

## 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*

### ***A Message from the Manager:***

*“Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? What cannot God do?” (Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, Mary Baker Eddy, p. 135:17)*

We know many of you are following recent announcements of vaccine mandates from public and private entities, and are thinking deeply about what they mean for you. The Office of Committee on Publication has been watching carefully and prayerfully engaging with the public, including government, media, and individual inquirers. And we are grateful to see God furnish “tables” — solutions to meet each need — every day. If you are looking for context and perspective regarding these mandates, please feel free to be in touch with your Committee on Publication.

Your Committee on Publication is available to speak with members who have questions about vaccination requirements and religious accommodations that may be available in one's individual circumstance. They also can provide a perspective on how the public is viewing these issues, as well as share possible ways to communicate with a school, employer, etc. about one's individual, sincerely held religious belief in Christian Science — including what Christian Science is and is not — in situations where religious accommodation is available. Not only do these direct dialogues best meet the unique requirements of each organization (where forms generally do not), they provide an opportunity for heart-to-heart dialogue that supports genuine understanding and receptivity.

Likewise, Committees are available to serve as a resource to branches or members who receive inquiries from individuals exploring Christian Science branch membership with a possible motive to seek a religious exemption or obtain a signature from a branch church “official.” While we are grateful for the increased interest in Christian Science as a result of the discussion around vaccination, we also need to be alert to those who are simply seeking to use Christian Science to avoid requirements. While we may not be able to offer the inquirer exactly what they believe they want, these conversations often lead to something so much more.

In many countries around the world, where society is working to balance religious freedom with protection of public health, we are finding that religious accommodations are not necessarily a matter of legal right in every case, or simply granted by presenting formulaic language, as some might want or expect. But they come through our prayerful demonstration in each case, as divine Mind leads the way. And while, humanly speaking, working through issues relating to vaccination requirements may require concessions on both sides, as Mary Baker Eddy recognized when she dealt with similar threats of contagion in her day, it never stops our prayer or the operation of divine law.

Committees on Publication, too, strive to strike that right balance in explaining our church's support of public health and individual free choice on health decisions, while also making clear that many church

members appreciate having the option to decline required vaccines because Christian Science religious practice commonly includes a sincere reliance on God for health needs. We're grateful for evidence that journalists and others are finding our public statement on [christianscience.com](https://www.christianscience.com/perspectives/perspective-on-vaccination-and-public-health), "[A Christian Science perspective on vaccination and public health.](https://www.christianscience.com/perspectives/perspective-on-vaccination-and-public-health)" to understand our church's point of view, which is deeper than simply being "for" or "against" vaccination.

Even though human circumstances may change, and we may feel like the children of Israel navigating the wilderness or Red Sea, we have the assurance given in *Science and Health* that divine Love guides "all right desires in their passage from sense to Soul, from a material sense of existence to the spiritual, up to the glory prepared for them who love God. Stately Science pauses not, but moves before them, a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, leading to divine heights." (p. 566:1)

Warm regards,  
Kevin E. Ness, Manager, Committees on Publication

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### ***Fruitage***

When a local newspaper published an article about a local church planning to start a healing ministry, it quoted the church's reverend as saying, "Christian healing does not attempt to replace science and medicine with what may be called faith-healing. We are not advocating practices found in 'Church of Christ; Scientist' Reading Rooms or any such beliefs." The state Committee on Publication together with a local Assistant Committee on Publication were inspired to pray with the Annual Meeting theme "Grace to Go Forward," seeing this as an opportunity to speak heart-to-heart about the genuine healing practice of Christian Science and to express grace and gratitude for how Christ's church is answering the innate human longing for healing. Following is the letter to the editor that flowed from these prayers and was published with the title given by the editors, "Healing at the heart of being a Christian":

As someone who believes that healing is at the heart of what it means to be a Christian, I was most grateful to read about [name] Church's announcement of plans to begin a ministry of healing. Of course, Christian healing practices take somewhat different forms in differing faith traditions. As important as their common element is – looking to Jesus Christ as the exemplar of healing and way of salvation – the distinctions can be important as well. For example, while [the reverend] grouped Christian Science with faith-healing practices, there are substantial differences between spiritual healing as understood and practiced in Christian Science and what is often called "faith healing" that should be recognized.

As a Christian Scientist who attends the local Christian Science church, I can speak from experience about an approach to healing that looks to God as Love itself (see I John 4: 8,16) and as "a very present help in trouble" (Psalms 46:1), never imposing suffering or death, and always willing and able to heal. We do not view God as choosing whether or not to intervene when there is need for help and healing. It is also perhaps valuable to note that while Christian Scientists most often do choose to rely on prayer to God for healing, that always is, and has been from the beginning of the Christian Science movement, a choice and not a dictate.

Jesus' healings brought comfort and restoration to all who earnestly sought him. It appears that this is exactly what our community – our world – needs today! In following his example and teachings, I believe we can find more that unites us than divides us, and I wish [the] Church many blessings and healings for the good of our community.

A statewide newspaper recently published a story about an organization affiliated with Christian Science that included some statements reinforcing the often-seen misperception that Christian Scientists casually ignore the world and its needs. The local Committee on Publication was led to pray with Mary Baker Eddy's statement on *Science and Health* p. 571: "At all times and under all circumstances, overcome evil with good. Know thyself, and God will supply the wisdom and the occasion for a victory over evil. Clad in the panoply of Love, human hatred cannot reach you." These prayers led to a published letter to the editor, excerpted below, bearing witness to Christian Scientists' devotion to prayer that blesses humanity:

Thoughtful discussions on faith can rarely, if ever, be synopsisized into one or two catch phrases or soundbites. Doing so usually misses the heart and soul of religious practice and the way it enriches lives. I believe this article missed the mark when it stated that "Christian Science theology, as set out by founder Mary Baker Eddy, teaches followers not to believe in matter; that the spiritual world is the only reality, while the material world is an illusion."

The theology of Christian Science centers on healing sickness and sin. But that does not mean Christian Scientists casually dismiss the world in which they live nor ignore the needs of humanity. While the method of healing does involve a degree of questioning generally accepted conventions and limitations, more so it is striving to glimpse the power of Spirit.

### ***Inspiration and updates from your Committee on Publication:***

Dear Friends,

I am available to discuss your questions related to vaccination and accommodations. There is much public reporting on mandates, public health guidelines and how the courts are responding. I'm happy to share what I have learned. There is no cookie-cutter solution to this issue. Every situation is unique and offers opportunity for healing and growth. Please give me a call and we can chat. If the line is engaged, leave a message, text or email, and I will get back to you a little later. I thought the below scripture was appropriate based on the many calls I have received to date.

"And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice." (I Kings 19:9-12)

Sincerely,

George

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