



PRESIDENT OF THE MOTHER CHURCH

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Dear Members of The Mother Church,

Years ago my wife and I were traveling in East Africa, and we met a young man who lived in the village where we were staying. Over some weeks of regularly being together, he asked about the books we read and wanted to join us each morning to read the Bible Lesson published in the *Christian Science Quarterly*. Nothing was forced or awkward; it just came about naturally. He was very familiar with the Scriptures and intuitively seemed to understand what Mary Baker Eddy saw as “the higher mission of the Christ-power to take away the sins of the world” (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 150). I learned later that he went home each day and read *Science and Health* to his dad, who had been struggling with alcoholism and eventually found his freedom. The young man also ended up sharing ideas with one of the local pastors, who was so moved by *Science and Health* that he started using it to build his sermons, and even quoted from it to bring out a deeper spiritual understanding of the Scriptures.

This friend comes to mind sometimes when I think about what it looks like to be about the Father’s business—when I think about what the work of the mission of Christian Science looks like. He wasn’t trying to “do church work,” but I’d say he was doing the kind of church work we are all aiming for: practical and normal Christlike living that lifts the atmosphere of thought spiritually, wiping out mental darkness with the light and love of Truth. He was showing that “Love is reflected in love” (*Science and Health*, p. 17).

In the story about Jesus’ visit to Martha and Mary, recounted in Luke 10:38–42, Jesus teaches a lesson about exactly where to put our focus and attention when it seems as if there are so many important things to do and focus on.

The one needful thing Jesus talked about wasn’t so much a rebuke of Martha. She clearly cared deeply about Jesus and his mission. I see it as a vital redirection of thought to put our whole heart on God and spiritual receptivity. He was showing people, including each of us, how to start, how to discern between a primary mission—i.e., our work of loving God supremely, and of loving our neighbor as ourselves—and so many things pulling on our attention to do anything other than this essential work.

And isn’t our receptivity and attention to this one needful thing a key part of living the 2025 Annual Meeting theme, “As you work, the ages win” (Mary Baker Eddy, *The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, p. 188)? As we work, as we cherish our individual practice and our collective church practice, we can ask ourselves if our next steps are pointing our thought in the direction Mary was heading, to the one needful thing, or in the direction

Martha was being pulled, to being “cumbered about much serving.” We can take strong steps to commit our work to that one needful thing: the Science of Christ-healing.

When I think about our Church, I think about standing shoulder to shoulder with each of you in the work of demonstrating “the Christ-power to take away the sins of the world.” I think about the example of my friend from East Africa and how we can each have a significant impact that contributes to and supports what Jesus was doing and what Mrs. Eddy, as our Leader in following him, saw as the higher mission of this Church.

Our unity in purpose and mission helps unify our Cause. And our work doesn’t have to be all the same to be heartfelt and effective ... to be in line with the one needful thing.

With much appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Josh Niles". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Josh" and last name "Niles" clearly distinguishable.

Josh Niles
President of The Mother Church