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Christian Science Nursing Anywhere, Everywhere and All Ways

DEAR FRIENDS,
We're happy to share with you the following synopsis of the panel discussion portion of the annual meeting of our Christian Science Visiting Nurse Service of New Hampshire held on April 27, 2014.

The theme of the meeting was "*Christian Science Nursing – Anywhere, Everywhere and All Ways*".

Panel Members:

Linda Kohler — working as a private duty Christian Science nurse at the time of the meeting; currently the President of The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston.

Pat Cameron — a long-time employee of the Christian Science Visiting Nurse Service of New Hampshire and currently one of two visiting Christian Science nurses with the Service.

Lelia Smith — a new employee of the Christian Science Visiting Nurse Service of New Hampshire working in partnership with Pat as a visiting Christian Science nurse.

Sally Carruth — working as a private duty Christian Science nurse and part time at Tallwood House.

Kerry Reed — owner/manager of Tallwood House in Concord, New Hampshire and working there as a Christian Science nurse.

After each panel member was introduced and provided brief biographical information, the moderator, Diane Johnston, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Service, began asking questions of the panelists based on the parable of the Good Samaritan (see Luke 10:30-37). The discussion explored how the parable demonstrates the Christian standard of care in relation to Christian Science nursing.

Diane: How is the work of the Christian Science nurse similar to that of the Samaritan?

Pat: Although the man in need was out in public and a visiting nurse goes to peoples' homes, in both cases the care goes to the individual. This is particularly helpful when one is challenged and



(from left to right)

Diane Johnston

Linda Kohler

Pat Cameron

Lelia Smith

Sally Carruth

Kerry Reed

Photo by John Cameron

OUR MISSION

To provide and promote Christian Science visiting nurse care, embracing an individual's reliance on Christian Science for healing.

Christian Science Nursing as a provision of the Manual of The Mother Church, safeguards, supports, dignifies, and defends the ministry of Christian Science healing. More than a mere human activity, it fully demonstrates "...the spirit of Christ's charity."

Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures
by Mary Baker Eddy, p. XII



doesn't feel up to *going* somewhere. The parable says: "a certain Samaritan, came where he was:... And went to him,." Meaning that in addition to going to a particular location, the care-giver meets the one in need where he/she is mentally, physically and metaphysically, without judgment.

Another aspect is the pouring in of the oil: the healing qualities of consecration, love, heavenly inspiration, as oil is defined in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy (p.592). This is our medicine and it isn't given sparingly or in small doses as material medication might be given, but is *poured* in. There also is no language barrier to individuals from different cultures or backgrounds. As Christian Science nurses, we care for those whom God brings to us and the language of nursing is love.

One final similarity is the public nature of the care given. The wayfarer and the Samaritan in the parable encountered each other on a public roadway. There must have been observers to what took place. In the same way, a visit from a visiting Christian Science nurse can be seen by neighbors, friends or family members and thus it's acknowledged that the need is being met and that Christian Scientists do care for each other by taking proper human footsteps with practical resources.

Diane: *How can we as church members and nurses be better neighbors?*

Kerry: Of course, one answer is through our outward expression of Christly love. In order to feel freer in that expression, we need to not feel burdened by it. In the parable, the Samaritan didn't take on the burdens of the man's care. He "set him

on his own beast"; there was a provision at hand to carry the burden. Some of the modern-day burdens that might interfere with our reaching out could include thoughts such as "I don't have time; I don't know what to do; I don't want to interfere; they won't let me help them; someone else will do it; what if I get sued?"

We know these thoughts don't come from God and we can find reassurance in the article: "The Theology of Care" by Geraldine Schiering. (*The Christian Science Journal* July 1982) She states: "The reward we receive for helping others or for facing these challenges ourselves and demonstrating our theology every step of the way is great spiritual advancement." And Mrs. Eddy gives us guidance on page 367 in *Science and Health* as to how to start: "The tender word and Christian encouragement of an invalid, pitiful patience with his fears and the removal of them, are better than hecatombs of gushing theories, stereotyped borrowed speeches, and the doling of arguments, which are but so many parodies on legitimate Christian Science, aflame with divine Love."

We can all do these things as we let our love and compassion guide us and then turn to God for specific directions. It's not hard. We've all cared for family members and loved ones with various needs and this is just 'enlarging the place of our tent'. (Is. 54:2) So, it's for all of us, not just those who graduated from the Chestnut Hill Benevolent Association.

