

Canterbury Crest's 2015 Annual Meeting Address by Anna Lisa Kronman, C.S.
Nursing the World . . . beginning right here and now!

Thank you so much for inviting me today! Portland in April is so gorgeous!

Nursing the world, beginning here and now. It sounds kind of big, doesn't it? What does that really mean? And who is supposed to do it? Here's the quick answer. We all get to do it! Since nursing is love in action, we get to consciously love, and include everyone we meet (our world) in that affection. So this talk is not just for folks already actively in the nursing practice. It's for all of us! This is not to minimize the tremendous contribution of those already committed to this selfless endeavor, and we are all so grateful for the good work you are doing at Canterbury Crest! But it is to broaden our vision to see we all have an essential part in this. We are all needed. Today along with rejoicing in the genuine, we're also going to look at some mistaken views of Christian Science nursing practice, for the purpose of rejecting them. We are going to see how those Christian Science nursing qualities that Mrs. Eddy talks about can be used by all of us in our daily encounters, and in how we think about news from other parts of the globe. We all get to embrace this, and be embraced by it! That's what we are going to think about today.

Let's start by remembering that pillar of fire by night and smoke by day that guided the children of Israel out of Egypt. It stayed right with them, day and night. That cloud, which they saw as God's presence, didn't leave them at the Red Sea. It journeyed with them. When they

received the Ten Commandments, carved into stone tablets by Moses, they built a very special chest to safeguard and carry them, called the Ark of the Covenant. As they made their way through the desert, that God-present cloud hovered over the tent where they put the Ark of the Covenant. In their journey, if the cloud stayed, the travelers stayed. When it moved, they would move. They were literally following the holy Spirit, epitomized by the Ten Commandments. Even though their training ground was a barren, dusty desert, God led them step by step to put off the old, and accept the new.

Think of this with me: this holy Spirit is still with us, still guiding, still moving us to relinquish limited views for higher ones. Like those early wayfarers, we need to follow when it moves, obediently and fearlessly. And we are! What is it we are being moved to see right now? I believe there is a remarkable new view being revealed right now that elevates and expands our whole concept of Christian Science nurse. The perception of it is shifting from that of a little-known or understood health-care system at the fringe of our movement, just for Christian Scientists, to be seen more clearly as an essential element in our healing ministry, central to our church, and wanted and needed by the world. Linda Kohler, President of the Mother Church this year, and Caroleen Scholet, both Christian Science nurses, have been circling the world this year talking to nurses and church members, inviting this higher vision. We are not collectively there yet to this clarified

view, but we are unmistakably on the move.

World, in Rodale's *The Synonym Finder*, includes these synonyms: globe, planet, four corners of the earth, mankind, humanity, the whole world, the general public, everyone. The base Latin root for the word nurse is a form of nourish, closely related to nutritious. *Webster's* definition for nurse includes nourish, nurture, foster, feed, maintain, cherish—in short, to love in a very practical way. So, we could think of today's topic as Nourishing the Whole World; Fostering Humanity; Nurturing the Planet; Ministering to the General Public; or, Loving in a practical manner whoever comes your way, beginning with your closest neighbor, yourself. Sometimes we think of the world as everyone far away in a different hemisphere, wearing other clothes and speaking a different language. Distant lands certainly are part of the world, but the world is also in our own family, neighborhood, church, and community. Nurturing the world happens in little and big ways: giving a stranger your seat on a train; feeding your neighbor's cats while they are away, assisting a church member, comforting a child, caring for a parent. It can also include actions that touch folks in other cultures, perhaps donating to a specific helpful cause that meets some of their needs. All these offer the opportunity to approach our interactions with others in a consciously loving and practical way.

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Christian Science nursing—have you ever considered that it's older than the Bible? Though not going by that name, its expression is like a golden thread that weaves throughout the Scriptures. Remember Jesus' saying, "Before Abraham was, I am"? Wasn't he saying the Christ is an eternal idea? Well, so is Christian Science nursing. It is as eternal as the Christ, because it is a divine idea. It could be described as the action of the Christ, simply and modestly visible. It wasn't called by the name Christian Science nursing until the 1800s, but as an eternal idea of Love's specific expression, it has always been. One might say, Christian Science nursing is Love, God, expressed, and Love, God, expressed is Christian Science nursing.

