

# Diving into Deep Waters

The late Paul Harvey, radio broadcaster for ABC radio networks whose programs reached as many as 24 million people a week, told the story of Ray Blankenship preparing his breakfast and gazing out the window.

Suddenly, he saw a small girl being swept along in the rain-flooded drainage ditch beside his Andover, Ohio, home. Blankenship knew that farther downstream the ditch disappeared with a roar underneath a road and then emptied into the main culvert.

Blankenship dashed out the door and raced along the ditch, trying to get ahead of the floundering child. Then he hurled himself into the deep, churning water. Blankenship surfaced and was able to grab the child's arm. They tumbled end over end.

Within three feet of the yawning culvert, Blankenship's free hand felt something protruding from one bank. He clung desperately, but the tremendous force of the water tried to tear him and the child away. "If I can just hang on until help comes," he thought.

He did better than that. By the time the fire-department rescuers arrived, Blankenship had pulled the girl to safety. Both were treated for shock.

On April 12, 1989, Ray Blankenship was awarded the Coast Guard's Silver Lifesaving Medal. The award is fitting, for this selfless person was at even greater risk to himself than most people knew. Ray Blankenship can't swim.



That is a powerful story of courage and sacrifice, putting his own life at risk.

In many respects, we are like Ray Blankenship. We are jumping out into the deep waters without certain knowledge of how to swim. For some, that's reason enough to go back to the shore.

But we need to understand that is exactly where God wants us to be: in the middle of deep water, amidst the swift currents of our culture, doing a new thing for God and the people we are called to serve – something we may never have done before.

Let us step forward in faith and confidence, recognizing that God never calls His servants to a work we cannot accomplish for He has given each of us the necessary talents.

Be of good courage, even in the deep water.

*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13 NKJV).*

– Beecher Hunter