

“The Lord Thy God Shall Lead Thee by the Hand”

JANET S. SCHARMAN

The basis for my remarks this morning comes from a scripture found in D&C 112:10: “Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers.” I think this means: Be open to letting the Lord help you. That is not to say that you should take a passive stance or be helpless or dependent. Rather it suggests that in this time of both pressure and uncertainty, the Lord can be there to guide you through your important decisions of life and to support you in times of trial.

Let us start by reflecting on what we know about our premortal life. We get a sense of how important it must have been to our Heavenly Father for us to learn to work through a process, to be faced with choices, and then have the ability to make our own decisions. During that time he presented a plan to all of us. Lucifer said he could insure that not one soul would be lost during this earthly phase of our lives. As a parent there have been times when I would have done anything to protect my children and have such a guarantee. That makes the Lord’s decision in this situation all the more powerful and meaningful to me. He rejected the option of a guarantee that would have insured our return but that would also have taken away our ability to learn and grow

and progress. What the Lord wanted us to experience on this earth apparently was so important that before our mortal existence even began, he was willing to lose one-third of his children who refused to acknowledge the wisdom of his great purpose—children that he loved and cared about just as your earthly parents love you. I believe he had and has the power to make all of us return to his presence. But although he was not willing to create a structure that would force our compliance, he promised to be at our side—coaching, comforting, and directing each step of the way. If we would just listen and respond, we could have his companionship on this journey to help us return safely home.

Because we don’t have any memory of that premortal time and because Satan is constantly on the attack, we sometimes forget about our divinity—where we came from and what rewards await us if we will stay the course. We don’t remember that we accepted these challenges willingly, knowing that, although

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difficult, there would be every opportunity for our success.

Ardeth Kapp tells the story of a sculptor who spent days chiseling and cutting away at a piece of marble. A young child who had been watching him through this process one day exclaimed, “I know who that is. It’s Abraham Lincoln. How did you know he was in there?” (from “Oh Remember, Remember, Lest Ye Forget,” 1997 CES Book of Mormon Symposium). Sometimes it takes a few hard knocks for us to break through our hard exteriors and remember who is inside and what it really means to be on earth at this time. Through the experiences our Father wanted us to have, we can learn that we are stronger than we thought or that what we assumed was important has moved on our priority list. We can develop into being less judgmental and more empathetic of those who also chose to come to earth so they could progress by dealing with life’s challenges.

I’d like to tell you about a group of people who understood who they were and what was truly important to them. The year was about A.D. 1140 at the Weibertreu Castle in Germany. This was not an easy time to be living. Thick castle walls, deep moats, and heavy gates were built for a reason. The battles that took place at that time were probably not all that different than those we read about in the Book of Mormon, where men fought hand to hand and eye to eye with their attackers and the occupation of the victors was most often devastating. King Konrad III and his powerful army attacked this castle of Weibertreu in a powerful siege. He knew his trade well, and those within the walls were unable to defend themselves. As the castle inhabitants were on the verge of surrender, Konrad, in a moment of kindness, said the women could leave the crumbling fortress, taking with them all they could carry on their backs. The gates opened, and the women staggered out, struggling under the heavy loads they carried. Konrad and his men were caught off guard, shocked and surprised by what they

saw, for on the back of each woman was one of the men. They knew where their treasures were, and they chose to take what was very most important, even at the risk of stirring the anger of the soldiers. Konrad, touched by this tender display of love and loyalty, remained true to his word and, although his troops leveled the buildings, not a life was lost that day.

Those must have been among the most harsh and brutal times to live, and yet the people of Weibertreu were able to reach beyond that to some degree and hang on to what was most dear to them. They understood the importance of their relationships and were able to summon the strength and courage from within to preserve that which was needed for their survival. Although there is little in the way of physical remains of the castle in modern times, the story of the “Castle of the Loyal Wives” lives on and is still an inspiring reminder to young and old alike more than 850 years later.

Understanding who we are and what is truly important in this life is a vital element in letting the Lord help us through this journey on earth. Being humble, in the way referred to by the scripture, means being willing to listen to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. There is so much noise in the world that sometimes this is not an easy task. As members of the Church we are blessed with so much that perhaps, on occasion, we don’t notice the help and guidance being given to us or we don’t think to acknowledge the source of our strength. When we do listen, the result can be very powerful.

