

“Brim with Joy” (Alma 26:11)

NEAL A. MAXWELL

What a delightful and moving musical presentation! Thank you so very much, choir, for blessing us all so abundantly with your talents. I am grateful, as always, to be privileged to stand at this pulpit.

Each time I have been anxious about rising to the occasion, as I am now. Even though President and Sister Bateman have been welcomed formally, I add my welcome as they assume their duties.

I am so grateful, as you will hear me say in the text of this speech, for a part of mortality that we sometimes overlook: the intertwinings of our lives. I acknowledge the Lord’s hand in these intersections. Some here have heard me say that one of the reasons we love each other in the kingdom is that our friendships are not friendships of initiation at all but are, instead, friendships of resumption!

I mention with regard to President and Sister Bateman several intersectings of our lives, beginning in 1975, when President Oaks asked if I would do what I could to influence Dr. Merrill Bateman to take a deanship at Brigham Young University. I found him in Europe, where he was traveling for an international corporation. I told him it was not a Church call, but that we would be blessed if

he would accept, which, happily, he did. He has been such a great friend ever since. Later, I was privileged to be with him and Sister Bateman several times in Japan as they presided over the Asia North Area, providing more intersectings of our lives. Then I watched him perform so well as Presiding Bishop of the Church. In the parlance of management, Merrill is a “quick study”; he does things so well, so quickly. He has the capacity to touch people deeply and quickly.

I am so grateful for these intertwinings of our lives. I could say the same with regard to Elder Eyring. The manner in which our lives have intersected has been such a great blessing to me, and it is likewise so with Bruce Hafen and with so many more. It is a marvelous thing when the Lord gives us these experiences, and, of course, you have them as well.

It should not surprise us, brothers and sisters, that Heavenly Father brings about these

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intersectings and intertwinings of our lives. So often (after something is over) we will say, “little did I realize” or “I had no way of knowing” in referring to these intersectings. But why should we be surprised? Each of us has circles of friendships, and within those lie the portion of the human family whom God has given us to love, to serve, and to learn from. Hence I feel so blessed to have learned from the Eyrings, the Batemans, the Hafens, and so many others who are here today—both on the stand and in the audience.

Within each of our circles of friendship there lie so many unused opportunities to love, to serve, and to be taught. Indeed, one could apply the scriptural phrase about there being “enough and to spare” (D&C 104:17). None of us ever fully utilizes the people-opportunities allocated to us within our circles of friendship. You and I may call these intersectings “coincidence.” This word is understandable for mortals to use, but *coincidence* is not an appropriate word to describe the workings of an omniscient God. He does not do things by “coincidence” but instead by “divine design.”

I am one who likes to know of happy ironies and happy intersectings. There are many intersectings, of course, that are not happy. I will mention an episode to you now of which you probably do not know, nor did I until recently.

In 1855 Abraham Lincoln, then a lawyer in Illinois, was asked to participate in a patent infringement case involving McCormick, of reaper fame. Lincoln had been given a \$400 retainer and was told he might actually argue the case, so he studied and went to Cincinnati for the trial. A lead lawyer in the case was a man named Edwin M. Stanton—a brilliant Pittsburgh lawyer—who said when Lincoln arrived, “Why did you bring that . . . long armed Ape here . . . ; he does not know any thing and can do you no good” (David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995], pp. 185–187). Lincoln stayed at

the same hotel as Stanton and the other attorneys, but he was never even asked to eat or to confer with them. Lincoln went home feeling insulted and “roughly handled by that man Stanton” (Donald, *Lincoln*, p. 187).

The years tumbled on, and later Stanton was to join the cabinet of the newly elected president, Abraham Lincoln. There were differences of views, of course, but Stanton came to deeply admire Abraham Lincoln. After the shooting of Lincoln, a few, including Stanton, stood mournfully by his bed as Lincoln was in the process of dying. When Lincoln died, Stanton, who had once described Lincoln as “an Ape,” paid tribute to his fallen chief:

With a slow and measured movement, [Stanton’s] right arm fully extended as if in a salute, he raised his hat and placed it for an instant on his head and then in the same deliberate manner removed it. “Now,” he said, “he belongs to the ages.” [Donald, Lincoln, p. 599]

Would that all rough relationships could have that kind of resolution and generous ending.