Diane: *How do we recognize when help is needed?*

Sally: If we have a little scratch or something, we put a band-aid on it; or maybe it's wise to stay off

your feet when working out a challenge. These are instances of nursing ourselves and family members, but when there's a situation that's a bit more challenging, and thought may be a little too focused on the challenge, that could be the time to call a fellow church member or a Christian Science nurse. Sometimes it takes humility to realize that outside help may be needed, but that objective thought — outside the problem — can bring a new perspective and additional metaphysical support.

Whether the one in need is yourself, a family member or friend, turning to God will provide the inspiration needed to know how to proceed and we can trust that divine direction will bring together the right individuals in the right way. I had an experience while hiking the Appalachian Trail in the boondocks of Maine with my family when we encountered a young man and struck up a casual conversation. In essence he said he was also a Christian Scientist, had been hiking a long time and had a painful blister on his foot. I was able to cleanse it and show him how to bandage it, so it wouldn't bother him. For me this is a perfect example of "Christian Science Nursing: Anywhere, Everywhere and All Ways" with the divine hand of God/Love ever at work!

Diane: That brings to mind another quote from the "Theology of Care" article: "The individual who requests the services of a Christian Science nurse is approaching his human need from a spiritual stand-point." Which leads to our next question, When should we call on a Christian Science nurse for help?

Relia: I have the perfect answer! There is a statement in *Science and Health* (p.420) that says "Truth, not error, Love, not hate, Spirit, not matter governs man. If students do not readily heal themselves they should early call an experienced Christian Scientist to aid them. If they are unwilling to do this for themselves, they need only to know that error cannot produce this unnatural reluc-

tance." Most likely, Mrs. Eddy is referring to a Christian Science practitioner, but to me, this is also applicable to the Christian Science nurse. And the marginal headings for these passages are "True government of man" and "Positive reassurance".

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the Samaritan was guided and directed by divine Love. He listened and followed God's directing, which enabled him to know what to do every step of the way. He had the presence of Mind, the grace, the knowledge and confidence to properly and completely rise to the occasion. The individual he helped was also guided by divine Love to be receptive to the care being provided. This is an example of love reflecting Love, and as each individual is listening and being obedient to Love, they will respond appropriately. How grateful we are for the parable of the Good Samaritan, as told by Christ Jesus and how grateful we are for

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our Leader's wisdom in making sure that Christian Scientists have the *Manual*-based provision for us all to be well taken care of. (Art. VIII, sect. 31)

Diane: Linda, could you talk to us about Who should we call? Should we call the Christian Science Visiting Nurse Service? Should we call someone in the Journal? Or, maybe another church member?

Linda: Well, we all know, to state the obvious, that we are calling on the Christ when we're reaching out for healing and aid. Even

though on the surface it feels like we're reaching out for physical help and for physical improvement of a physical condition, we all know that what we're really reaching out for is to feel that power of divine Love. And Christian Science nursing and Christian Science practice are love made manifest; love made visible in our experience; so it's good to remember that what we're really calling on is divine Love. We also know that we can pray and listen for the intuition about who to call. But if you feel the angels aren't quite getting through because there's a little fear going on, you don't have to worry; you can call any of us listed in *The Christian Science Journal*.

Who you call depends on a number of things. Do you need someone there as quickly as possible, or is this something that could wait? How long do you need them to stay? Maybe you don't know how long you'll need them to stay; you'd like to be healed before they get there, and that happens, and that's OK. We're always happy to turn around and go back home any time. But the visiting Christian Science nurses are on call 24/7 so it's not easy for them to come and stay for a few days because they need to be available for other calls. Generally, the guideline is for visiting Christian Science nurses to come for a few hours or less, but they could come back the next day or however many days may be needed until the healing is complete.

If it seems that the need is for someone who can come and stay through the night, or stay for a few days, you can call one of the Christian Science nurses listed in the *Journal* who is not a visiting Christian Science nurse or employed at a Christian Science facility. Again, we're always expecting quick healing and when healing comes Christian Science nurses are always happy to be fired without any notice. And we happily work in tandem, so that if Pat is the nearest one and can get there quickly but can't stay, she could meet the initial need and then help you work out who can come

continued on page 4

for a longer period if needed. We're good at dovetailing and backing each other up and everyone respects the confidentiality and knows that God is governing so that all fits together harmoniously.

In addition to the back section of the hard copy of *The Christian Science Journal*, remember that there's also an online directory that allows you to put in your zip code and will list the nurses by proximity to where you are. Even though you know that those individuals listed in the directory of *The Christian Science Journal* have been vetted through an application process, there's no information on their background and experience so you can certainly ask for references if you wish. It's a perfectly appropriate question if you have someone coming in to your home, especially for more than a few hours. At the same time, we know that all this is prayerfully guided and governed.



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**To reach a visiting Christian Science nurse,
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