to rest. This is the kingdom of God upon the earth.

Let's look at some other elements in this proclamation to the world. It contains also a witness that the Father and the Son appeared to the boy prophet, Joseph Smith. We all thrill when we vicariously walk into the Sacred Grove and feel the magnificence of this occasion.

And third, this proclamation bears testimony that the power, authority, and organization of the Church of Jesus Christ relating to apostles and prophets have been restored.

Fourth, it declares that the Book of Mormon was brought forth by the gift and power of God and that it stands beside the Bible as another witness of Jesus the Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of mankind. Together these books of scripture, the Bible and the Book of Mormon, testify of his divine sonship.

Fifth, it gives a witness that the doctrines and practices of the Church can provide salvation and exaltation not only for those who are living but also for the dead, and that in sacred temples built for this purpose a great vicarious work is going forward in behalf of those who have died.

Sixth, it affirms that the family is a divine creation and that the most sacred of all relationships—husbands and wives, parents and children—may continue eternally.

Seventh, it bears witness that our lives here on earth are part of an eternal plan—that death is not the end but rather a transition.

Eighth, it testifies that the spirit of prophecy and revelation is among us; that the heavens are not sealed; that god continues to speak through a prophet.

Ninth, it declares that the mission of the Church is to act in *authority* and teach the gospel of Christ to all the world.

Tenth, it announces our responsibility to espouse and follow an inspired program of instruction.

Eleventh, it calls upon all men and women to work together to build a brotherhood in which we can know that God is our Father, that

we are His children, and that we will worship Him and His Son.

And finally, in the authority of the holy priesthood, seekers of truth in all the world are extended a blessing. This proclamation can't come to pass without you.

You are a proclamation. What kind of a proclamation will you be? Look deeply inside your soul, and don't be satisfied by superficial evidence. May I illustrate this with a story.

There were four people in a compartment of a passenger train. As you know, such compartments have seats that face each other. In this compartment there was a very beautiful young woman (I could point out many examples of that here today), a young woman just in the prime of life. Beside her was seated a middle-aged woman, one who was just about to go over the hill (and as I look around I see no examples of that). Opposite them was seated an army sergeant, and you could tell from all the ribbons he had on him that he had been on the battlefields of the world. He had also been on other battlefields; here was a man of the world in every sense. And beside him was seated a meek little army private who looked as though he had just left Provo the week before.

As the train went on its journey, suddenly that compartment turned pitch black. The train passed through a tunnel, and someone had forgotten to turn on the lights. In the silence of that darkness, this is what was heard (kissing sound and slap of the hand). When the train came out of the tunnel and there was light in the compartment, this was the evidence: there was the clear imprint of a hand on the face of the army sergeant. The middle-aged woman thought, "Well, it serves him right for taking advantage of that pretty young girl in the dark." The pretty young girl thought, "Hmmm, how come he kissed her rather than me?" The army sergeant thought, "Well, he got the kiss and I got the slap." Only one person there had all the facts. You see, what had really happened

was that the private had kissed the back of his hand and slapped the sergeant.

Now I suggest to you: don't look at superficial evidence. Look inside yourself deeply. Put your life and its roots deep into spiritual soil. You'll find many circumstances in life where at first glance it will seem as if the circumstances are one way, but as you get down to the facts, you will find that the facts are somewhat different than they had appeared. The truths of the scriptures are the base upon which you must plan.

As I look at you, I have a feeling of belonging because a thread of brotherhood and sisterhood binds us together. Will you allow me the privilege of sharing a very personal experience with you that took place prior to my being honored with the invitation to join the ranks of the General Authorities?

In business, I was with an organization that represented some very large international business machine manufacturers. One of these very large international corporations invited me to represent the distributors of their products in the western part of the United States, to go east periodically at their expense, and to review and evaluate their advertising and sales promotion program.

At the end of one of these meetings, the top sales executive invited me to go to dinner with him one evening and said he was going to invite some others as well. We went to the restaurant. We were seated, and he had me to his right. Soon the waitress came to pick up our drink orders. I said I'd have nothing, and he put a lot of pressure on me that night. He said, "Look, you've been in two days of long, arduous meetings; now relax, have some fun." I said, "I'll take a 7-Up." The waitress went around the table picking up the orders of the others, all of whom ordered intoxicating liquors, until she came back to the host. He said he'd have a 7-Up.

I had known that man for a number of years. Whenever I had walked into the

hospitality room of his organization, always, without any comment, I had been given an orange juice or a 7-Up, and I wondered why he had applied the pressure that night.