Our family lived in Germany from 1983 to 1986. A member of our ward worked for the U.S. government and had responsibility for certain aspects of academic training for the American military personnel who were there. He asked me if I would teach a week-long course to soldiers in a nearby city. I had not been in any kind of full-time work situation since having children, and I was anxious both about my ability to teach the course and also about leaving my son and daughters. I finally agreed to teach when a

woman in our ward, who had become a friend of our family, offered to tend.

I was to start my first class at 8:00 Monday morning. About 8:30 the Sunday night before, I received a call from the woman's husband telling me she had had a medical emergency and had been rushed to the hospital. Although her situation had stabilized and she was in no immediate danger, she obviously would not be able to watch my children the following day. We had no family nearby and, because we were so new to the country, I didn't know people in our neighborhood well enough to call and ask them to help. I hung up the phone and went back into the living room, where two elders from our area were just completing a discussion to a young male investigator. Our home offered the missionaries the privacy that was sometimes lacking in the living arrangements of those they were teaching, and we had invited them to come whenever they wished. As I told them of my plight, the investigator said that his girlfriend had just lost her job and might be willing to help us. Under normal circumstances I would not have considered losing a job as a sterling recommendation for watching my children, but at this time and in this situation it was enough. I immediately called the young woman, who was willing to come. The only area of concern was that she smoked, and she agreed to go outside for her breaks.

I want to pause in this part of the story for a moment and tell you about an experience earlier that same Sunday. A young sister in our ward was teaching a Relief Society lesson about the importance of family home evening. Suddenly, right in the middle of her lesson, she said that she felt inspired to ask each one of us individually to commit to having family home evening the next night. This was a little irritating to me because I had already made a conscious decision to skip it this week since I would be so busy and probably a little stressed as well. But as she questioned me directly, I felt there was nothing I could say but that I, too,

would promise to spend this time with my family.

Monday evening I came home from work to find that all had gone well. I personally was exhausted as we finished dinner, and I began preparations for the next day of teaching. However, my promise of the day before to hold family home evening would not leave me alone. Finally I went to my file drawer and hastily selected one of the family home evening packets my sister, Carol, and I had prepared together before our family moved to Germany. I had made a simple drawing of a boy figure named Sammy who had a big mouth, which was cut out. I also had a picture of a garbage can with a hole cut in its lid. There were smaller pictures of things like fruit, vegetables, milk, cheese, bread, etc.—all healthy things—and beer, wine, cigarettes, cigars, drugs, etc., which were not good for the body. The children selected an item and then decided where to place it. Things that would keep Sammy healthy went in his mouth, and the unhealthy things were thrown in the trash. The entire lesson on the Word of Wisdom—including prayers, music, and treats—was completed in record time. I no longer felt guilty and was able to return my focus to the lessons for the next day.

When I returned home Tuesday, the baby-sitter announced that she had decided to quit smoking. Then she told of how our daughters had gone out to her in the yard that day as she was smoking. They wrapped their arms around her and told her they loved her and that they didn't want her to die. Then they brought her into the house and gave her a little lesson with Sammy.

Wednesday night our baby-sitter had the children's version of the Book of Mormon in her hands as I walked through the door. She said she and the children had finished reading it that day. Although it was quite interesting, she knew there must be more to the story and asked if I had any other reading materials

I could share with her. I often wonder if people investigating the Church have any idea what they are getting into when they ask such a seemingly simple question. By the time my work assignment was finished on Friday, she had a stack of books and an appointment with the elders. A few months later she was baptized, and a year after that she was married in the temple. Not only is she now a member of the Church, but so are her children.

It all started with a young sister who followed the prompting to ask those in her Relief Society class to commit to having family home evening. The teacher moved out of our ward shortly after her lesson and likely never knew of the great impact her decision to follow a prompting of the Holy Ghost would make. I have shared with you only our story. Who knows how many other lives were touched because she was humble and allowed the Lord to lead her by the hand?

It is not always easy to follow the Lord's counsel and do what he asks of us. Even some of the greatest prophets the world has ever known experienced moments of hesitation, of self-doubt, and wondered if the Lord's requests were too difficult. When the Lord asked Enoch to preach the gospel among his people, Enoch replied, "I . . . am but a lad, and all the people hate me" (Moses 6:31). It was true. He was young, and the people really did not like him. But the Lord had chosen him and would be there at Enoch's side to lead and support him. Of course, we all know that because of Enoch's humility and willing heart, great miracles were accomplished with the people he taught.

