

Toward a certain future

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Published in *The Christian Science Journal*. February, 2002, p. 5



Earthquake.
Terrorist attack.
Major catastrophes.
When these happen, people often begin to question where the world is heading.

Speculation and fear about the future can give rise to predictions of impending doom. In this seedbed of uncertainty, rumors about such things can gain credence.

I well remember such a time – years ago – when I was living in Adelaide, the capital city of South Australia. A rumor, based on the predictions of the 16th-century French doctor and astrologist Nostradamus, began to circulate. The rumor was that on a certain date, at a certain time, the entire city would be struck by an immense tidal wave.

It sounded crazy. And I thought no one would believe it. But to my amazement, the rumor spread. People cited world calamities that had “come true” in keeping with similar prophecies by this and other visionaries. People even argued that the city’s doom had been prophesied in the Biblical books of Daniel and Revelation. Some people believed the tidal-wave prediction so strongly that they scheduled trips out of town for that date, or actually sold their homes.

Although I never believed the rumor, I found the constant media reports, radio talk-show discussions, and endless, casual speculation very unsettling. I decided to pray. I started with what I understood to be true about God, making a list sort of like this:

1. God is Love. He cares for me. My loving Father-Mother isn’t out to destroy me. He loves me.
2. God is the only creator. He doesn’t forecast an end to His creation. He isn’t going to take away my life and happiness. That’s why I don’t have to be disturbed by predictions of doom.
3. God is good. God has only good planned for me. Even if God *were* in the business of making predictions about my future, they would be all good. They would never involve anything bad.
4. God is Life. So Life is eternal. Life is indestructible. This means that my health and well-being are constant – the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Then I thought about my community. Here, I prayed: “Dear Father-Mother, You are here, assuring us that all is well. Your tender presence is comforting and strengthening everyone. Your love is destroying fear. Help each one of us feel Your peace and calmness. Help me and everyone else know that we’re safe in Your care. There is no end to our lives, nor to the good You are providing and preparing.”

As the rumour continued toward its climax, I prayed for calm in the city. Then the day in question came. The State Premier, accompanied by some members of parliament and several of the city's business leaders, went to the seaside suburb of Glenelg. They wanted to prove that there was nothing to fear. They wanted to show that they didn't believe the rumor.



As the clock ticked down for the arrival of the predicted tidal wave, the officials and business leaders walked to the very end of Glenelg Jetty. Calmly and resolutely, they faced the sea.

The time arrived. The sea gulls circled overhead. The waves lapped gently against the old wooden piers. The sun continued to shine. Nothing happened. The moment passed. Another unfulfilled prediction of doom was relegated to the wastepaper bin of history.

Now, whenever I hear speculation or rumors that the world will end, I remember this incident. It gives me good reason not to join in all the speculation – and not to be afraid. I remind myself of God's unending love for everyone else and for me. Good is forever. It's what lies ahead. This is the truth. And it will be as true tomorrow as it is today.

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