I returned to Salt Lake City. A couple of weeks passed, and a telephone call came from my friend in the East. He said, "I'm coming out West and I'd like to visit with you if you'll be in town."

I said, "Yes, I'll be in town."

He came and brought his wife. After a period of time, he said, "Tom, I want to tell you now why I'm really here. I'd like to offer you an executive position with our organization. In fact, I'd like you to be my assistant."

I was highly complimented, and after we had talked about the content of the offer he said, "Now take a couple of weeks and think it through carefully if you'd like."

Just as he was ready to leave, I said, "Do you remember the dinner back east you invited me to the last night of our meetings?"

He said, "Yes."

I said, "Tell me, if you will, why you applied such pressure on me to take an intoxicating drink."

He smiled and said, "Tom, we are trying to build into the top echelons of our organization men of integrity, men who will not buckle under pressure. We would like to have men who think that spending Saturday night in their family rooms reading the *National Geographic* is exciting, rather than being out carousing in all the places where they ought not to be."

Helen and I considered carefully this offer, which was such a compliment to us, but we decided not to accept it. I called back east and told them of my decision and was told, "Well, that won't change our relationship. We want it to continue in a very cordial way." And I thanked them for that consideration. That was chapter one.

Chapter two: A year passed. Another invitation came to go east to attend that same

meeting, which we did. As soon as we had checked into our hotel and gone to our room, we heard the telephone ringing. I went in, and it was the operator. She said, "Mr. Fyans, there is a party in Salt Lake who has been trying to get in touch with you for some time. They would like to make an appointment call. Will you be in your room at 2:00 this afternoon?"

It was then about 12:00. I said, "Yes. But by the way, operator, who is calling?", thinking it would be someone, of course, from our business organization in Salt Lake.

She said, "It's a Mr. Moyle."

Helen and I asked each other, "What Mr. Moyle do we know?" The only one we could think of was President Henry D. Moyle of the First Presidency, but we knew he surely wouldn't be calling us.

At 2:00 the telephone rang, and, much to our surprise, it was President Moyle. He asked us if we'd leave almost immediately and go to Uruguay to preside over a mission. We said, "We'll do whatever the Brethren ask."

A short time later another telephone call came, this one also from Salt Lake. It happened to be from the president of the organization with which I was associated. He said, "Tom, did you get a telephone call from Salt Lake in the last little while?"

I said, "Yes, sir."

He said, "What did you tell them?"

"Well, I told them what you would have told them."

"Well then you'd better return to Salt Lake immediately because we'll have to do some major reorganizing prior to your departure."

I hung up that telephone and then thought, "Now, I'm back here in the East at the invitation and expense of this large international organization. What do I do?" So I called the company and told them I had an emergency that necessitated my returning to Salt Lake City immediately. "In fact," I said, "I'll be unable to continue coming east to these annual meetings" and explained that I would be going

to South America. They said, "We don't understand. A year ago we offered you a very important business opportunity, and you decided you wouldn't bring your family to the East. You thought about it for two weeks. Now you get a telephone call, asking you to move halfway around the world, and you immediately respond. We don't understand. Actually, we do understand. Please get in touch with us upon your return."

Well now, what has been suggested in these few moments this morning? One thing, at least in part, is a role definition. Today you live in a particular and unusual environment here on campus. It includes football, basketball, Homecoming, the Spectacular, and the Young Ambassadors. There are the challenging, energy-draining studies that occupy so much of your time, and the everyday things that you do as you attend this great university. All of this is a learning and preparing experience.

Tomorrow, as you move into the world, you will experience a somewhat different environment, and you can have a distinct influence on this newly-encountered condition as you journey through life. You see, after all, we proclaim

what we are. You, as a vital influencer, will carry the spirit of proclamation with you wherever you go. Bear it courageously, bear it effectively, because your proclamation will have eternal consequences for you and for all those who are warmed by the glow of the gospel as it radiates from your soul to theirs.

Remember, you are the Church. As you are, the Church is. And in the final analysis, you recognize that whatever principle of intelligence you attain unto in this life, it will rise with you in the resurrection. (See D&C 130:18.)

I bear you my witness that Jesus is the Christ. This is his church. This is the kingdom of God upon the earth. You have been and will be a great influence as you proclaim what you really are. There is a prophet of God in the world today. I witness that to you in all humility and with every fiber of my being. And I leave a blessing with you that you will be actuated to build solidly on firm spiritual ground, that you will proclaim what you are and thereby bring to pass what the Lord has already seen—the establishment of his kingdom in all the earth. And I pray for this humbly, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.