Another prophet, Moses, felt totally overwhelmed by his calling to lead the children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt. "I am slow of speech," he said (Exodus 4:10). At that time Moses had been away from Egypt and, therefore, also away from the Egyptian and Hebrew languages for about 40 years. Anyone who has studied another language knows how difficult it would have been to regain fluency in a lan-

guage not used for a lengthy period of time. Keep in mind that the task was not to have a casual conversation but to convince a pharaoh to do something he didn't want to do and to lead thousands on the greatest exodus the world has ever known. Can we understand his hesitation? Certainly. But he let go of his fear and forged ahead on a seemingly impossible journey, trusting that the Lord would be there with him.

Nephi was one who seemed never to question the commandments of the Lord. There are many examples of his steadfastness, but one of my favorites is recorded after Lehi's group had wandered for years after leaving Jerusalem, experiencing hardships and heartache and finally ending up in the land of Bountiful. The Lord spoke to Nephi, telling him to construct a ship to carry all those who were with him across the waters.

Let's think about the context in which Nephi received this commandment. Nephi was raised in and near Jerusalem, a city in the mountains not near any major bodies of water. He spent eight years wandering in the wilderness. It is very possible that he had never even been in a boat before, and even more likely that he had no previous knowledge of shipbuilding. Add to that the fact that this commandment came more than 2,000 years before Columbus sailed to America. These people didn't know of the earth's shape or what was beyond what they could see. Certainly obedience would require extreme faith and a willingness to follow closely the counsel of the Lord. It would seem normal to hesitate or to question such a request, even if for only a moment. And yet listen to Nephi's first response to the Lord, as found in 1 Nephi 17:9: "Lord, whither shall I go that I may find ore to molten, that I may make tools to construct the ship?" In other words, how do I get started? He did not have to understand everything in order to be willing to obey. There must have been questions in his mind about where they were going, how it was

all going to work out, and why he was the one asked to lead the way. But there never seemed to be any question in his mind that the Lord would be at his side, helping him to do whatever was needed.

Nephi is a great example, and he established a mark of excellence toward which we can aim. We may not have as much courage or the depth of faith that he exemplified, but fortunately we don't have to be like Nephi—or like anyone else, for that matter. We are only asked to start where we are and then to keep trying. Alma 32:27 gives us direction on this: "Exercise a particle of faith, yea, even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you." We don't have to start out having it all together. The Lord only asks from us what we can give, but we are then expected to give that much. As we stretch and push ourselves, we grow—physically, emotionally, and, most important, spiritually. If we can just understand the importance of believing and then following, we will be blessed beyond our greatest imaginings.

Prophets of old are not the only ones to whom we can look to learn of believing and then doing. Ordinary people who act in extraordinary ways are all around us every day. One such example was Jose Mackintosh, the young elder and former BYU student who was murdered several weeks ago while he was serving in Russia. It is hard to imagine the heartbreak experienced by his family when they received word of his death. The attack was so senseless. There must have been some expectation that Jose would be protected as he was serving the Lord. Why did this young man, who gave to others so freely, have to die? I don't have the answer, and yet I know the Lord is aware of Jose and his family and is with them as they deal with this tragedy.

I had the opportunity to speak briefly with Jose's parents on the phone shortly after we at BYU learned of his death. What tremendous examples they are—humbly following the Lord

and inviting his care and keeping into their lives. What strength of character and solid grounding in the gospel has been exhibited by them. Reports are that, when told of the death of their son, the most pressing considerations of Brother and Sister Mackintosh related to the well-being of Jose's companion, Elder Borden; to expressions of forgiveness for his murderer; and to love and concern for the people of Russia.

Sister Janelle Jarvis, wife of Jose's mission president, Donald K. Jarvis (who, by the way, was a BYU faculty member), wrote these memories of Elder Mackintosh:

He was really a remarkable young man. His favorite word in Russian was smile! He set a goal to smile at all public transport workers. Some would smile back, and others would ask, "Why are you smiling?"

And he would answer, "Because I am happy."

