



**Carstairs-Bancroft United Church**  
July 30, 2021  
**DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT**  
**DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**  
**By Rev. Maria Szabone Berces**



Source: time.com

Beloved Carstairs Bancroft United Church Members,

I believe we can all agree that the past eighteen months have been challenging, the least to say. We are tired of the uncertainties, changes, and losses that the pandemic caused. On top of it we suffer from the extreme weather situation that the global warming triggered throughout this planet. We are swayed by extreme droughts, wild-fires in our part of the world, causing poor crops for agriculture. At the same time, we can hear about floods and hurricanes at other places.

It is easy to lose heart and think that we are unaided in such immense trials. **These burdens are too heavy to carry alone.** This is why so many experiences mental health issues, and turns to drugs and other addictive 'stuff'. They numb the anxiety and distract attention from the painful reality, at least for a while. But then they turn into quicksand.

How can we keep sanity and integrity then in all these circumstances? There is a geological term "*liquefaction*", which is used in modern sociology. It means that what we thought to be solid, it's not any longer, due to cultural shift, political, and economic changes. For those generations and individuals who don't have a trusting, personal relationship with the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer God it is just too much to handle. **These burdens are too heavy to carry alone.**

But **the good news is** that we don't have to wrestle with any of these alone. As the New Creed of the United Church of Canada puts it: "*We are not alone, we live in God's world. We believe in God: who has created and is creating ... In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone.*"

We belong. We are offered a place in God's family, where the Almighty has both the means and affection to provide for us. Throughout the history a great number of people – including Moses and the Israelites – witnessed this care and protection.

Yes, we need a 'leap in faith' to open ourselves to this insight. But in my experience, it is the faith in God's providence and provision that can carry us through in difficult life situations, and not losing the ground beneath us; not giving in to the "*liquefaction*" of our times.

We may gain encouragement from one another as we share how and in what situations we actually "**saw how the Lord [our] God carried [us], as a father carries his son.**" (Deuteronomy 1:31) Because last Sunday's Psalm has been valid not just this week, but always: "**The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.**" (Psalm 145:18)

Grace and Peace to You All,  
Rev. Maria



## God Carries Us

*There you saw how the Lord your God carried you, as a father carries his son,  
all the way you went until you reached this place.*

Deuteronomy 1:31

### READ Deuteronomy 1:26–31

In 2019, Hurricane Dorian overwhelmed the islands of the Bahamas with intense rain, wind, and flooding—the worst natural disaster in the country’s history. As he sheltered at home with his adult son who has cerebral palsy, Brent knew they needed to leave. Even though Brent is blind, he had to save his son. Tenderly, he placed him over his shoulders and stepped into chin-deep water to carry him to safety.

If an earthly father facing a great obstacle is eager to help his son, think of how much more our heavenly Father is concerned about His children. In the Old Testament, Moses recalled how God carried His people even as they experienced the danger of faltering faith. He reminded the Israelites of how God had delivered them, providing food and water in the desert, fighting against their enemies, and guiding the Israelites with pillars of cloud and fire. Meditating on the many ways God acted on their behalf, Moses said, “There you saw how the Lord your God carried you, as a father carries his son” (Deuteronomy 1:31).

The Israelites’ journey through the wilderness wasn’t easy, and their faith waned at times. But it was full of evidence of God’s protection and provision. The image of a father carrying a son—tenderly, courageously, confidently—is a wonderful picture of how God cared for Israel. Even when we face challenges that test our faith, we can remember that God’s there carrying us through them. – By **Karen Pimpo**

### REFLECT & PRAY

**Loving God, help me remember that You carry me, even when I don’t feel it. Thank You for Your strength and compassion. Amen.**

In what ways have you seen God’s provision and protection in your life? How can you face difficulties knowing that God carries you tenderly and confidently?

### SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

As the Israelites in their wilderness wanderings were reminded in Deuteronomy 1:26–31—and repeatedly throughout the Bible—God is a forgiving God, “gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love” (Nehemiah 9:17; Joel 2:13; see Psalm 86:15). We first see these words uttered to Moses when He received the second set of stone tablets from God on Mount Sinai after the Israelites rebelled by building a golden calf and worshiping it (Exodus 34:1–7; see chapter 32). Despite their grievous sin, whenever the Israelites, God’s people, repented of their sins and turned back to God, He graciously and lovingly forgave them and brought them back into fellowship with Him. – By **Alyson Kieda**

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