Now to my focus today, which will be on the joys and advantages of gospel living, including the place of intertwinings. The focus is on joy, brothers and sisters, because sometimes at your ages we may seem to emphasize the seemingly stern gospel requirements without consistently and helpfully identifying the joys, the blessings, and the advantages of gospel living—both here and now and in the there and then.

I do not mean to imply that the pursuit of all terrestrial objectives is useless and joyless. We can, in pursuing terrestrial objectives, have “joy for a season.” Some of the commandments of men, though lesser commandments, may, at times, be aligned with certain gospel values and principles. But keeping the commandments of men is not going to bring us a fullness of joy. In fact, we cannot expect to have a

fullness of joy in this life until, as the scriptures inform us, the body and spirit are “inseparably connected” (D&C 93:33). But we can still have much joy and much happiness in life. In fact, God is delighted when His children keep His commandments because then His children are truly happy! And He wants us to be happy. After all, His plan is called “the plan of happiness.” Conversely, on occasion, God weeps over the needless suffering of His children (see Moses 7:28, 32–33, 37).

The joys that might have been given to ancient Israel, for instance, evoked Jesus’ wrenching lamentation “O Jerusalem” (Matthew 23:37). He offered to ancient Israel more than they were prepared to claim; they were content to live far below their privileges.

As we speak of joy, it is important for us to realize what I recall reading somewhere: “God is serious about joy.” Joy is the essence of what He would have us experience.

I continue by asking you a rhetorical question: “What are you actually and specifically deprived of by serious gospel living?”

Ponder these several examples. By complying with the revealed Word of Wisdom, you are much more likely to be deprived of lung cancer, and surely deprived of becoming an alcoholic. You are much more likely to miss out on AIDS if you keep the seventh commandment and refuse to use drugs.

Before you die, my young brothers and sisters, you will thank Heavenly Father many times for the advantages of abstinence! Regarding certain destructive things, abstinence is so much easier than moderation! Meanwhile, you will see those about you who are surfing life’s pleasures indulgently. They will eventually crash against the reefs of reality.

By responding to the strong gospel emphasis on education, you will also be deprived of being ignorant.

You will be deprived of that large dose of human despair that “cometh because of iniquity” (Moroni 10:22). You will also miss out on

the exhausting and finally futile calisthenics of trying to mold a meaningful morality by using the Play-Doh of permissiveness. It just won’t work!

Yes, you will be tested and puzzled, but because of your faith in God’s plan of salvation, you will thereby be deprived of cynicism, that corrosive emotion that relentlessly expresses itself in a hundred different ways. By having faith in Heavenly Father’s plan of salvation, you will be inspired not only to keep the law of chastity, but you will be able to cope with adversity.

Obviously, you could easily add many more examples of what may for the moment seem to be deprivations that are actually great benefactions, greater than you can now fully appreciate!

I depart from my text to give you an example of the blessings that flow from simple faith in the plan of salvation. About three and a half years ago a young mother, Vicki Nichols, came to my office. Something I had written had apparently helped her, and she wondered if she could visit. As the conversation began, she told me that her husband had recently died of a brain tumor, leaving her with four children. I began to bestow expressions of sympathy, but she, being strong, said, “Brother Maxwell, I am handling that, but I just learned that I, too, have cancer, and I wonder what is going to happen to our four precious children.” She is a woman of great faith, strong intellectually, strong spiritually! Sister Maxwell and I felt it a great privilege to be in touch with her from time to time in the intervening several years during which the Lord gave Vicki some prolongation of her time for the nurturing and preparation of those four children. Several days before she died, I called her in Spokane. By now her voice was very weak. She said something like, “You will understand how wrenching the prospect is of my leaving the four children,” expressing the kind of feelings that only a loving mother could have. However,

because she understands the plan of salvation, Vicki said, “Brother Maxwell, can I tell you something? I am so torn at the prospect of prolonged separation from my children, but I want you to know that, nevertheless, I have a sense of anticipation about going through the veil of death.” It was a privilege to speak a few days later at Vicki’s funeral. The oldest of her children, Traci, is about sixteen, a wonderful daughter. As related to and remembered by me, soon after Vicki died, the oldest daughter gathered together her three siblings and they talked about their mother and the gospel’s plan of salvation. What a simple, yet powerful act of faith!