He is remembered for saving 40 missionaries from starvation at the end of a four-hour zone conference. He took a Snickers bar out of his pocket, opened it, looked at it, then said to the elder on his left, "Do you want it?"

"Of course," was the answer. He repeated the procedure with a second Snickers bar, then a third, and so on until he had fed every missionary there. . . . He believed in hard work and loved Brigham Young's words: "If you work hard you'll be happy. If you don't, you'll go to hell." [E-mail submission to www.lds-gems.com, 12 November 1998]

Elder Mackintosh's story was widely publicized. On this campus, although rarely coming to the attention of many people, there are numerous others who are as choice and who are a positive influence in the lives of all those around them. This semester alone students have provided thousands of hours of service to other students, ranging from medical assistance to tutoring to reading textbooks onto audiotapes to planning and presenting campuswide activities. We know of the hours given in Church assignments in our student wards

and stakes. And thousands more are given as we extend to programs and individuals within the community. As we give of our time and talents, we are literally serving as the Lord's emissary to others in their times of need.

We must take responsibility for who we are and what we've become. Darryl, a relative of mine, shared with me the analogy of the orange. If you squeeze an orange, he says, you will get orange juice. It doesn't matter who squeezes it, where or when this is done, or what kind of implement is used. If you squeeze an orange, what comes out is orange juice. The same holds true for each of us. When the pressure is on—regardless of when, where, why, or who is inducing the pressure—all that can come out is what genuinely is inside of us. If we have learned to trust in the Lord, care about others, and sincerely want to do what is right, all that will be evident. If we have not worked at learning those things, our mistrust, selfish desires, or angry feelings will ultimately rule the outcome.

The early pioneers understood the necessary combination of humbling themselves, listening intently to God's will, doing all they could to follow it, and then allowing their Heavenly Father to support them in facing almost unthinkable challenges. Because of their deep trust that they were players in a glorious cause, they were able to face hardships with hearts that were thankful to a Father who would invite them to be a part of his plan. In Susan Arrington Madsen's book *Christmas—A Joyful Heritage*, recollections of the earliest days in the Salt Lake Valley are shared by some of the Saints who were there.

One example given by Sister Madsen is of a particularly memorable Christmas recorded by Mary Jane Perkins Wilson:

It was here at "Hole in The Rock" that we spent our first Christmas holidays. We children had no place only on the wagon wheels to hang our stockings. Nevertheless old St. Nicholas visited us with

*parched corn and some cookies that were baked in the dutch ovens. However everybody was happy. We spent most of the day gathering sagebrush to build fires at night to dance by. It was not of course on waxed floors, nor wearing various colored pumps, but it was on the sand rocks and some were barefooted. Brother Charles E. Walton was the orchestra. Sometimes he played the violin and other times the cornet. [In Susan Arrington Madsen, *Christmas—A Joyful Heritage* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1984), p. 6]*

It is refreshing to think of a time when people could experience great joy with only parched corn, a sagebrush fire, and an orchestra consisting of one man.

Another entry by Elizabeth Huffaker, reflecting back, said:

I remember our first Christmas in the Valley. We all worked as usual. The men gathered sagebrush, and some plowed; for though it had snowed, the ground was still soft, and the plows were used nearly the entire day. We celebrated the day on the Sabbath (Christmas was on Saturday), when all gathered around the flagpole in the center of the Fort, and there we held a meeting. And what a meeting it was. We sang praises to God, we all joined in the evening prayer, and the speaking that day has always been remembered. . . .

*. . . Many who were there for that first Christmas in the Valley later remarked that in the sense of perfect peace and good will, they never had a happier Christmas in all their lives. [Madsen, *Christmas*, p. 26]*

Their Christmas spirit was really the peace, comfort, and sense of well-being they felt from a Heavenly Father who knew they had done their part, that they had given their all—literally—to the furthering of the kingdom on earth. He blessed them, not with material rewards, but with gifts of the Spirit.

