

## 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of September 11, 2011

Thank you very much. I appreciate being asked to represent our community as part of a National Day of Remembrance and Service on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the national tragedy of September 11, 2001. The organizers of this occasion, the Cache Community Connections and American Festival Chorus deserve our thanks as well. We are part of a National Day of Remembrance and Service.

I am pleased that we were able to rescue Dr. Col, Dean Craig Jessop from that weekend job he had at the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City. Our entire community is enhanced by his presence and the Chorus he brought into being. Craig is living proof that “You can come home” in spite of what Thomas Wolfe wrote.

Four years ago this month, the Utah League of Cities and Towns celebrated its Centennial and asked Pulitzer Prize winning historian David McCulloch to speak at the luncheon in Salt Lake City where Gordon B. Hinckley at age 97, was named “Citizen of the Century.” Craig and about half of the Tabernacle Choir performed beautifully. Since the event was held in a hotel ballroom, the Choir was crowded onto risers and they seemed on top of the guests, the conductor, and the podium.

When McCulloch rose to speak, he said that he was transfixed by the fact that over 180 pairs of eyes remained focused on the baton and the Director’s eyes.

He exclaimed in awe, “That’s the finest example of leadership I have ever witnessed.”

Later in his speech, McCulloch made a comment that is the framework for my remarks this evening.

“There never was a “simpler time” for those who lived then, - different, not simple, - people always live in the present.”

I want you to think about the past ten years as our present. Walter Lippman wrote in 1922, “There is the world outside and there are pictures in our heads. Man behaves not according to the world as it really is, but to the world as he thinks it is.” Thomas Bailey, the Stanford historian, added, “The truth is often less important than what people think is the truth.”

Please keep in mind that the last ten years is indeed recent history. The critical analysis, deep examination of all sources, and a thorough summation is not yet possible. During the past few days as this anniversary neared, there have been numerous documentaries, panel discussions, articles, and published memories. Many books have been written, and after reading all of the memoirs and autobiographies of President Bush, Secretary Powell, Secretary Rumsfeld as well as Bremer, Galbraith and now – Vice President Cheney, I am not only confused, but fully aware that authors are wonderful at deflecting blame and acquiring credit. The reality is that the last ten years have undergone considerable scrutiny and the

jury is still in deliberation. Through most of the anniversary events and the published books, there are three consistent themes: 1) A chronicle of the changes of the past decade, 2) There was a great spirit of unity in our nation following the attack, 3) And why has that feeling of unity been replaced by virulent divisiveness?

Tonight, in commenting on these observations, the thoughts and perceptions are mine and I hope they are based in reality. The last decade has passed quickly amidst a multitude of changes and consequences. My choice of topics to discuss is not inclusive, but representative. I am sure that letters-to the-Editor in Logan's Herald Journal will elaborate on my foibles and perceptions.

Two days following the attacks of September 11, 2001, students at USU requested a Candlelight Memorial Service on the quad. As one of the invited speakers at the event, I sat on the makeshift stage and watched literally thousands of somber students slowly and reverently gather from all corners of the campus. Sitting on the grass, they lit candles, listened, and exuded compassion and empathy for the nearly 3100 people who had died only two days earlier. At the conclusion of the event, no one seemed eager to leave. Then a soft, solitary voice began to sing "God Bless America" and quickly others joined in and the chorus swelled and by the time they sang: "Stand beside her and guide her through the night with a light from above, the entire audience was engaged.

Following that poignant song, they spontaneously began “America the Beautiful” and the phrase in verse three that pierced my soul as I thought of those who had needlessly died, “O Beautiful for heroes proved in liberating strife, who more than self their country loved and Mercy more than life.” Our souls were full of love for humanity, our community and our nation.

Less than a month later, as part of a previously planned USU Alumni-sponsored tour to New York and Washington DC, forty-eight alumni stood on the observation deck of the Empire State Building looking south in total disbelief at the smoldering ruins of the World Trade Center towers. Tearful and reverent, we exchanged pleasant greetings to any and all fellow citizens we met. New Yorkers and Aggies alike realized our collective vulnerability. Our cities had been targeted and it was different than the Oklahoma City bombing six years earlier, or Pearl Harbor, or the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915 or the battleship Maine in 1898. We realized that “9-11” would become to a generation of Americans what JFK’s assassination on November 22, 1963, or the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 was for parents and grandparents. “Where were you on \_\_\_?” now had a new ending.

