
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...” Church Manual, Article XXXIII, Section 2

A Message from the Manager

Dear fellow members,

I and the whole Committee on Publication family have been deeply grateful to hear from so many of you who are earnestly praying and thinking about worldwide public health — committed to bearing witness to almighty God’s omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence; and listening moment-by-moment for the best way forward for you and your family, while also listening for the best way to bless humanity in its hour of need with the spiritual understanding that Christian Science teaches all of us.

We are moved by the genuine Christianity evident in our church family, and humbled to serve together with you as fellow church members. This statement from Mary Baker Eddy has been so inspiring to me during this time:

“My Beloved Brethren -- The chain of Christian unity, unbroken, stretches across the sea and rises upward to the realms of incorporeal Life — even to the glorious beatitudes of divine Love. Striving to be good, to do good, and to love our neighbor as ourself, man's soul is safe; man emerges from mortality and receives his rights inalienable — the love of God and man. What holds us to the Christian life is the seven-fold shield of honesty, purity, and unselfed love.”
(The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany, Mary Baker Eddy, p. 200:11–19)

This statement beautifully guides the *Manual*-provided work of “correct[ing] in a Christian manner impositions on the public in regard to Christian Science,” which we’re seeing is needed today more than ever. Metaphysically treating and healing misperceptions helps ensure that the Comforter is available to all, without limitation.

We’ve also been approaching this work in the spirit of Paul’s counsel to “watch and be sober.” (1 Thess 5:6.), or as Mrs. Eddy said it, “Be watchful, sober and vigilant.” (SH p.324:13) We’re taking into consideration public health laws, along with how to best love our neighbor and have patience with their fears, even as we have conviction for Christian Science practice and continue to share what the world most needs. These goals actually go right together — not competing with one another. I’ve asked myself, how could Principle and Love — two aspects of God — ever be at odds with each other?

Naturally, Committees on Publication have received queries of a practical nature, such as whether a covid vaccine will be required, and what the Committee office is doing about it.

In the U.S. and throughout most of the world, there have been no legislative bills filed to mandate a covid vaccine for adults or children, so it remains a free choice. U.S. State and Federal officials, as well as government officials in most other countries, have generally said they encourage taking the vaccine as it becomes available, but at this point they don’t think there will be a need to require it. If a legal

mandate were considered in the future, Committees on Publication would plan to seek religious accommodation in the law where possible.

We're also watching beyond government to what private entities such as employers, schools, residential communities, or travel providers — like airlines — might require, and are assessing what religious or other accommodations may be available in those cases.

Our approach to this watchfulness is to serve the *Manual* and the Committee's corrective, healing purpose, including giving a fair and accurate picture of Christian Science to legislators and public health officials, while knowing that divine Mind is the only source of government, legislation, and law. And with that focus, we've found that right accommodations — the space in law to practice Christian Science — naturally come. You might say the approach is to look outward, not inward. We're asking ourselves: how can we heal (as opposed to what's in it for us)? And asking ourselves: what is our opportunity as a church to help bring a sense of peace — and less fear — on this topic, and to give a genuinely Christian response, which naturally includes health and safety for us all?

In seeking accommodation, it's a joy to explain to others that our basis for doing so is love, not fear. We're not dogmatically "against" vaccination, not afraid of the vaccine or the disease. (Therefore not coming from either pro-vaccination or anti-vaccination positions.) We let them know that we seek accommodation because we've experienced something that's practical, reliable, and tangible through our practice of spiritual healing. We appreciate being able to demonstrate immunity through a means we have found to be most effective. It's important to us to follow the Golden Rule and love our neighbor, so that our practice of Christian Science is conducted responsibly, and not in a way that would harm or threaten others. Church members make their own individual health care choices within the law. And while our Church doesn't promote or encourage vaccination, it does support our members whichever direction they take.

Above all, we're trusting that we as Christian Scientists, as well as all of humanity, can truly feel "...peace, patience in tribulation, and a priceless sense of the dear Father's loving-kindness," (SH 365:31) as beautifully expressed by our Leader.

Sincerely,
Kevin Ness
Manager, Committees on Publication

Below are some additional resources on this topic that you may find inspiring and helpful:

- ["Thinking about vaccination and public health"](#) by Kevin Ness, *The Christian Science Journal*, March 2020.
 - ["Vaccines, immunity, and the pathway to health"](#) by Curt Wahlberg, *Christian Science Sentinel*, January 28, 2021.
 - [The Christian Science Board of Directors' letter to the field](#), September 16, 2020
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Inspiration and updates from your local Committee on Publication

The Texas Committee has been monitoring the 2021 Texas legislative session very closely. None of the bills that have been introduced serve to restrict the practice of Christian Science. In fact, there are a number of bills that promote religious freedom for all faiths practicing in Texas. At this time there is no proposed legislation that would mandate vaccination. That of course does not preclude private entities from having their own restrictions or requirements. But religious accommodations from vaccination requirements remain in the school setting under Texas law, and in the context of employment requirements, most employers with 15 or more employees are required to consider accommodation of religious beliefs to the degree doing so does not present an undue hardship on the employer's operations. Regardless, I have found Mrs. Eddy's instruction regarding the handling of contagious disease to be the most important contribution we can make as Christian Scientists, where she states:

“At a time of contagious disease, Christian Scientists endeavor to rise in consciousness to the true sense of the omnipotence of Life, Truth, and Love, and this great fact in Christian Science realized will stop a contagion.”

(The First Church of Christ, Scientist and Miscellany, Mary Baker Eddy, p. 116:1–5)

Sincerely,

George

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