

AN OLD AM RADIO: AN ANALOGY FOR THE HOLY GHOST

I grew up in Price, Utah. It is about 120 miles from Salt Lake City, Utah. Price is a coal mining town. People came from all over the world to Price because of the coal mines. This influx of Greek, Italian, Eastern European, Mexican, Japanese and other ethnic groups made Price one of Utah's most culturally complex and diverse communities. As I was growing up, Price was the only city or town in Utah that was not predominantly L.D.S. (Mormon). We felt this made Price very unique.

Price is high in the mountains, over a mile high, and somewhat isolated. During the 1960's, as I was growing up, Price was only about 6,000 people. Even though Price was small, it was the biggest town for miles around. Provo was the closest town of any size and it was about 70 miles away. The road from Price to Provo was narrow, barely two lanes. It was a winding, mountain canyon road. It went up Price Canyon and then you had to drive more of the same winding, canyon road down Spanish Fork Canyon. There was a steep cliff on the outside of the road with hardly a break down lane before the sheer drop-off. The road went over Soldier Summit. The summit was often closed in the winter due to snow and winds. It was a treacherous drive even in the best of weather. This road is no longer used but even the newer, wider safer one is still considered one of the most dangerous roads in the country.

This all made Price, especially at times, a pretty isolated place.

We had one radio station in Price. The station's call letters were KOAL (naturally since it was a coal mining town). It was the only station in that part of the state. We could not get any other radio stations, not out of Provo or Salt Lake or anywhere else in Utah.

Because it was the only radio station, KOAL would try and please its diverse listening audience with its programming of a wide mix of programs and music. Paul Harvey came on every day at noon. Western music and rock 'n roll music would play co-mingled, in no special order. And then a news broadcast would be sprinkled here and there. It had a little bit of everything.

Every teenager in the 60's had a radio, a small transistor one, with very limited capabilities. And if you were lucky, you had a bigger better radio you could listen to at home. I had one. It was my main Christmas Present one year. It was an AM radio, it did not have FM capabilities. There weren't any FM radio stations anyway. It had a button which I could turn and it would play for one hour then shut itself off. This button gave me the freedom of listening to music every night at bedtime, and the freedom from worry that I would fall asleep and the radio would play all night. I thought this button made the radio quite fancy. The big dial on the radio was the tuning dial. This dial was turned very slowly and very carefully and was used to tune to the radio station. You had to get it just right or you would get a lot of static. But once you hit that exact spot it came in loud and clear.

This was the era when rock and roll was king. And as unbelievable as it might seem, due to the strangest fluke of science and nature, all the teenagers of Price could tune in every night to rock and roll. And it was ALL Rock and Roll, no western music, no Paul Harvey, no news, just the latest Rock and Roll hits. It was not by listening to our one and only radio station KOAL in Price Utah. We

were listening to a radio station being broadcast from, of all places, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma! That radio station was KOMA, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (1520 on your radio dial). We could tune in no matter the season and no matter the weather. KOMA came in loud and clear even during bad weather. We could get the radio signal every single night but it was only at night. Even though KOMA broadcast twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, the signal reached us only at night. That did not seem to matter to us since we really only tried to listen at night anyway. As teenagers in Price, we didn't question this miraculous fluke of radio signals and nature, but faithfully tuned in every night to a radio station out of Oklahoma City.

Normally an AM signal, which is an amplitude signal, can travel perhaps up to 200 miles if there is no interference or noise. But just about everything interferes with an AM signal; power lines, auto ignition, fluorescent lights, motors, electronic equipment, even a thunderstorm. If you are old enough to remember listening to AM radio you remember how easily a station would become full of static.

Somehow these radio signals from KOMA would bounce and skip around, hitting peaks and valleys in the mountains just right to reach us in Price Utah. They must have bounced and ricocheted through the Rocky Mountains in precisely the right way to allow a radio signal from Oklahoma City, over a 1000 miles away and at an elevation thousands of feet lower, to come in loud and clear in Price, Utah.