The next day, unable to visit the now closed Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, we boarded a tourist boat and slowly glided by those national icons and then cruised up the Hudson to the East River, turned right past Yankee Stadium,

down to the U.N. and then reversed our course. While on that cruise, it was announced to the passengers that the US had initiated airstrikes in Afghanistan in pursuit of Osama Bin Laden, Al Qaida, and their supporters. The comment from James Garfield, given at the time of Abraham Lincoln's assassination, came to mind, "For mere vengeance I would do nothing. This nation is too great to look for revenge. But for security of the future, I would do everything." That was now and is still our dilemma – revenge and security. For a few months that choice remained open.

Our group then visited Washington, D.C. observing the destruction of the portion of the Pentagon as we made our way to Arlington National Cemetery. Walking from the eternal flame to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, we watched horse drawn caissons bearing some of the victims of 9-11 toward their final resting place. The 21 gun salutes pierced the quiet autumn morning and reminded us of our gratitude and mortality.

That evening we joined Washington DC area alumni and gathered in a Senate Committee room in the Hart Senate building shortly before that building was quarantined because of the anthrax threat. We spoke of our love of the nation, our government, the beautiful landmarks, and our fellow citizens. The words of John Rutter you just heard applied to every moment:

"The journey may be long, no end in sight

there may be hills to climb or giants to fight.

But if you'll take my hand

We'll walk together toward the land of freedom.”

Although unsure and a bit apprehensive in our current surroundings, we felt a bond of togetherness. Throughout that trip, there was apparent civility, decency, and obvious humility. WE did indeed feel a genuine togetherness. At the Hart Building, I told the story of how three wounded World War II veterans, all with severe damage to their limbs went through physical therapy together – Senators Daniel Inouye, Robert Dole, and Phillip Hart – and then served together as friends and colleagues in the US Senate –although they represented different political parties, their lives and service exemplified that county is greater than party.

During this past year, I have revisited all of what we saw immediately following September 11, 2001. Last month while in New York City, I walked at 6:00 a .m. from my hotel in Midtown all the way to the site of the attack in Lower Manhattan. As I walked I greeted and visited with any and all New Yorkers along the way, I was aware of the city beneath the sidewalk-the subway, water, electricity, and sewer. It is true that I try to talk to anyone who will answer, that is why my children and grandchildren refuse to go to the grocery store with me. The written words of a Dutch priest, penned in 1662 rang very true. “I heard every language known to man in New Amsterdam.”

As I looked down on the two reflecting pools that outline where the twin towers once stood, they look very small and I was reminded that the victims killed there represented over 100 different nationalities. I closed my eyes and tried to visualize the young Welles Crowther who escorted co-workers from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 42<sup>nd</sup> floor and then went back up to help firefighters, rather than join his coworkers as they left the building. Or Michael Benfante, whose book *Reluctant Hero*, describes how he and a co-worker carried a wheelchair bound woman down nearly seventy flights of stairs to safety. Benfante survived, Crowther did not. The stories of heroism and dedication are endless. One of the great miracles is that most of the nearly 50,000 who worked in those buildings survived. The area where the towers stood is dynamic and alive as the memorial rises and rebuilding continues with unity, devotion, and purpose. A critic recently chastised the city of New York and the nation for being so slow in constructing the memorial; however, the critic forgot that it took years of painful and painstaking searching through the pile of rubble to seek and identify any and all human remains.

The same is true of the Pentagon and the Memorial constructed there. I marvel at our capacity and commitment to rebuild, restore, and remember. The monument in Western Pennsylvania is also worthy of a visit. The hijacked hostages, aware of the other attacks through cell phone calls to family, became

“Masters of their fate and owners of their souls” and saved another national treasure, our national capitol.