There is no adversity that can set aside God’s plan of salvation. It is an immense blessing to know about the plan, to believe in it, and to have faith in it.

The advantages of abstention have been referred to already. Consider, however, the devout Jewish rabbi, Harold Kushner, who was once chided because he abstained from eating pork. He turned the tables on his enquirers and said, “Isn’t it incredible? There are five billion people on this planet, and God cares what I have for lunch” (Rabbi Harold S. Kushner, “The Human Soul’s Quest for God,” *Brigham Young Magazine*, February 1995, p. 26). With your knowledge of the expansive plan of salvation, you could say, “Yes, the God of ‘worlds without number’ cares about what each of us on this tiny planet says and does, including how we treat our parents, our friends, and our roommates.”

A major point about joy is that joy is obviously of a higher order than mere pleasure. Pleasure is perishable. It has a short shelf life. Mere pleasure is not lasting because it is constantly feeding on itself. Thus the appetites of the natural man, though frequently fed, are never filled. For instance, even as gluttony digests its latest glob, it begins anticipating its next meal. The same pattern prevails with regard to the praise of men, to lust, and to

greed. Strange as it seems, so far as the carnal pleasures are concerned, the very act of their consumption insures the cancellation of their satisfactions. They just do not last!

Joy, on the other hand, is lasting. It involves the things that really matter, such as being forgiven and forgiving another. One true test of ultimate value has to do with whether or not something is lasting. Of so many human endeavors, even those celebrated with great excitement, the child’s question in one of Southey’s poems stands as a stark reminder: “But what good came of it at last?” (Robert Southey, *The Battle of Blenheim* [1798], st. 11). This criterion is not one to which the things of the flesh can successfully respond.

The carnal pleasures cannot finally deliver. In fact, there is a scripture in the Book of Mormon declaring that the adversary lets his followers down at the last day (see Alma 30:60). He can’t finally deliver. It is Jesus who is the Great Deliverer!

No wonder, therefore, the pleasurable things of the day and the things of the moment—such as having political power and social sway—are so fleeting. They are unrelated to true joy and to the everlasting things. Mere popularity, for instance, is not only transitory, it can also be dangerous. Wise President N. Eldon Tanner cautioned us, “This craving for praise and popularity too often controls actions, and as [people] succumb they find themselves bending their character when they think they are only taking a bow” (N. Eldon Tanner, “For They Loved the Praise of Men More Than the Praise of God,” *Ensign*, November 1975, p. 76). A wise and special man!

Sometimes, therefore, it is wrong to belong:

Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on [Christ]; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue:

For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. [John 12:42–43]

The synagogue, of course, is a metaphor for any lesser, mortal belonging that can divert or dilute our efforts, first of all, to build up the kingdom of God (see JST, Matthew 6:38).

I like the way Malcolm Muggeridge spoke of his changing perspective:

*Now, the prospect of death overshadows all others. I am like a man on a sea voyage nearing his destination. When I embarked I worried about having a cabin with a porthole, [and] whether I should be asked to sit at the captain's table, who were the more attractive and important passengers. All such considerations become pointless [because now] I shall soon be disembarking. [Malcolm Muggeridge, *Things Past*, ed. Ian Hunter (New York: Morrow, 1979), p. 166]*

One of the great blessings the gospel gives us is the lens through which we can see with proportion. Special perspective comes from the marvelous and overarching principles of the gospel.

For some reason, the last month or so, my mind has turned to a colleague of many years ago at the University of Utah. Dr. Reed Merrill was a distinguished educational psychologist. He had, for instance, done pioneering work in establishing the process of licensure associated with clinical psychology, as well as important work in educational psychology. However, he had been inactive in the Church and inattentive to spiritual things, though a good person. Then, in the early 1980s he was stirred spiritually by the Lord. I could see it when he came to visit me twice. He wrote two powerful letters regarding the comparative emptiness of his secular discipline with the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. These observations meant a lot because they came from a man of unquestioned intellect and integrity. Other catalytic things were happening, unbeknownst to

me, including his daughter's service on a mission, to say nothing of a wonderful wife.

