

## Katy 1<sup>st</sup> Ward Spiritual Message #59

### YOU NEVER KNOW WHO IS WATCHING YOU, EVEN IN WALMART!

When our kids were young I served on the High Council for 10 years. I was also the head of our Neighborhood Crime Watch which had about 5,000 people in it. As a part of that crime watch job, I taught classes to the people in the area on how to make your home burglar proof. So all the stake members pretty well knew me from my giving talks in their ward now and then over 10 years. Most of the non-church members also knew me as well from the neighborhood crime watch. Because of that, our son Nathan started to complain that everywhere he went people would ask him, "Are you Cordell Vail's son?" To make matters worse, later it seemed like I changed jobs about every few years. Each time I found a better job it was in a new city. Because our kids were in school I would normally go there ahead of time and let Janice and the kids stay until school was out so they could start the new school in a new year. Often that was for 3 or 4 months at a time. Because of that, by the time the family got there people in the church pretty well all knew me. So when the family arrived, again when Nathan would go to Stake dances or other church events, people started asking, "Are You Cordell Vail's son?" When Nathan went on his mission to Hungary we got a very interesting letter from him after he had been there 3 months. In the letter he said he was assigned to a city clear up near the Russian boarder where there was a very small branch of the church. By then he had learned Hungarian well enough they asked him to give a talk in Sacrament meeting. It just happened that on that Sunday there were some American visitors there in that little branch. After the meeting Bob Brady, one of the visitors came up to Nathan and asked him, "Are you Cordell Vail's son?" Bob was the father of a missionary who had just been released and they had come to Hungary to pick up their son. Elder Brady had been assigned to that branch earlier in his mission so he had brought his parents there that day to meet people he knew. Bob, Elder Brady's father just happened to be my same age and had grown up with me in Hyde Park, Utah. That is how he knew me and that is why he asked if Nathan was my son. But to make things worse for Nathan, the other American visitor then came up to him and asked if he was Cordell Vail's son. He was Jack Matckin. Jack was LDS and was serving in the Job Corps. He was on his way into Russia and had stopped in that little branch in Hungary that Sunday to go to Church. Jack grew up in Hyde Park, Utah and even though he was older than me he knew me and our family. Nathan said jokingly in his letter he just could not go anywhere that there was not someone who knew us.

However that is not the end to this story. After Nathan was married and move to California, the church built the Sacramento temple near where he lived. The first time he went to the new temple, the temple worker who took him through the veil stopped him after and, yes.... asked him, "Are you Cordell Vail's son?" The temple worker was Steve Dennis. He was my counselor in the Stake Mission Presidency while we were in the Army. He now lives in Sacramento and is a temple worker. Nathan then wrote us another funny letter and said, "DAD YOU NEVER KNOW WHO IS WATCHING YOU". I thought that was a profound observation.

I reflect on the experience Nathan had quite often. It seems so tied to another experience we had while we were in the Army. When we would go to the Officers Parties they would always have a bar and most of the people would be walking around the party carrying a glass with their drink in it. Because so many people knew we were members of the church we felt it was important to avoid even the very appearance of evil. So Janice and I would order Sprite and then we kept the can rather than have it in a glass so people would not think we were drinking. That little action became so significant to us later

when we would go to big social dinners with the General. The table would be preset for 50 or 60 people with a name card at each plate so you knew where to sit. At the beginning of those dinners everyone would stand up with their wine glass and the General would make a toast. But to our amazement, every time we went to one of those dinners, someone always put milk in our wine glasses. We never knew or found out who was doing that. Someone on the culinary staff obviously noticed we were LDS and wanted to help us not have to drink wine at those command performance dinners. We learned once again from that experience that just as Nathan had learned, you never know who is watching you and when your actions will have an influence on someone.

Why do I share these stories? Because it happened to me today. I saw someone who had on a BYU shirt in Walmart so I went over and talked to him. I did not recognize him but it was Andrew Hyde who used to be in our ward. As soon as I said hi he said, "Aren't you Leah Dailey's dad"? What if I had been doing something stupid or had been rude to someone there in Walmart not realizing there was someone there like him and his children who knew me that were watching me without me realizing it. Again today I thought of what our son Nathan said, "You never know who is watching you". I guess the key to that is to never be doing something you would not want your friends to see you doing. Enough Said!

Brother Vail

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