
QUARTERLY UPDATE FROM THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION

“It shall be the duty of the Committee on Publication to correct in a Christian manner impositions on the public in regard to Christian Science, injustices done Mrs. Eddy or members of this Church by the daily press, by periodicals or circulated literature of any sort.” Church Manual, Article XXXIII, Section 2

Message From the Committee on Publication Manager’s office

Mary Baker Eddy wrote: “Jesus loved little children because of their freedom from wrong and their receptiveness of right. While age is halting between two opinions or battling with false beliefs, youth makes easy and rapid strides towards Truth” (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 236:28).

That natural receptiveness to Truth is something many of us pray to see in ourselves, regardless of age. It’s also something we pray to see in those with whom Committees on Publication communicate about Christian Science, which often includes students.

Ranging from elementary school to graduate school, we regularly hear from students who have a research project or paper that includes or focuses on Christian Science. They often share a list of questions for Committees to answer that cover a variety of topics, such as: faith and the power of prayer; the level of importance Christian Scientists place on the Bible and Christ Jesus; how we understand concepts like reality, heaven, hell, and sin; our approach to illness, suffering, and medical treatment.

It is a joy to give each request the diligent prayer needed to address any impersonal impositions on thought or false assumptions that sometimes underlie the questions. From this prayer and listening for God’s guidance come inspired responses that strive to uniquely meet the need in each instance. And the students often share appreciation for the Committees’ care and clarity in support of their school assignments. We feel blessed to witness this expression of the statement, “The intercommunication is always from God to His idea, man” (*Science and Health*, p. 284:31–32), knowing that God is communicating not only with us but also directly with each inquirer.

Sincerely,

Kevin E. Ness, C.S.B.
Manager, Committees on Publication

Fruitage

The following questions and answers are excerpted from some of these student projects to which Committees on Publication have responded. In the interest of brevity, some of the Committees’ responses have been condensed.

What do you think is an aspect of your faith which people often misunderstand?

Because spiritual healing through reliance on God’s power, as practiced in Christian Science, does not involve medicine or medical intervention, it is sometimes seen as withholding medicine and trusting (hoping) that God will do something. This is far from what Christian Science healing actually involves.

Christian Science healing does not center around the absence of medical treatment, but the positive application of spiritual treatment — a disciplined practice of drawing closer to God in one’s heart that has resulted, across many generations, in healing a wide array of diseases. And while we find it incompatible to mix spiritual and medical treatment because they are fundamentally so different, it is important to note that the form of treatment that an individual seeks is always a choice and never a church dictate. Many Christian Scientists live long into maturity and have not sought medical care. In some situations, some Christian Scientists have chosen medical care. They are free to make these individual decisions and continue as loved members of the Christian Science community.

What are your initial thoughts on the term “faith healing”?

“Faith healing” is not a term we use because the Christian Science approach to healing has some important differences from what is typically found in faith healing groups. There’s no question that Christian Scientists typically rely on the power of God’s love for the healing of physical problems, and that reliance certainly involves faith. But the essential power that results in spiritual healing, as understood in Christian Science, is the omnipotence of God, not limited by human faith in God. Christian Scientists do not believe that it may be God’s will to let some people die. We don’t see disease or misfortune as somehow a “divine punishment” for personal sins and failings.

In Christian Science, we see healing being accomplished according to the inviolate laws of God—an understanding gained through our study of the Bible and the teachings and practice of our Savior, Christ Jesus. And Jesus never accepted disease as God’s will. Instead, he healed all sorts of diseases based on his inspired understanding of God as being only good, and on God’s tender love for each one of us ... This goes back to my earlier mention of Jesus’ instruction to: “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give” (Matt. 10:8). In fact, Mrs. Eddy thought so much of this injunction by Jesus that when she created the “Cross and Crown” emblem of our church, she inscribed it with these same words.

Can you expand on parent-children relationships within Christian Science? What about medical decisions in a child's life?

... individuals find in Christian Science a form of worship that enriches their lives. And this is certainly true when considering the care of children. The deep love that pervades a parent’s heart and the absolute desire to keep their children safe and healthy is as true for Christian Scientists as it is for any other parent.

Christian Science practice is not about ignoring a problem, hoping that it will simply go away, letting it linger, or even about avoiding medicine. Instead, we firmly believe that God wants all His creation, including children, to thrive, prosper, and be healthy. It is never God’s will for anyone to suffer. And so we turn to the understanding of God’s laws of health, harmony, goodness, and joy to bring real blessings to our families. Christian Scientists have seen the efficacy of this prayer in their lives helping to bring about a greater sense of harmony, peace, and health. And it also may be worth saying, for so many, these are not one-off experiences. Time and again in praying this way we experience the blessings of wonderful healings. Witnessing so many proofs of God’s protecting and healing power naturally builds a deep faith, trust, and assurance that Christian Science is not only the best form of care for oneself, but also for one’s children. Children are not considered a testing ground for the strength of one’s faith. They are cherished as individuals who have the capacity to know God themselves, and are receptive to God’s healing grace...

Christian Scientists appreciate the ability to live out their faith, but recognize the paramount importance of each individual's health and safety, and wish to balance sincerely held religious beliefs with what's best for their children and society. The approach you'll find among most Christian Scientists is thoughtful and balanced — full of humble, prayerful listening and consideration. It is rooted in love for God and humankind. There's no church dogma or rule that tells members what to do in any situation. Each individual and family has the freedom to decide for themselves and their families how to work through personal matters.

Inspiration and updates from your Committee on Publication

Hello church family! A warm winter welcome for each of you as we anticipate the freshness that comes with Spring around the corner. This look towards Spring and renewal reminds me of a quote from the Bible:

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” (Romans 12:2)

Doesn't this renewal echo the childlike thought referred to in the Manager's message? This receptiveness is natural and normal. And so is curiosity. There are millions of people in the world who are seeking the Christ. Each one of us has been gently led in our lives to this amazing discovery by Mary Baker Eddy, and God will undoubtedly continue to shepherd His children in their spiritual growth. Branch churches serve as an avenue for seekers to find answers regarding their curiosity about Christ Jesus' healing mission and how our church furthers that mission. To remove impositions on the public that would discourage or prevent this natural curiosity will do much for mankind, and is certainly in keeping with Mary Baker Eddy's instruction:

Millions of unprejudiced minds — simple seekers for Truth, weary wanderers, athirst in the desert — are waiting and watching for rest and drink. Give them a cup of cold water in Christ's name, and never fear the consequences. (Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, Mary Baker Eddy, p. 570:14–18)

As we work together to this end, please know I am available to answer any questions you may have. I look forward to working with you in the coming year and wish you all a wonderful week!

Warmly,

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