As we know, love was the keynote of Jesus' life. When he was walking on the water, and Peter wanted to join him, Jesus said, "Come on." Becoming afraid, Peter began to sink. What did Jesus do? Did he sigh, put his hands on his hips, watch him sink, and say, "Good disciples are so hard to get these days?" No, he did something very practical. He stretched out his hand to Peter, lifting him up to walk with him on the tempestuous sea back to the boat. Was that not a perfect example of the simplicity and utility of Christian Science nursing? Jesus was not impressed with Peter's struggle, didn't get caught up in it himself, but he loved enough to help Peter see there was nothing to fear, which included giving his hand. On a couple of other occasions, he fed (we could read here, nourished, or nursed) hungry multitudes. His idea

of proper care of sick was to love and remove the imposition, not be disturbed by it nor provide for lengthy endurance of it. Another time he taught the vital importance of practical, hands-on assistance in his parable of the Good Samaritan and in his call for visible, tangible, appropriate love for one's neighbor. He said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34,35). Have you ever considered he might as well have been saying, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye nurture, nurse, and cherish one to another"? That was the only measure he gave of how folks would know who his disciples were. Isn't it an interesting parallel to see that this instruction to love one another came in one of the final messages to his disciples, and Mrs. Eddy's bylaw establishing the Christian Science nurse was one of her final two additions to the *Manual*, also very late in her career? Perhaps Jesus' statement in John could be considered the correlative Scripture to the *Manual* bylaw. I'll read it again, and think of it that way: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Does that sound to you like "practical affection and goodness"? Do you remember how Mrs. Eddy uses that exact phrase? This grabbed my attention recently

from a recent Bible Lesson: "The efficacy of the crucifixion lay in the practical affection and goodness it demonstrated for mankind" (*Science and Health*, 24:27). The crucifixion! The efficacy, or effectiveness, power, force, and usefulness of Jesus' crucifixion lay in the nursing it demonstrated for mankind.

So Jesus, and many others before him, like Noah, the Shunammite woman providing for Elisha, and Nehemiah, to name a few, established the foundational basis of nursing in their loving, nurturing, fostering, building, protecting, maintaining. Modern-day nursing began with Florence Nightingale's care for fallen soldiers in the Crimean war in the mid-1800s. Her efforts to bring order, care, and cleanliness to the wounded cut their mortality rate dramatically and demonstrated the effectiveness of providing even simple care for those in need. Florence Nightingale and Mary Baker Eddy were contemporaries, and Mrs. Eddy had a great deal of respect for Florence's loving and selfless contribution to the well-being of her fellow man.

Mrs. Eddy saw the need for Christian Science nurses, but she didn't set up this ministry as a spiritually-oriented matter-repair shop. Miss Nightingale advanced the thinking of her day from no organized care at all to a system of thinking through needs and providing for them in practical ways—certainly a compassionate step forward for her time. Mrs. Eddy, also yearning to alleviate humanity's suffering, caught a higher vision of how to do

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this following Jesus' example. We might consider the holy Spirit was moving her, and mankind, forward. Instead of basing her system on ever-shifting matter, she founded it on the changeless, reliable nature of God as Love. She wrote in *Science and Health* (p. 111), "After a lengthy examination of my discovery and its demonstration in healing the sick, this fact became evident to me, — that Mind governs the body, not partially but wholly. I submitted my metaphysical system of treating disease to the broadest practical tests. Since then this system has gradually gained ground, and has proved itself, whenever scientifically employed, to be the most effective curative agent in medical practice." How interesting to think of Christian Science nursing as an integral and essential part of "the most effective curative agent in medical practice"!

The bylaw itself is simple, brief, and profound, with three main points. The first requirement: a demonstrable knowledge of Christian Science practice. In other words, the nurse must know how to heal, how to practice scientifically. He or she must know the cardinal points, that God is all and matter is nothing. Must know and be guided by Jesus' example and the Scientific Statement of Being. The second two criteria relate to appropriate loving of one's neighbor expressed in a thorough understanding of the practical wisdom necessary in a sick room, and the ability to take proper care of the sick.

