

OK, LET'S DO IT

A few months ago I was reading a book I had started several times but never finished. Usually that was because I have a tendency to be curious about the missing parts of a relatively minor character's story.

In this case the character's name was Joe. You will probably figure out who this might be.

Now Joe was a relatively simple person. He came from family that had a long history of being reasonably religious in that he followed the rules, attended religious services, and lived amoral life.

Joe was a single young adult, maybe 19 or 20 years old. Joe lived by himself in a small town kind of near the desert, like maybe a small town northeast of San Bernardino. Mobility was by foot or pack animal.

There was some political turmoil in the area since the region where Joe lived and worked had a reasonably large number of foreign military also living and working there. With time, the foreign military thereabouts had allowed the government to be controlled by foreign politicians.

Joe was a small time entrepreneur, had his own business. He was by inclination and background a carpenter, in the construction business but also doing the other kinds of jobs that a good finish carpenter would do. If he was slim in build like my

grandfather he would have been a top notch cabinet maker. Business was good.

Joe was getting to the age when he should start looking to settle down and start a family. Living alone he dated the girls in the town and sometimes the girls in nearby towns. He did meet a young lady and things went well between them. After a while he made it his intention to spend his life with her. All continued to be going well between them when he found out that she was pregnant, a real deal breaker. Nevertheless he really cared for her and felt good with her. But if he took her into his home and she gave birth he would end up being responsible for and raising a child who was not his. This created for Joe a serious conflict.

Mulling over the situation he realized that by breaking off this ongoing relationship with her being pregnant, he would be exposing her to significant legal and moral ramifications. However, being the kind of man he had become, this was not his way of doing things. After some unknown urging Joe decided to take this woman into his home and make the best of the situation. "OK, let's get married."

A boy baby was born; Joe, his wife and the baby began their life together.

Because of surrounding political pressures the politicians felt threatened and, wanting to maintain their control, decided to disrupt the lives of the citizenry in the area. Recognizing the threat to his family, "OK, let's move out of the country," Joe closed up his business, boarded up his home, and with his wife, gathered food, clothes, baby wipes and whatever else they could

load on the donkey. With the boy and his mother riding, they took off heading toward the southern border. It was a long way.

Finally crossing the border into a new country they came to an area in which they could settle and Joe found a place where this small family could live. Looking for useful work, he set up his carpentry business again and undertook to provide for his family in this foreign land.

After more than a year, word had filtered down that the threat to his family had passed. Deciding that they should go home, "OK, let's go back home," Joe closed up his new business, sold their home, and with his wife, again gathered food, clothes, baby wipes and whatever else they could load on the donkey. With the boy and his mother riding, they took off heading north. It was again a long way.

Back in their home town, Joe moved his wife and the boy into his place, trying to give this small family a place to call home. He again set up his small business and with time began to teach the boy the use of the tools and some tricks of the carpenter's trade. As time passed the boy grew, went to school, and, even though the boy was not his, Joe came to like him and enjoy working with him. The boy respected him.

Now in this country it was usual for an entire extended family to make a periodic trip to the big city for a major religious event. Joe planned, and arranged for his wife, the boy, and himself to join others of Joe's extended family to travel together. Off they went. All was good.

After having spent several days during the event, it was time to head home. On their way, as the families traveling together tried to get themselves sorted out, it was discovered that the boy was missing. Joe and his wife searched the entire extended family group without finding the boy. Joe's wife was panicked. Joe was as upset with the boy as he could be. "OK, let's go look for the boy." They headed back to the big city and began searching there. Finding the boy in the city they finally began to head home.

After they got home, Joe said to the boy: "Follow me out behind the woodshed."

When they got there Joe looked the boy straight in the eye and said: "Now look, I know you are the Son of God, but there are a few things I need to tell you. Pulling this 'getting lost' stunt really upset your mother. That was not a good thing to do. You made her suffer all sorts of fears. Don't do it again."

Life settled down and Joe, who really was under no obligation to do so, taught the boy, who was not his son, the carpenter's trade probably saying "I'll show you what I know." Joe had otherwise said little. Given the stresses and turmoil he encountered, the problem solving solutions he implemented, he found within himself an acceptance of such disruptions to an ordinary life.

We can wonder what kind of person was this man.

With a wife, mother to a son, with a son not his, Joe was most of all a Dad.