Reed called me sometime before his daughter's sealing, asking if I would perform her sealing. I said, "I would be delighted." I think I had an intervening trip overseas, but asked, "Reed, will you be there?"

With his typical integrity, he said, "Neal, you know me well enough to know I won't be there unless I am fully worthy to be there." When the morning came for the sealing in the Salt Lake Temple, I waited with particular anticipation. Then Reed came down the corridor of the temple. We embraced, and he said, "Neal, I made it!" He had come home! Subsequently, he taught in his high priests group and in various classes. It was a spiritual renaissance in his life, a marvelous thing to see. How wonderful it is when anybody comes home!

Yesterday, when I reviewed my handwritten notes used ten years ago at Reed's funeral, they included words of gratitude for what I called, even back then, "the intersections of our lives"—Reed's and mine. The most important thing to be said about Reed Merrill when he departed from this life was that he exited "in spiritual crescendo." Such things bring joy!

Some of what has preceded has been related to the natural human desire you and I have to belong and to have people notice and care. My plea is not to downplay that basic fundamental need, because it is there for a reason. Instead, I ask you to distinguish between belonging in a proximate way and belonging in an ultimate way. One can, for instance, belong to a churning, changing group in an airport transit lounge. Yet this is not belonging. One can, instead, begin to sense that he or she belongs to God and that we are part of something that is very, very special and very, very large. This is another great blessing that comes from the gospel that gives us perspective.

If you and I were left, instead, to draw conclusions or generalizations from our small,

personal databases, we would not be very wise. But we can access the divine database through the scriptures and prophetic utterances, acquiring perspective about “things as they really are” (Jacob 4:13). Otherwise, our generalizations won’t be worth much more than the one I encountered years ago: “All Indians walk single file, at least the one I saw did!” We can end up being so provincial and so parochial. I love these lines from G. K. Chesterton, the brilliant Catholic writer:

How much larger your life would be if [you] could become smaller in it. . . . You would begin to be interested in [others]. You would break out of this tiny . . . theatre in which your own little plot is always being played, and you would find yourself under a freer sky, in a street full of splendid strangers. [G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1959), pp. 20–21]

The gospel tells us who those “splendid strangers” are. It gives us a sense not only of the immensity and the vastness of God’s work, but also of the great personalness of His work as well.

Since a real sense of belonging does matter, one of the great things you and I can do for family and friends is to contribute regularly to their storehouses of self-esteem by giving deserved and specific commendations and encouragement.

Another thing we can do when we see the chaff in the lives of friends (as compared with the worthy kernel of their characters) is, “with the breath of kindness,” blow the chaff away.

What is interesting is that joy has a way of renewing itself, and the ripple effects of joy are constant and ever emanating; joy has a momentum of its own.

Another great advantage of joy, contrasted with pleasure, is that joy overrides routine, which, otherwise, could make us bored. We don’t know, for instance, how many times Heavenly Father has been through the plan of

salvation before with other of His children elsewhere before our particular sequence on this planet. God even hints at the repetitiveness of His redemption when He says, “[My] course is one eternal round” (see 1 Nephi 10:19; Alma 7:20; D&C 3:2). Yet God is never bored by what might seem mere routine. Why? Because of His perfect love for His children! What He calls “my work and my glory” brings abundant and pure joy! (see Moses 1:39).

Therefore, because God loves us, He seeks with such vigor and long-suffering to separate us from our sins, which He hates! This process of separation is one reason why much of the pain and suffering must be borne, a necessary thing if we would share in His ultimate joy.

A fascinating thing about joy and love, with which you are surely familiar, is that when we enlarge our capacity to love, other people become real individuals, not merely functions. Gospel duties cease to be mere routine and become, instead, doors to delight. Every doctrine of the gospel is a door to delight that, when opened, exposes us to a vista of things we have not yet fully comprehended.

I love Brigham Young and am grateful this university bears his name. Hear what he says about love:

There is one virtue, attribute, or principle, which, if cherished and practised by the Saints, would prove salvation to thousands upon thousands. I allude to charity, or love, from which proceed forgiveness, long-suffering, kindness, and patience. [JD 7:133–34]

A marvelous insight!

Charity initiates and sustains all the other spiritual qualities in much the same way that courage sustains these qualities at the testing point.