Now, remember I said we are all in this together? We all get to do this? We all pray, don't we? But

we don't necessarily all decide to go into the *Journal* as practitioners; we pray in whatever job we have. Likewise, we all cherish, nurture, and give loving service, in other words, nurse. We may not decide to make that a full time job, either, and we are so eternally grateful that there are dear spiritual warriors who are ready 24 hours a day, any day of the year, to bear sturdy witness to God's government as professional Christian Science nurses! Thank all of you who are doing that, and bless your earnest, good hearts! But you're doing it does not lessen our need to join in, wherever we are, and however it is appropriate. Happily, this is not hard, because it is who we are and what we already do, as Love's expression.

I didn't always see it that way, and I am going to share this because it points up some misconceptions still hanging around about the Christian Science nursing field that need to be addressed. As Larry mentioned in his kind introduction, I had the privilege of nursing for about 35 years. That is a great vantage point from which to observe some very marked progress... like that cloud moving the children of Israel forward. Appreciating the simplicity, power, utility, and purity of Christian Science nursing is definitely not how I started out, however. As a young adult pondering my path, I was an ardent student of Christian Science, but had zero interest in Christian Science nursing. I wanted to heal problems, not nurse them along. Why even have Christian Science nurses, I wondered? I frankly didn't see the point. I knew very little about them, and the few I met had not inspired

me; it seemed some took that job perhaps because they couldn't be hired anywhere else. Even worse than these surface concerns, I was afraid they were delving into some mushy gray area where material remedies met Christian metaphysics, and I wanted nothing to do with that! However, I knew Mrs. Eddy had put that provision for the Christian Science nurse in the *Manual* for a reason, so I knew there must be a correct concept about it. I plainly did not yet have it.

About this time, Fern Lodge, a Christian Science care facility in Northern California, offered a weekend introduction to nursing called "Adventure in Learning." I was not about to become a Christian Science nurse, but I did want to get the right idea about it, so I decided to attend. What I witnessed and learned that weekend changed the course of my life. I glimpsed that far from being a murky realm of questionable practices, genuine Christian Science nursing was the ultimate Christian exercise. I discovered that weekend that Christian Science nursing is the fulfilling of God's love for man. It is not about making matter comfortable, but rather about bearing witness to the Comforter itself. What a revelation that was! I was very grateful to have some of my misconceptions dispelled.

I also met my first genuine Christian Science nurse, Emily Valentine, a tall, solid woman with snowy white hair piled on her head, dressed in a white uniform, with a twinkle in her eye and infinite

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patience, joy, and wisdom. I found that so attractive! I still had no intention to become a Christian Science nurse myself, but I wanted to learn that wisdom. I decided I might be willing to work as a nurses' aid for a little while so I could learn wisdom. (I figured about three months should do it!) I am still at it! God finally got through to me, and I found myself fully involved in the ministry of Christian Science nursing.

As I learned and practiced, I could see my early impression of this vital work was completely distorted, the inverse, really, of the truth. I began to glimpse the eternal and entirely spiritual nature of this high calling. I came to the conclusion that it is absolutely essential to our movement. It is the oil we have in our house. It is our Christian outreach arm, and if we lack that, we lack the heart of what we profess. I came to see that Christian Science nursing is as everlasting as Christian Science healing. Why is that? Because they both are an expression of God, Love, Herself. At their core, neither nursing nor prayer-practice is about fixing an unfortunate circumstance. They are both about bearing witness to God's love in a discernable, practical, useful way. They work together.

Over the years I came across some other misconceptions, impositions on genuine Christian Science nursing practice that I needed to see as bogus and reject. Like tares mixed with wheat, these false, fruitless concepts needed to be correctly identified so they could be weeded out. We're going to look at some of those tares now, so we can "bind

them in bundles to burn them". (One might say, here are some "tare-able" impositions on the practice of Christian Science nursing, to be recognized as powerless!) That it is...

- Mostly unknown and much misunderstood
- Well mortals caring for ill mortals
- Only for Christian Scientists, sick ones at that
- Modeled after a medical nursing practice
- Hierarchical
- Limited
- Controlling
- Task-oriented
- Wearing and wearying
- Carries risks to physical health for the giver
- Not enough money in it
- Too many personalities in it
- It's about sickness management, discord management, failure and death.