The last example I'll share is this tender memory of 1862 written by Hannah Dalton:

All of us children hung up our stockings Christmas eve. We jumped up early in the morning to see what Santa had brought, but there was not a thing in them. Mother wept bitterly. She went to her box and got a little apple and cut it in little tiny pieces and that was our Christmas. But, I have never forgotten how I loved her dear hands as she was cutting that apple. [Madsen, Christmas, p. 58]

How many dear hands have helped our lives be better, have reached out to us in our times of crisis, and have given us what we've needed? The Lord is often by our side by way of the service of others. Although they were obviously extremely difficult times, the Lord was there beside Hannah's mother to help her through her trials. And he was by Hannah, as well, touching her heart with feelings of love and gratitude—for a mother's hands and for the Christmas spirit. And he was with the Mackintoshes, so they could feel forgiveness toward others at a time when a son was lost. The Lord promised to be there to take us by the hand and answer our prayers.

I would like to share with you a very personal family story that happened almost 21 years ago. The day after Christmas in 1977, a little redheaded girl was born to our family. Although she came a few weeks early, she appeared to be healthy and happy, and we all loved her very much. When she was about two months old, she became quite ill and spent a few days at Primary Children's Hospital in the semi-intensive care unit. After some treatments and special medications, she improved enough for us to take her back home. But she never totally recovered. In fact, her condition worsened until we took her back to the hospital again a month and half later. This time she did not respond to the treatments, and a diagnosis of the problem was not readily evident. As her lungs began to fail, she was transferred to the intensive care unit, where, on a respirator, she gradually moved to 100% oxygen.

We were told this was an essential treatment for her at the time, but high doses of oxygen for an infant could in the long run result in blindness. Also, lack of adequate oxygen to the brain could cause some long-term brain damage. Because of the numerous blood tests required, a shunt was put into her tiny arm to facilitate the process. Again we were warned of potential problems. In fact, the very day the shunt was inserted, a nine-month-old baby in the same unit had his arm amputated because of a severe infection associated with the shunt he had received.

At first the doctors were optimistic, stating that there were many possible reasons for her condition and, as soon as they could identify the cause, appropriate treatment could be administered. Test results gave no useful information, and nothing seemed to help this little life that was slipping away from us. On a Saturday evening the doctors told us Holly had stabilized, and they suggested we go home and get some rest. If there was a problem, they would call us immediately. The dreaded call came during the very early hours the following morning. We were told that both of Holly's lungs had collapsed and that doctors would try to keep her alive until we arrived so that we could be with her as she died. We threw on our clothes and jumped in the car. On the way to the hospital I thought to myself, "This is one of those times when people bargain with the Lord for something they dearly want." But, try as I might, I couldn't think of anything I could offer that was a worthy trade for the life of my little daughter. So instead I prayed with all the energy I had that the Lord would help me handle whatever was to come.

Forever etched on my mind will be the scene inside the intensive care unit when we arrived of doctors holding the limp little girl in their arms, hand-pumping the oxygen that was keeping her alive. We asked if we could give her a blessing before taking her off the oxygen. Literally as soon as the *amen* was said, a lobe in

one of her lungs spontaneously inflated. It wasn't a lot, but it was enough. She had been given a little more time.

Unfortunately we still didn't know what was wrong with her. Our pediatrician, Stanley Child, was relentless as he began searching the medical journals until he read of a very rare condition that could be causing the problems. In order to make a definitive diagnosis, an angiogram was required—a very risky procedure for a child so young and so critically ill. There was a big chance that the angiogram could cause a stroke or, worse, death. Without a diagnosis, however, it was essentially guaranteed that she would die. After much discussion the cardiologist moved ahead with the procedure. The doctors did, in fact, discover the problem, and open-heart surgery was scheduled immediately. This was a dangerous operation under the best of circumstances, especially 21 years ago, and Holly was given very low odds of surviving.

Here is where I would like to make an important point. I tend to be an emotional person, and I can cry with little prompting. To face the probable death of my child would seem to be almost unbearable. And yet, as I sat in the waiting room of Primary Children's Hospital after the operation began, I felt calm and peaceful. In fact, I was the one who was offering reassuring words to the others who had come to be with us as we waited. At times I could feel the presence and strength and warmth of others behind me; but when I turned around, no one was there. Almost suddenly I understood. The Lord was answering my prayer to be able to handle whatever was to come. I was experiencing the gift of the Holy Ghost as a comforter.

