

*Come, Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

“And his banner over me is love.” This was the quotation, which appeared at the bottom of Duncan’s and my wedding announcement -- yes, wedding announcement, Pilgrim. It is with great joy, excitement, and humility that in your day’s letter I am able to make this proclamation, for as of today, we’ve been married almost three months.

But wait a minute, Pilgrim, is it hard to keep up with my world? Well, it sure is for me! Your letters were written over a ten-year period -- some daily, while others weekly or monthly or whenever the Spirit seemed to move on my soul. In that expanse of time, we’ve shared sunrises and sunsets, birthings of babies, deaths of friends, lakes and oceans, tender times, trying times, happy times, sad times. We’ve gone through a campaign season, Christmas seasons, Lenten seasons, Easter seasons. We’ve traveled to foreign lands. We’ve climbed mountains and walked through some valleys, including a house fire.

You learned of the sad reality of my divorce after 29 years of marriage and today I drop the celebration proclamation of my recent marriage. The speed with which these events are shared must seem totally contrary to soap opera time. I remember occasionally watching a soap during my college days. Why, you could miss a week and it didn’t matter, for in

just one viewing you could catch up with what had happened, whereas if you miss a day or two of your letters, you could miss years.

But guess what, Pilgrim? It doesn't matter. Each letter hopefully hangs on its own and it's not about me and my world as much as hopefully it is about our Father God and how he is actively involved with each one of us. I pray that some of my experiences remind you of some of your own experiences for our Father God is in a uniquely personal relationship with each one of us. The best thing that could come out of these letters is hopefully a little encouragement for your daily walk, plus that you could pick up your pen and paper and record your own story -- the most important one of all -- the love story between your Father God and you. What a priceless inheritance to give, more valuable than any other. As Christians, may we each proclaim "our God reigns -- actively."

Last week my husband Duncan and I began attending a weekly Bible study at our church. Its theme was huge -- God -- that's right -- God. Its hugeness became less daunting as a result of our breaking into smaller discussion groups where each person was allowed to share his or her personal understanding of, and relationship with, God.

The sweetness of the sharing profoundly touched me. This week's topic is Jesus -- ah, our Father God's love fleshed out. I look forward to the class and once more the telling of the individual stories. I remembered a list of names of God at my

old church in Alabama. We faxed back and forth and received this list. Please forgive me, Pilgrim, if my Hebrew pronunciation is wrong.

El Shaddai - The All-sufficient One

El Elyon - The Most High God

Elohim - Creator

Jehovah Nissi - The Lord My Banner

Jehovah Jireh - The Lord Will Provide

Jehovah Shalom - The Lord is My Peace

Jehovah Sabaoth - The Lord of Hosts

Adoni - Lord, Master

I Am That I Am

Yahweh

Lord Jehovah

El Olam - The Everlasting God

Anna - Jealous

Jehovah Rohi - The Lord My Shepherd

Jehovah Rophe - The Lord That Healeth

Jehovah Shammah - The Lord is There

Jehovah Tsidkenu - The Lord Our Righteousness

Jehovah M'Kaddesh - The Lord Who Sanctifies Us

Have you, Pilgrim, experienced some of these aspects of God's nature? I don't believe in our lifetime any of us can experience all for as Paul said, we look through a darkened glass and it would only be on the other side of eternity that we will know the fullness of God's nature. It would be just too

much to comprehend on this side. Why, we'd have to walk around barefooted like Moses did when he encountered and became aware of God's presence. (Maybe that's why the children at my old church in Alabama go barefooted. Maybe they realize the holiness of the ground upon which they walk.) Hmm! Do we all need to take off our shoes more often? Just a thought!

When I read over this list of God's name, I smile to myself and can affirm "yes," for by His grace, I have experienced some of these aspects of God's nature. At this particular time and place and space, I am most aware of Jehovah Nissi "The Lord My Banner."

This lyrical love exchange in Song of Songs became very important to me during the devastating season of divorce. Such an experience can shake every fiber of your being; such a heart rife can send out shock waves stronger than on the Richter scale. Hopefully, Pilgrim, you've not had to walk this trial of tears, but if not this particular sorrow, I'm sure you've experienced, or are experiencing, a brokenness of heart of some sort. It seems to be part of our human condition. What I found with the shakedown was the rock solid assurance of Our Father God's love. When all else fails, his love stands. We are our Father God's beloved, each one of us, individually -- His Beloved. Do you hear that, Pilgrim?

On those hard days, low days, challenging days, may I recommend that you stop whatever you're doing, crawl up into

a comfortable chair, preferably one which seems to embrace you so that you can sense your Father God's loving embrace and then read out loud the whole book of Song of Songs. Let the words bathe you with God's love -- hear them, feast on them, absorb them.

"And his banner over me is love." Do you hear the sweetness, the tenderness, the comfortableness, the gentleness, the kindness, the protectiveness? There seems to be a freeing but bounded lightness fostered in such an environment. Those words make me want to sing and celebrate and so does the fact that I am now Mrs. Duncan John MacLeod - hmm - "MacLeod" - that's a "banner over me" type name, wouldn't you say?

As to our love story, Duncan's and mine, I'm afraid you'll just have to wait till your next letter to hear, but I promise it is worth the wait! In God's perfect timing,

I am your sister in Christ,

Lucy