Sounds pretty grim, right? It does not sound like a business I would want to be in! The good news is, this picture was never the genuine practice of Christian Science nursing, even if it seemed at times to be operating under that name. Wheat never turns into tares, and tares never become wheat. An imposition on a truth may seem to obscure that truth for a period, but it cannot actually alter it. These impositions certainly do not rightfully belong to "the most effective curative agent in medical practice"!

Making this list reminded me of a passage in Paul's letter to the Galatians talking to his beloved church community where he is contrasting "tare-able" behavior,

that which doesn't work and is fruitless, with what does work and is fruitful. He says, as translated by J.B. Phillips, "The activities of the lower nature are obvious. Here is a list: sexual immorality, impurity of mind, sensuality, worship of false gods, witchcraft, hatred, quarrelling, jealousy, bad temper, rivalry, factions, party-spirit, envy, drunkenness, orgies and things like that. I solemnly assure you, as I did before, that those who indulge in such things will never inherit God's kingdom. The Spirit however, produces in human life fruits such as these: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, fidelity, tolerance and self-control—and no law exists against any of them. . . . If our lives are centered in the Spirit, let us be guided by the Spirit."

So, like Paul recognizing and rejecting the bad fruit, and rejoicing in the good, let's peel off these impositions about the practice of Christian Science nursing with the truth:

- **That it is mostly unknown and much misunderstood**
Christian Science nursing is an eternal, whole, complete expression of God's love for man, and man reflecting that Love. Mind knows it accurately, therefore man can know it accurately. It cannot be hidden!
- **Well mortals caring for ill mortals**
"... Love [God] is reflected in love." Not mortals caring for mortals.
- **Only for Christian Scientists, sick ones at that**

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Eternal truths bless all mankind. That blessing cannot be contained any more than the shining of a light. The practicality of Love expressed, like happiness, “is spiritual, born of Truth and Love. It is unselfish; therefore it cannot exist alone, but requires all mankind to share it.” We get to listen for how to do this.

- **Modeled after a medical nursing practice**
“Love’s work and Love must fit.” *Science and Health* is the sole textbook for Christian Science nursing.
- **Hierarchical, Limited, Controlling**
Christian Science nursing is not a human institution, governed more or less benevolently by inspired or uninspired mortals. It is as durable as Church, the structure of Truth and Love, and is governed by God.
- **Task-oriented**
The lesser cannot obscure the greater. The servant is not the master.
- **Wearing and wearying, carrying risks to the physical health of the giver**
This is not a matter-job with friction and stress as integral elements. It is the natural, safe, exalted expression of pure Love. “The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it” (Proverbs 10:22).
- **Not enough money in it**
“Soul has infinite resources with which to bless mankind, and happiness would be more readily attained and would be more secure in or keeping, if

sought in Soul” (*Science and Health* 60:29).

- **Too many personalities in it**
There is one Mind, one source, one law.
- **It’s about sickness management, discord management, failure and death.**
Just as Christian Science treatment is not a spiritual pill to alter material circumstances, Christian Science nursing is not about just being nice in the face of material problems. Christian Science treatment is bearing witness to the permanence of Truth and its expression, and Christian Science nursing likewise bears witness to the perpetual fact of God’s creation, even as it lovingly meets the need of the one who is afraid of what he sees. Genuine Christian Science nursing is about Life, not death; progress and success, not failure; listening to God, not basing actions on error.

Like Paul’s list of qualities for followers of the Way, Mrs. Eddy had a list of qualities she felt essential for nurses. Like Paul, she begins with ones a nurse should not have. She writes on page 395 of the textbook: “An ill-tempered, complaining, or deceitful person should not be a nurse.” She probably didn’t think a person like that should be a banker, shoemaker, or carpet layer, either! No one wants to be around bad temper, complaint, or dishonesty, no matter what his occupation. What does she say is necessary? Her second list, tracking closely Paul’s fruits of the Spirit, reads, “The nurse should be

cheerful, orderly, punctual, patient, full of faith, — receptive to Truth and Love.” Now, aren’t those universally desired qualities? Doesn’t every mother want those in her children? Wouldn’t any employer be delighted to have those attributes shining in folks he is looking to hire? So, this list, while talking about nurses, actually is not confined to folks specifically in the nursing field, and in fact, can be applied usefully in pretty much every endeavor. So, this brings us to one of our other themes: it’s for the world.

