

Stand in Holy Places

I remember a story told by J. Martel Bird who was in the Stake Presidency of the East Los Angeles Stake and later was a mission president in Scotland and Australia. He also served as head of security for the church. For years he worked for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

One day he and his partner went to make an arrest on a suspected criminal. They went to the home of his girlfriend for which they had a search warrant. As you can imagine, his girlfriend said he was not there. They invited themselves in anyway to search the house. One went in the front door and the other went in the back. Brother Bird went into the bedroom and while searching opened the closet door. There on the floor were a neat row of shoes. However, one pair had a pair of legs in them. The legs were connected to some knees. As Brother Bird pulled apart some hanging clothes, there was the suspect. Brother Bird said, "What are you doing here?" The criminal smiled and said, "Well, everybody has got to be somewhere!"

There is a lot of truth in what this man had to say. Additionally it has special meaning to us that are members of the church who have received the injunction from the Lord found in the Doctrine and Covenants, "...stand in holy places and be not moved." So, if we have to be somewhere, why not in the right place, doing the right thing, at the right time?

Have you ever thought why you were born in this day and age, in this country, as a member of the church, and, to the parents you have. Why weren't you born in Moscow, Russia in the 1700's? Why weren't you born in a ghetto in La Paz, Bolivia where life struggles on a day to day subsistence level? Is there some reason for why you where born when and where you were? Some reason why your specific family? I believe so. I believe that you were numbered among the "great and noble ones" described by Abraham in the pre-earth life. I believe the Lord is counting on you. I believe He expects that we give 110% to move the work along and promote the great plan of happiness described by Alma in the Book of Mormon.

Consider the following story. Once there were missionaries laboring in a village located high in an Andean valley in Peru. Surrounding the valley were mountains ranging over 20,000 feet. Opposition to the church was strong in this mountain village and the people threatened the missionaries with physical harm if they remained in their town. They were literally forced to leave their assigned area or face a very real chance of being killed. Reluctantly the missionaries moved to the next city lower in the valley. On Sundays the faithful saints from the first village would travel down the valley to the town where the missionaries were now situated for Sacrament Meeting, Priesthood, and Relief Society.

One Sunday while they were meeting a tremendous earthquake shook the entire area. A glacier from one of the high mountains fell free fall for thousands of feet. It landed in a large lake at the top of the valley. The net effect of this incredible, natural phenomenon was similar to filling the bath tub full of water and then tossing in the largest boulder you could find. Water, mud, boulders and sludge came racing out of the lake and washed down the valley at speeds over 100 miles per hour. Boulders the size of a living room crashed down on homes and businesses. The

first mountain village was completely buried. The only thing remaining of the village was cross at the top of the Catholic church. Over 20,000 people were killed in the matter of just a few minutes. Today that village is the scene of a national cemetery.

The deluge of debris continued down the valley toward the town where the faithful members of the church were holding their meetings. Aerial shots depicting the path of the flood graphically show the water and mud making a turn at the village and literally going around the entire town. Once past the town it goes back to what would be its normal course and continues down the valley. The next town below was also destroyed by the flood.

Here's another example of being in the right place. Daniel and his companion terminated their Preparation Day activities so they could be to an investigator discussion on time. The appointment was a good 45 minute walk from their apartment. They arrived only to find that no one was home. A little frustrated, they started back to their apartment. While walking home, they noticed an individual on the other side of the street motioning to them as he talked on a telephone. The closer they got to the man they could see that he was weeping. He explained that he was talking to his girlfriend who was a member of the Mormon Church and living in an other part of the country. He was telling her of all the problems he was having and how depressed he was. At the same time Daniel and his companion were passing the telephone booth, she was telling him that he needed to find the Mormon Missionaries so he could learn how to pray and start to resolve some of his problems in life. I believe these two missionaries were instruments in the hands of the Lord because they were in the right place doing the things they were suppose to be doing.

Tom Brown, an LDS kid at the Air Force Academy, was the back up quarterback and the favorite to take over the position the next year. He was a Freshman and was heavily recruited out of high school. The responsibility of going on a mission was something that weighed heavy on his mind. When he asked his dad what he should do, his dad would simply say, "Tom, I know you will make the right decision". He found himself in the office of Coach Berry DeFisher explaining that he was leaving the team and going on a mission for his church. The coach asked him if he knew what he was giving up - quarterbacking for a Division I football team? Tom weathered the pressure from the coaches and the other team players. He went on a mission and was very instrumental in moving the work ahead in his field of labor. Everyone has to be somewhere and he decided to be in the right place at the right time.

Today we are in the Super Bowl of right vs. evil. The Lord is counting on us to be in the right place at the right time. We need to do our part. If you are the coach of the San Francisco Forty Niners and it is the closing seconds of the fourth quarter, you are down by three points and you just took possession of the ball, who do you want throwing the football? Who do you want catching the ball? Of course the answers are Steve Young and Jerry Rice. I think the Lord feels the same way about you. We are in the closing minutes of this world's existence. He needs His very best to get the job done. He is depending on us to stand in holy places.