

# INCURABLE? RE

RON BALLARD, A SPIRITUAL HEALER AND CHRISTIAN SCIENCE TEACHER FROM ASHLAND, MA, spoke recently with staff editor Patricia Kadick about spiritually scientific prayer.

This prayer brings healing even to conditions thought to be out of cure's reach. It's prayer to God for each one of us.

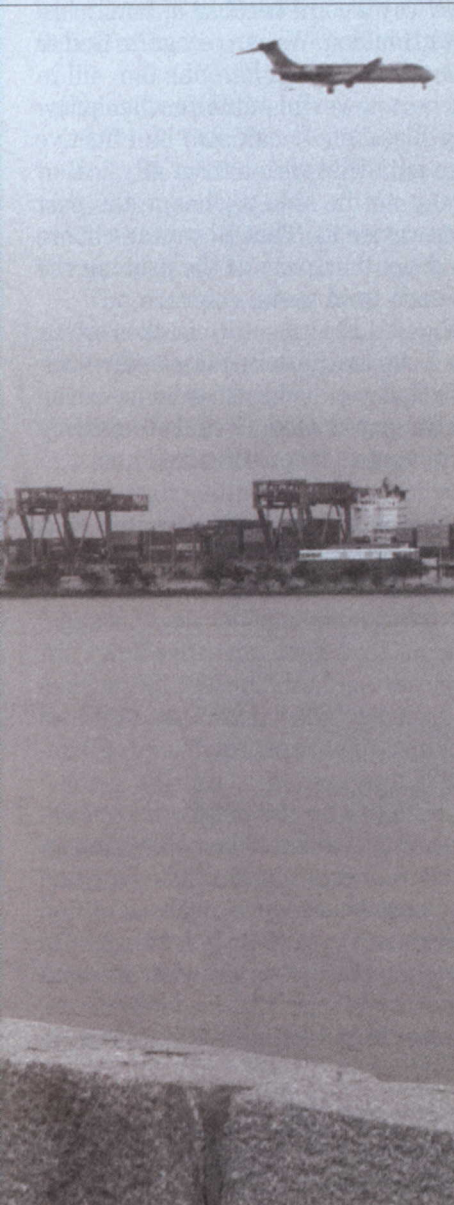


WENDY HANCOCK—STAFF

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## **Is your approach to treating an incurable condition different from your prayer for a disease that is not life-threatening?**

Generally a disease is called incurable because common treatment hasn't proved effective. So what the label "incurable" actually means is, "we don't yet know how to cure it." This is not for lack of effort or good motives, yet perhaps healers haven't explored all the options.

Christian Science healing explores the mental nature of disease. So it's not surprising that the Christian Science healer looks more to a person's mental make-up than to the physical. And this looking is deeper than merely considering how emotions—fear, anger, hatred, disappointment, etc.—may affect the body.

Mary Baker Eddy, who discovered Christian Science in 1866, concluded that "Man is not matter; he is not made up of brain, blood, bones, and other material elements. . . . Man is spiritual and perfect; and because he is spiritual and perfect, he must be so understood in Christian Science" (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 475). Here *man* refers to all men and women. When I first read that, I wondered how anyone could rationally come to that conclusion. Then I began to see it as an invitation to be more perceptive about our true identity.

As long as our efforts to heal—or be healed—remain at the point of physical observation, the label incurable may be insurmountable. If, however, we shift our perspective to a spiritual standpoint, and consider our identity as connected with God, we begin to see beyond labels. The fundamental fact regarding that connection is that God expresses His nature and character in each one of us. What is true about the divine nature is true about you and me. Conversely, whatever cannot accurately describe the divine nature and character cannot accurately describe us.

When a person's condition is less than healthy, the Christian Science healer challenges it on the basis that it is not from God. Therefore, the treatment is not fundamentally different, whether the condition is thought to be life-threatening or merely routine.

## **As a Christian Science healer, do you see a difference between healing and cure?**

People often make a distinction between healing and cure—healing can mean nothing more than becoming able to cope with a disease, as opposed to being completely cured of it. Christian Science healing, on the other hand, is about understanding our wholeness—spiritually, morally, intellectually. We are spiritual—the manifestation of God, who is Spirit. We can naturally expect complete cure, not just the ability to live with a disease.

## **When someone asks you for help, how do you treat, or pray, for that person?**

In this spiritually scientific healing, there is no formula. But I've found

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it important to be clear on certain fundamental facts:

- God is everywhere; we're never absent from His intelligent care and control.
- God is good and therefore expresses only good in His creation.
- True identity is spiritual, and the patient is "not made up of brain, blood, bones, and other material elements."
- Recognizing divine control destroys fear and heals completely.
- No individual can be deprived of healing, whatever the physical appearance. And each one can respond to the truth about his or her spiritual identity.

## **How do you address the assertion that illness is God's will, or a punishment?**

If we understand God's nature to be infinite good, we can dispel the notion that God would express anything but good. Believing that God wills disease is a mistaken conception.

Sometimes people learn important life lessons when they mistake their way, and then need to deal with the consequences. But this is not to say that God punishes us for our mistakes. The solution is in turning to God to find our true, spiritual identity. One of the great images in Jesus' teaching is in the story of the prodigal son (see Luke 15:11-24). Realizing he'd made a mistake in squandering his inheritance, the son got back on the road home and found his father running to meet him. God always welcomes each one of us. That never changes. Sometimes we just need to wake up to it.

## **What if the disease is said to be hereditary?**

Mary Baker Eddy declared, "Disease is always induced by a false sense mentally entertained, not destroyed. Disease is an image of thought externalized. The mental state is called a material state" (*Science and*

*Health*, p. 411). That last sentence, to me, means that what we call someone's physical condition is actually the expression of a mental state. If we accept disease as an "image of thought," we can begin with the mental state and reason spiritually about it. From a spiritual standpoint, our mental state can only be the expression of God's thoughts—the intelligence of the divine Mind.

As we learn more about God's nature, we'll know more about our own spiritual identity. Whenever the thought comes that we are the way we are because of family history, we can change our thinking. We can recognize God as our divine Source, our true and good Parent.

This concept can be a powerful antidote when praying about hereditary disease. It can also be effective when confronting the pain that stems from physical or mental abuse. We may not be able to change the past but, in a sense, we can revise it. That is, we can choose what to carry forward: not memories of the past but the spiritual lessons we learn from them.

I don't believe that God records our mistakes or our victimizations. God is Love, no matter what—and, rather than wondering where God was during a hardship, we can productively explore the power God gives us to destroy dark memories that prevent us from living freely.

## **What are some of the conditions you've treated that were medically diagnosed as incurable, which were healed through spiritual means alone?**

I've seen a number of them: macular degeneration, herpes, Kaposi's sarcoma, diabetes, congestive heart disease, leukemia, AIDS, and mental illnesses like schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Each was diagnosed by a physician, and the subsequent spiritual healing confirmed by medical checkups.

One case involved a man who was diagnosed with diabetes and heart disease. He was told he needed immediate heart surgery for several blocked arteries, and while he didn't know how, this fellow resolved to find healing through other means.

Soon after that, someone gave him *Science and Health*, and he began reading it. As he later wrote, "I achieved a level of peace and happiness that I didn't

# WE CAN NATURALLY EXPECT COMPLETE CUR