In the operating room an incision was made from Holly's sternum around the left side of her chest to her backbone. The surgeon needed to reach into her tiny body with his adult male hands and reroute an artery that was only the size of a pencil lead. After a time we received word that all had gone well. The next challenge

was to take Holly off the heart/lung machine so that her heart could begin beating on its own once again. With great relief for all involved, she successfully made that transition. After several weeks she was strong enough to be taken home. Her little body had been paralyzed, she had no voice because of trauma to her vocal chords, and she weighed less than what she had at birth. The next months were challenging, but little by little she regained full strength.

In less than one month, on December 26, Holly will be 21 years old. She loves to play the piano with two hands, she sings with a lovely soprano voice, she has 20/20 vision, and she is an honor student. In high school her heart and lungs were strong enough for her to run track. There are not many around who are more energetic, fun loving, or who seem to enjoy more from life.

I often reflect back to that time and to doctors who listened and were guided to know how to best help our child. I think of friends and family who gave more to us during that difficult time than I could have imagined possible. And I can never deny the hand of a loving Heavenly Father who heard my prayer and gave me the strength I needed to handle the situation, both while Holly was in the hospital and during the time that followed. Obviously, I have shared with you an experience that turned out exactly the way I wanted.

Many things happen in our lives that do not have the result we would have desired. For example, Saturday I watched our women's volleyball team play for the WAC championship. I agreed with the sportscasters, who continuously commented on the excitement of the game and the tremendous poise and talent displayed. In one of the closest battles of volleyball history, BYU ended up with second place in the championship—not what they hoped for. But they were first place in the way they handled themselves and represented our university. Regardless of what disappointments may come our way or how challenges ultimately

turn out in this life, we can be supported through them and can use them as opportunities for growth.

In this last general conference, President Hinckley said:

Why are we such a happy people? It is because of our faith, the quiet assurance that abides in our hearts that our Father in Heaven, overseeing all, will look after His sons and daughters who walk before Him with love and appreciation and obedience. [“What Are People Asking About Us?” Ensign, November 1998, p. 72]

This is a time in the history of the world when great and marvelous things are happening—and happening at a pace never before known to man. The last days are truly upon us. W. Jeffrey Marsh, in his August 1998 *Ensign* article, cited Elder Joe. J. Christensen of the Presidency of the Seventy, who

pointed out that the quickest Adam and Eve could communicate or travel over long distances was by horse. Almost 6,000 years later, the fastest Joseph Smith could communicate or travel was by horse. No progress in travel in almost 6,000 years of history! But beginning with the Restoration, the Lord began to pour out his Spirit and unveil modern inventions that have enabled us to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. [W. Jeffrey Marsh, “Training from the Old Testament: Moroni’s Lessons for a Prophet,” Ensign, August 1998, p. 15]

In that same article Brother Marsh quoted Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, then of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, saying in general conference in 1926:

I do not believe for one moment that these discoveries have come by chance, or that they have come because of superior intelligence possessed by men today over those who lived in ages that are past. They have come and are coming because the time is

ripe, because the Lord has willed it, and because he has poured out his Spirit on all flesh. [CR, October 1926, p. 117]

Just in the time since I graduated from high school, more information has been produced than existed in the previous 5,000 years—and that amount of information is estimated to double every five years. It is impossible for us to learn all of that, let alone determine its value and worth. But it is there, available to us. If we are humble and seek the Lord’s guidance, he will help us to know how to access the tools we can use to do our part in furthering the kingdom. We are in a prime position to make a difference and to be guided in directions that will have the most positive influence. Let me quote President Hinckley from a California regional conference in 1995:

You can’t stop the work of the Lord from going forward. You can stop yourself from enjoying its blessings, but you cannot stop the work of the Lord from going forward. This is His work, and regardless of what we do individually, He will find a way to accomplish His eternal purpose. [Gordon B. Hinckley, from priesthood leadership meeting, Vacaville/Santa Rosa, California, Regional Conference, 20 May 1995, in “Messages of Inspiration from the Prophet,” Church News, 30 September 1995, p. 2]

The work of the Lord will go on with or without us. Evil, no matter how cleverly disguised, will not win out in the end. There will be no more floods to cleanse the earth. The next greatest worldwide event will be the return of our Lord and Savior. My prayer is that the work of the Lord will go on *with* each of us, that we will humble ourselves so that we can understand his will and then move ahead, trusting that he will be at our side. I leave these thoughts with you in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.