As I visited these hallowed spots, I pondered the past decade and what has transpired. As I walked through New York, I felt the vibration of my cell phone and chose to ignore it. Too many people around me were yelling into their phones and at first I thought they all wanted to talk to me. Cell phones, iPods, and other devices make it impossible for one to hide or escape. iPods, iPads, and Steve Jobs changed our world. When you think of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and all social networks and add texting, YouTube, Kindle-you realize that most people in the world are connected electronically and virtually and weirdly-but connected. Do not believe those folks who talk about having all of the scriptures on their phones, they are only check the NFL scores while appearing most pious. This did not exist a decade ago. Photos and footage from any Middle Eastern or Asian country can be delivered via the Internet to television stations immediately-as could photos and footage of interrogation inside Iraqi Prisons. The “euro” as a common currency was established less than a decade ago and is not in trouble. I still cannot understand the fascination with Harry Potter and how everyone became excited about wizards and then vampires in the “Twilight” series. Reality television, which is an oxymoron, became the norm. Hopefully, it will go the way of the telegram, cassette tapes, and kodachrome film.



Air travel will never be the same and the concept of Homeland Security has taken hold of our lives. In the aftermath of 9-11, we were willing to put security over civil liberties when the Patriot act was passed. We have avoided another catastrophic attack and in view of the 28,000+ daily flights carrying over 2.5 million passengers, this is a miracle. I have even learned to live with the TSA security checks and have concluded that if the full body scan of what is left of this body excites anyone, life is good. However, Great Britain, Spain, Russia, and India have suffered major attack on railways, in schools, and at a hotel. We still ask are we more safe and secure?

Physically, we have risen from the ashes, rubble and destruction of ten years ago. As a nation, we should take great pride in this dedicated achievement. It helps us recapture the spirit of togetherness and unity we felt in the autumn of 2001. This is one of our goals this evening. How do we create a lasting tribute to those who gave the ultimate sacrifice on that day and in the battles of the past decade?

However, in many ways the nation has become less unified since that fateful day ten years ago. How do I explain the fact that our nation quickly evolved away from the heartfelt post 9-11 harmony? Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1820, "I know no safe depository of the ultimate power of the society but the people themselves, and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their

discretion. How do I try to inform our discretion? That is the task before us. Let me begin with a mission statement for the United States penned 224 years ago this month in Philadelphia: the Preamble to the Constitution:

We the people of the United states, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish the constitution of the Unites States of America.”

The United States of America is a work in progress. More perfect union is a lofty goal, as are justice, domestic tranquility, common defense and the general welfare. Our Founding Fathers desired to secure the blessings of liberty not just for themselves, but for their posterity-us- and now us for our posterity. The Constitution is a bundle of compromises pieced together by those who sought to fulfill the promise of the preamble. They devised a great compromise on Representation by creating two legislative bodies and clothing each with different powers, slavery and the slave trade, north and south, large and small states, and the very powers of each branch of government. From our Constitution we realize that America demands advanced citizenship and it is not easy.

Disagreement, dissension, and outright opposition are a political way of life, but in the past few years, those voices are more contentious, nasty, and mean-

spirited. One of the problems is that radio talk-show hosts, bloggers, and pundits do not seem to be interested in solving problems, nor documenting assertions-they are all about selling controversy. It is a giant business and they love the extremes-there is no rest from bickering.

The nightmare of politicians always campaigning adds to the turmoil. One of the many brilliant aspects of our constitution, besides creating the job of an elected President, is that it defines elected terms of office by the calendar and not the crisis. The idea of constant campaigning seems to be based on maintaining an industry or a position, not on helping to govern. I am positive that it would shock those who crafted the document to know that political campaigns and fund raising never end. To even think of televised debates over a year before an election is almost insulting and ludicrous, but it sells. Our politicians are too busy trying to keep their jobs that they do not do their jobs.

When the concept of identifying opposition as an “enemy” is added, fear and anger are often the result. A person who belongs to another party is not our enemy. Public servants in Wisconsin, Ohio, and New Jersey-police, firefighters, teachers, and others, cannot be described as enemies because they battle legislative cuts that prevent them from doing their job. Late in the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln was chastised for being lenient toward his Southern foes, so he wrote the

critical woman: “The best way to destroy an enemy is to make them your friends.”

We could all take a few pages from Mr. Lincoln.