For the teenagers of Price, Utah it was as if we had our own private radio station...our secret world. We would send our high school announcements to KOMA. Those announcements were about our High School upcoming events; i.e. homecoming, or prom etc. We would anxiously await and listen for our announcements. We would be absolutely thrilled when we hear our High School name and our announcement! It never occurred to us most people would have to pay for their advertising time on the airways. The executives at KOMA must have been so astounded to have a listening audience tucked far away in the Utah mountains, over 1000 miles away, that they put the announcements on the air at no charge. Maybe they considered us a public service announcement? But for whatever reason, what a benefit! It was instant communication with all the teenagers in Price, Utah. KOMA seemed like a gift to us, not only did we enjoy the latest Rock N Roll every night, but we got personalized announcements of upcoming events. It definitely was our secret teenage world in a tiny isolated mountain town in Utah in the sixties.

I once studied a map with the mountain ranges on it to see if I could visualize how that radio signal might have possibly reached high into the mountains over a thousand miles away and come in crystal clear each and every night. It just doesn't seem possible but it did, somehow it came in loud and clear, somehow that signal would reach us.

Now if you think about it, this is kind of like how the Holy Ghost works. It is a gift given to us at confirmation, we receive the "gift" of the Holy Ghost. This gift acts much like that signal from Oklahoma, it is a signal that we can tune into, a signal that is always there for us to listen to if we just carefully tune in.

We just have to make sure we tune in to just the right spot. We have to make sure our internal dials are set to the exact, correct spot on the radio dial so that we can listen to the whisperings of the Holy Ghost loud and clear at any time without any static.

For our dial to be turned to right place we need to be doing the things in our life that will allow us to listen.

With the Holy Ghost, we are even more fortunate than what we were as teenagers attending Carbon High School in Price, Utah back in the sixties. That radio signal came in only at night. We, however, can have the constant "signal" of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is our constant companion and if we tune in we can be blessed to feel those promptings of the Holy Ghost at any time night or day. That is our gift, our little miracle, given to us when we are confirmed.

Comparable to the AM radio signal being blocked easily by worldly interferences, there are also many kinds of interferences in the world that could block out the communication of the Holy Ghost. The signal of the Holy Ghost, like the radio station, is constantly being broadcast. Only when we allow interferences in our life to block the signal will we not receive the "signal" of the Holy Ghost. Our receiver must be tuned. We must do the "tuning". We must carefully keep our "dial" set to exactly the right spot. It is up to us to make sure we act in accordance to the things we know we must do to stay close to the spirit so that we will be able to tune in to listen to those messages from the Holy Ghost.

Just as we received a radio signal from Oklahoma City, high in the mountains, the Holy Ghost has the ability to bounce around all the worldly interferences and come to us in seemingly impossible circumstances. The signal will be there for us constantly and will help us, comfort us, and testify to us.

Akin to the Radio Station KOMA announcing our high school announcements, the Holy Ghost can give us "announcements" which are very personal. The Holy Ghost will specifically help us, guide us, teach us, comfort us and testify to us. We are the ones that will benefit. What a personal gift from our Heavenly Father!

Our life is full of mountainous peaks and valleys. We face many obstacles. The road of life can be very, very treacherous. It can also be narrow and winding. Life is not an easy straight road. So, with the challenges we must face in life, it is so important to have something that will help us, something that will guide us and something that will always be with us no matter how much noise and interference there is all around us. The Holy Ghost is something that will help us not feel so isolated. We need that constant communication of the Holy Ghost. We need to always have it be with us.

I pray that we may all finely tune our "internal dial" so that we may receive the signal or the whisperings from the Holy Ghost loud and clear. I pray that we may all live our lives in such a way that we may have the Holy Ghost as a constant communication and companion. Life can be treacherous, we all need to tune in to our own personal KOMA.