I mentioned earlier there were final two bylaws Mrs. Eddy added to the *Manual*. In 1908, she established the Christian Science Nurse and *The Christian Science Monitor*. Perhaps one could be seen as ministering primarily to her flock, and the other seen as ministering primarily to the world. We’re going to do something right now, a bit unusual in a talk of this sort, to give us a little practice in applying nursing concepts to world problems. Can you think of a world problem that would not benefit by the application of Christian Science nursing qualities? How they are sorely needed everywhere in the world! How much they are desired! How might Mideast tensions be lessened if everyone who thought about that part of the world approached it with cheer, patience, faith, and receptivity? How about this one: impropriety or dishonesty in the marketplace or industry, in banking, high tech, or car manufacture. If, in our reading about these problems, we stopped and claimed the not-yet-seen, but

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God-supported fact, that right there was orderliness, honesty, Truth and Love, in full operation, mightn't that help bring solutions much quicker? Another one: government bickering and refusal to work together for the common good. How could Christian Science nursing qualities be applied to that contentious issue? I have this week's *Monitor* here. I am going to read some of the headlines. Then, I am going to ask you to form groups of three to five, sitting right where you are, either in a line, or some of you turning around, to think together how the list of nursing qualities mentioned by Mrs. Eddy, or the fruits of the Spirit mentioned by Paul, could be usefully applied to these specific issues. Then we'll come together for a wrap-up.

(5 minutes of audience participation among themselves)

So, why is all of this an important idea? Because a shift in how we perceive something changes its value to us. Christian Science nursing is one of this movement's crown jewels. It is not just what you need when you are sick, it's also what we all need when we are well. It is a shining example of cherishing the whole man to our nursing brethren who find themselves dealing more and more with monitoring expensive machines and less and less with bedside care, and are increasingly seeing there is something vital missing.

I'd like to briefly share a nursing and prayer experience that has been a beacon to me in seeing the inestimable value of this whole Christianly scientific method working

together. I haven't spoken too much today about the role of trained Christian Science nurses, so we will touch on that now. At the time of this experience several years ago, I was working as a nursing instructor at Fern Lodge. One of the patients had a severe need, and I was asked if I could help out for a bit and just stay with her, something I happily did. The picture presented was vivid and grim, and it seemed like this could well be her last chapter. The lady was not able to breathe normally, and was frantic. However, though very afraid, she was insisting out loud that God was her life, and she could not be separated from it. My role was to whole-heartedly agree with that truth, hold to it myself, calmly reassure her, and call her practitioner (at her request) approximately every 10 minutes for at least an hour and a half. We turned to our Pastor, and I read her some simple, solid truths from the Bible and *Science and Health*. We leaned on the comforting strength of "O, gentle Presence." I wasn't "doing" anything to her body, just standing strongly with her metaphysically. Gradually her fear lessened, and she was able to breathe more regularly and freely. The calls to the practitioner became less frequent. After about two hours, someone else came in, and I left to resume my other duties. When I saw her the next week, she looked like a different woman. She was sitting up straight in her chair, hair freshly done, smile on her face, no trace of any breathing problem. She looked calm, collected, and radiant. What a contrast to that other picture! It made me so grateful that this care, this provision for scientific treatment and compassionate presence are

here, available, now. This was my experience, but you can multiply that by thousands. Christian Science nurses all over the world are helping folks reject error and stand for the truth through their own clear understanding of it. This is a profound blessing to our movement, and to the world.

Here are the big ideas I would love for you to take away:

- Christian Science nursing is not a peripheral add-on to our movement: it is the heart and soul of our church. It is loving the way Jesus did, in accord with the laws of God, and the effect of this is to minimize and dissolve inharmonies.
- We are so very grateful to have full-time nurses on the job, like those here at Canterbury Crest, but we all get to do it. We all have these qualities: it's not just for someone else to do.
- It begins right here, right now, and embraces the world.
- We start expressing these qualities with ourselves, then our loved ones, then all we meet. This becomes an act of world peace. It wraps us all in Love.

Thank you for all you are already doing, living this Love! God bless you and keep you!

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