Perhaps these are the unintended consequences of the political climate of the past ten years. Our government is not an enemy; it is us-WE THE PEOPLE! A love of country, as exemplified by the events of the past few days, is acknowledgement of all the goods and services we enjoy as citizens.

The world is not a perfect place and all of the consequences of September 11, 2011 are still unclear. We are engaged in placing blame and seeking simple answers to very complex issues. The political and economic world is contentious and when blatant greed is added to blame, it is difficult to maintain positive discourse. America is not easy – it requires advanced citizenship. You have got to want it, but the Bill of Rights reminds us that we have to be tolerant and understanding of others.

In the past ten years the United States has fought on two fronts, Iraq and Afghanistan. The cost is in the trillions of dollars and involves trying to build nations, not just destroy despotic secular dictators or Muslim leaders. It has been a most difficult task. However, our military personnel have carried out their difficult assignments with dispatch and efficiency. Our government has learned a valuable lesson from Vietnam- that of not abandoning its veterans. It is great to have parades and welcome-home events for our returning servicemen and women.

We did not provide that welcoming comfort during the Vietnam War. Nearly 6200 have died and over 40,000 wounded. They have made and continue to make a huge difference yet they know and have experienced reality. Their task has been unbelievably complex and they have done as asked. For some of them, like the responders of 9-11, time after time after time.

We have also seen in the past decade an amazing preponderance of greed and selfishness in our financial institutions, federal and private, which led to a huge mortgage and investment crisis that continues to plague the nation. The cost of the late 2008 bailout and subsequent loans and stimulus packages parallels that of both wars. Some institutions failed, others were saved and the legacy is one of debt.

The interesting thing about the decade of war is that the United States chose to do this while trimming taxes. Presidents Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, Wilson, and Roosevelt all added taxes to fund the nation, especially during war. Now, only the servicemen and their families were asked to sacrifice. We had three federal and many state taxes cut and it just does not work. Our nation cannot create the Homeland Security Department, bail out Wall Street, and fight two wars have nearly 9% unemployment and not go in debt. We all sacrificed civil liberties when we agreed to the Patriot Act, but is a nation secure that is deeply in debt? It is possible to spend ourselves as families or as a nation into weakness and subsequently inhibit our ability to solve problems and invest in the future.

The United States of America thrives on a strange system of multi-level governments (city, county, and state, federal), charity, capitalism, and volunteerism. Every day in the mail or via the internet we are asked to help fund a cure for cancer or a treatment for diabetes, build homes, educate children, support an opera, and provide food or a building for a community pantry. AND WE DO IT! We try! And when we are dealt a serious natural disaster like hurricane Katrina or a tornado or a Tsunami and an earthquake, we muster our resources and try to heal the pain of our fellow human beings. At times we may be slow, but usually we are there.

We cannot control or even explain the violent intense hatred of others. We can do all that we can to learn about and from each other. William Vollman said, “I now realize that everyone on the earth can be my teacher if I only retain the humility to ask and “every time I take a drink of otherness I become less ignorant and mean”.

While some exhibit a desire for revenge, others sees an opportunity to only satisfy their own greed, or many become fearful and even hateful, we should exemplify those who serve and protect and sacrifice. Individuals acting together to create a better community – people who understand compassion, sacrifice, and remain optimistic. John Rutter’s words reach out to us “we are many, help us to be

one. Heal our divisions, let they will be done. Friends and strangers, start with me and you.”

America is not easy. It is advanced citizenship. Deep in our hearts, deep in our soul, how do we treat other humans? That we do control. No one can be blamed for how we treat others. That we do control. The peace we seek – the perfect harmony – begins with us.

We, the people, is the most inclusive of all phrases, but making a difference begins with us – individually. Finally, as I think back on the past decade and marvel at what we do and how well we do it. The last few days have been a stark reminder of the lives that were lost, families hurt, and jobs that have disappeared. Yes, we have serious problems in this country and as we move forward, we should take the time to solve them. What we have witnessed during this day of Remembrance and service reminds me of a scene from the movie “Saving Private Ryan” the words that Captain Miller whispered to Private Ryan ring true and are a call to action for all of us. “Earn this!” Yes, “Earn this”

AND LET IT BEGIN WITH ME

– Thank you.