



Links Players

Proclamation

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. (Colossians 1:28, ESV)

For forty-one years, Ivor Robson was the official starter at The Open. It wasn't that long ago that we referenced this prestigious golf tournament as The British Open. In truth, it is much larger and grander than merely a European event. Men from all over the world arrive to compete for the Claret Jug.

Beginning in 1975, Ivor Robson announced each player arriving at the first tee by giving some details about them. For example, he would announce, "From the USA, on the tee, Bill Rogers." From time to time, he varied slightly from that formula and simply proclaimed, "On the tee, Jack Nicklaus!"

Retiring in 2015 at Saint Andrews after forty-one years of greeting the best players in the world, Robson packed up his belongings and called it a day. The Royal and Ancient Golf Club had the presence of mind to do what it rarely, if ever, does. They invited Ivor to the Past Champions Dinner—an appropriate honor for a man who adorned the first tee at The Open for four decades. The R&A also presented him with a replica of the Claret Jug.

Ivor's job was to proclaim the country from which they hailed, the player, and his location—the first tee. For forty-one years, with a high-pitched voice and without calling attention to himself, Ivor Robson proclaimed the names of the greatest players in the world, and he did so with utter simplicity.

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If we "Make America Great Again," it will not be by screaming or screeching. Instead, let's make America great again by proclaiming Jesus and his power to make new creations out of rebels.

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Proclamation! The importance of proclamation can hardly be overstated. When Robson proclaimed the names of the most accomplished golfers in the world, he established context and gave significance to the moment.

The importance of proclamation was not lost on the Apostle Paul either. After encountering the resurrected Christ on the Damascus Road, Paul would spend the remainder of his life proclaiming the person and work of Jesus Christ to the nations. That proclamation literally changed the world.

Paul proclaimed the gospel in synagogues, marketplaces, and town squares (the Areopagus). Paul preached to Jews and Gentiles. He proclaimed the gospel in homes and on ships. No place or time was considered off-limits for Paul's gospel proclamation. Of course, this boldness got him in a heap of trouble from time to time too. But, Paul proclaimed the gospel in prison as well.

So much modern preaching has been restricted to the pulpit on Sunday mornings. Without question, the pulpit is the most appropriate place for gospel proclamation. However, we might wonder what would happen if the church in the West began to proclaim Jesus in places outside the confines of stained-glass windows.

When John Wesley and George Whitfield were prohibited from proclaiming the gospel from the pulpits of their native England, they went to the highways and byways, and the world would never be the same.

Refusing to muzzle the gospel, Wesley and Whitfield also came to America and preached the gospel on street corners, in taverns, on rock walls, and in other unlikely places. America would become what she became because of this proclamation.

But this world-changing message was not just any ole proclamation, mind you. It was the bold proclamation of the gospel that shaped America and made her great. If we "Make America Great Again," it will not be by screaming or screeching. Instead, let's make America great again by proclaiming Jesus and his power to make new creations out of rebels.

Prayer: Jesus, pour out your Spirit on the church, and embolden her to proclaim the gospel of Christ.

Dennis Darville
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