

The True Incentive

I was recently asked what I thought development should be based on. I thought this was a pretty interesting question, since the usual answer one would expect from someone involved with any type of Board activity would be “to raise money, of course.” To the surprise of my questioner, my answer was “to live Mrs. Eddy’s statement “Love for God and man is the true incentive in both healing and teaching.” (Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, page 454:17-18).

I looked up the word “incentive” in the dictionary, which said the word came from the Latin word “incentives”, which means “setting the tune”. One dictionary said incentive is something that incites or has a tendency to incite to determination or action. The word “incite” is defined as to stir something up.

Isn’t development really being a witness to what has already been established and maintained by our Father-Mother God? When something is developed, we are bringing out what is already there but perhaps has not yet been recognized. One of the definitions of develop is to set forth or make clear by degrees or in detail.

Each of us, as students of Christian Science, heal and teach within our own lives. If we see our own life as an active ministry, following in the teachings of Christ Jesus, then healing and teaching are the natural outcome of our love for God and man.

If you love something, don’t you want to pray for it, support it, tell others about it? Those actions are included in healing and teaching. As fellow board members, we recognize the value of Christian Science nursing going on at El Dorado Vista, and we would want to communicate this clearly. By doing so, we are seeing both healing and teaching taking place.

Opportunities for development are limitless, and we need to not be afraid to act on them, no matter how small or large. Is there any limit to our ability to love God and man? Too often it is easy to settle for the “established” way of doing or viewing things. Instead, we need to incite, or stir up, our expectations for good and opportunities to bless.

We are all familiar with the Bible story in First Kings of Elijah on Mount Horeb, after his escape from Ahab and Jezebel. Elijah believed he was the last true prophet left in Israel and his life was in danger – and he had every reason to believe this because Jezebel herself had sent him a message that she wanted him dead. So Elijah did what most of us would have done, he ran for his life. Hiding in the cave, God called Elijah to come out, asking “what doest thou here, Elijah?” After he had seen that God was not in the wind, earthquake and fire, Elijah heard the “still small voice” which the American Standard Version of the

Bible calls “a sound of gentle stillness”. Our Bible Lessons usually end the story at this point. However, the rest of the story includes Elijah’s commission to continue his prophetic work even more actively than before. God assured him that he could count on seven thousand loyal and active Israelites, who, even though they were not actual prophets, had not chosen to worship Baal. Also, Elijah was promised an aide or assistant in his work, who we know as Elisha. Elijah’s healing and teaching mission, which was the outgrowth of his love for God and man, was to not only to continue but prosper and expand. God didn’t just promise Elijah a mission, but also gave the necessary means of fulfilling the mission.

The means to fulfill the mission of El Dorado Vista have been given us also on page 454:18-19 “Love inspires, illumines, designates, and leads the way.” This is the sentence following the “Love for God and man is the true incentive in both healing and teaching” quote. Mrs. Eddy sets out the act, and then follows it with how the action is to be accomplished.

Like Elijah, we have seen that God is not in financial lack, shortage of any sort, or disruption. The Christ message, the sound of gentle stillness, continues to speak to every listening heart. Large and small opportunities to develop the good news of the healing going on at El Dorado Vista come up every day. These opportunities are present for us to make use of, to spread the message of El Dorado Vista’s mission and purpose. Every step of the way we too, will have the assistance and support that we need.

Mary Louise Boelhauf
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