There was a time, however, in the earlier life of Brigham Young, when he was not so insightful or articulate. Before he joined the

Church, being untouched by the restored gospel, Brigham was apparently somewhat discouraged about life. As a young man he disapproved of much of what he saw in the world; he wondered what life held for him. Then his loving brother, Phineas, gave Brigham some prescient counsel: "Hang on, [Brigham], for I know the Lord is agoing to do something for us" (sermon of Heber C. Kimball in minutes, 8 January 1845, Brigham Young Papers, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). Did he ever! The rest is Moses-like history!

In the process of his personal development, Brigham had to be patient and submissive. As a result, he harvested and then gave to us so many insights, some of which are stunning, including the one I shall now read, as if he were speaking to each of us here today:

When the Latter-day Saints make up their minds to endure, for the kingdom of God's sake, whatsoever shall come, whether poverty or riches, whether sickness or to be driven by mobs, they will say it is all right, and [they] will honor the hand of the Lord in it, and in all things, and serve Him to the end of their lives, according to the best of their ability. . . . If you have not made up your minds for this, the quicker you do so the better. [JD 1:338; emphasis added]

You can see Brigham's soul enlarged "without hypocrisy" and his intellectual and spiritual stretching in the powerful insights he shared so generously with us. Brigham Young's joy was not at the mercy of men or circumstance. Likewise, you and I need to be able to utter those words "it is all right." Even when we are confronted with things we cannot fully understand, we can know that God does understand and that He loves us. Brigham's example helps us to appreciate the need not to be too much at the mercy of our moods or too much at the mercy of circumstances.

Another thing about joy: Joy not only helps us do our gospel duties but it increases our individuality. It is sinners who reflect such a stale sameness. Righteousness lends itself to individuality. Think, in contrast, of poor Lemuel, who "hearkened unto the words of Laman" (1 Nephi 3:28). He was Laman's satellite. One wonders if poor Lemuel ever had any thoughts of his own.

As we see righteousness in someone like Brigham Young or Eliza Snow, then we see a flowering of individuality and an immense use of talents and integrity. But we have to be patient and educate our desires. As President Joseph F. Smith counseled:

God's ways of educating our desires are, of course, always the most perfect. . . . And what is God's way? Everywhere in nature we are taught the lessons of patience and waiting. We want things a long time before we get them, and the fact that we wanted them a long time makes them all the more precious when they come. In nature we have our seedtime and harvest; and if children were taught that the desires that they sow may be reaped by and by through patience and labor, they will learn to appreciate whenever a long-looked-for goal has been reached. Nature resists us and keeps admonishing us to wait; indeed, we are compelled to wait. [GD, pp. 297-98]

Our patience, brothers and sisters, is the flip side of God's long-suffering. The more our desires, therefore, become like the Lord's, the greater will be our joy.

We will also avoid the problem Paul cited of members who fainted in their minds and who grew weary. We have a special promise concerning how to avoid getting weary intellectually. The Doctrine and Covenants says if we are faithful and if we will share the gospel, we "shall not be weary in mind" (D&C 84:80). What a great blessing! We avoid weariness. We avoid boredom. These are more of the many advantages of the gospel.

When Nephi was reactivating people, he was commended for his unwearyingness (see Helaman 10:4). But his unwearyingness reflected the joy he had in the significant labor he was performing. As Nephi regenerated others, he renewed himself! Likewise, when you and I extend genuine empathy to someone else, we are emancipated from the full weight of our own cares. Then our souls, too, are enlarged without hypocrisy. Heavenly Father is anxious to give us “all” that He has. He delights to honor His commandment keepers, but He can only give us blessings based upon our obedience to the principles upon which they are predicated.

One way of looking at the “thou shalt not” commandments, therefore, is that these are prohibitions which help us avoid misery by turning us away from that which is wrong. Once we become settled in terms of the direction in which we face, and once the telestial sins are left behind, the focus then falls upon the sins of omission. Committing these robs us of joy.

Our Heavenly Father accentuates the development of what are presently neglected taste buds of our souls. Just as important are the taste buds that have been burned over by sin. He desires that we regenerate these, because they will give us joy.

Another thing God does is emancipate us from our provinciality, as noted earlier. Then, to use the prophetic words of scripture, we come to consider things that we “never considered” before (D&C 101:94). This emancipation gives us perspective.

I have often tried to describe, though feeling inarticulate, how the gospel creates excitement in us. In that connection may I share this attempt with you?

No wonder, given its intellectual expansiveness, we are still inventorying the harvest basket of the Restoration! Having dashed about the wonder-filled landscape of the Restoration, exclaiming and

observing, it should not surprise us if some of our first impressions prove to be more childish than definitive. Brushing against such tall timber, the scent of pine is inevitably upon us. Our pockets are filled with souvenir cones and colorful rocks, and we are filled with childish glee. There is no way to grasp it all. Little wonder some of us mistake a particular tree for the whole of the forest, or that in our exclamations there are some unintended exaggerations. We have seen far too much to describe. Indeed, we “cannot say the smallest part which [we] feel” (Alma 26:16).

Such is my inadequate way of saying to you how I feel about the excitement and the expansiveness of the gospel and the joy that it brings, especially when individuals are becoming the men and women of Christ. You are in that process. Heavenly Father doesn’t want us, as His spirit sons and daughters, to be mere automatons, dutifully jumping over what seem to be arbitrary hurdles. Instead, He wants us, His children, being empowered to choose for ourselves, to choose joy instead of misery.

Joy will come in a thousand ways—when we see a relationship mended or enriched as between spouses and siblings and friends. The apostle John understood all this and wrote, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth” (3 John 1:4). Children who walk in truth can access the Spirit; they can receive personal revelation.

In closing I tell you of an experience illustrative of the principle just noted, as I recall its being described to me. In 3 Nephi 26:14, meek Jesus, the Resurrected Lord of the Universe, lets children teach their parents greater things than He, Jesus, had taught their parents. This occurred through the process of revelation. It is a verse that I hope you will read.

Around a year ago, Dan and Nan Barker in Arizona, who had been blessed to adopt four children, had their three-year-old boy say,

“Mommy, there’s another little girl who is supposed to come to our family.”

The mother said, in effect, “We’re already so blessed to have all of you.”

The boy continued, “She has dark hair and dark eyes. And she lives a long way from here.”

The mother asked, “How do you know this?”

To which the boy replied, “Jesus told me, upstairs.”

To which the mother said, “We don’t have any upstairs.”

The parents, being taught by the child, got in touch with an international adoption agency. Several months ago, Sister Maxwell and I were privileged to be in the sealing room of the Salt Lake Temple. There, sealed to Nan and Dan Barker, was a little girl with dark hair and dark eyes from Kazakhstan in the former Soviet Union.

Revelation is one of the great realities of gospel living, and it is so productive of joy.

For so many reasons, therefore, I am not surprised that Brigham Young would say, “If you want to enjoy exquisitely, become a Latter-day Saint, and then live the doctrine of Jesus Christ” (*JD* 18:247).

The phrase “alive in Christ” describes individuals whose aliveness is enhanced by their righteousness. We are the most joyful when we are the most alive. And Jesus, because He was the most empathic, most loving, most

forgiving, and the most appreciative individual to ever live on this planet, has a perfect fullness of joy. No wonder He instructs us, “What manner of men [and women] ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am” (3 Nephi 27:27). He wants us to have great joy. No wonder, too, His lamentation “O Jerusalem” was so stark and sad.

When we reach a point of consecration, our afflictions will be swallowed up in the joy of Christ. It does not mean we won’t have afflictions, but they will be put in a perspective that permits us to deal with them. With our steady pursuit of joy and with each increasing measure of righteousness, we will experience one more drop of delight—one drop after another—until, in the words of a prophet, our hearts are “brim with joy” (*Alma* 26:11). At last, the soul’s cup finally runs over!

May you be sufficiently committed to be “alive in Christ,” even in the turbulent last days in which you will live. For, indeed, whatsoever afflictions you may have, they can be “swallowed up in the joy of Christ” (*Alma* 31:38). Then you will be able to say with Brigham Young, even though things perplex and vex you even beyond your capacity to resolve them at times, “It is all right.” Thereby you will be acknowledging the hand of God. For His hand is a loving hand, stretched out to love and to lead us, if we will, into a fullness of joy. Of this joy that awaits us, I testify in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen!