



CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

"the respect mutual and the listening two-way"⁽¹⁾

MENU

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A comment posted by the Committee on Publication response to the program "Here & Now" on National Public Radio in the U.S.

church-service)

As a Christian Scientist, I'm always grateful for the understanding and respect shown by physicians toward our religious practice, so I particularly appreciate the thoughtful understanding Dr. Ray Barfield seeks to encourage in his medical students toward the varying religious views of those they encounter. I agree with him that the respect needs to be mutual and the listening two-way.

Christian Scientists' practice and perspective differ considerably from "faith healing" as that term is usually understood. We don't believe in eternal damnation, so can relate deeply to Dr. Barfield's questioning of traditional religious rationalizations for suffering. Actually, our church teaches the unvarying love of God for all humanity—a divine grace encompassing everyone, regardless of faith or background. We don't see disease or misfortune as somehow a "divine punishment" for personal sins and failings.

However different our perspective is from society's as a whole, Christian Science emphasizes the humanity at the heart of all genuine healing. We value the kindness and humanity of medical professionals in their efforts to help those who seek their care. Our denomination has always counseled respect for public health authorities and conscientious obedience to the laws of the land, including those requiring vaccination

(<https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fmountainx.com%2Fopinion%2Fletter-writer-christian-scientists-appreciate-religious-exemption-for-vaccines%2F&h=AT3ONmsIsER-Sv4aNgcWrK7qE4kpPU0YsooUjyvMuXM5EjDMjR4wVWH0fHeEzgpCVfTZq8TkYu-D-e0XaQT4VYiTOWiGR80TtA5UQnwMcAhx0dpnSYTN8icOsL2rXNCBcTe9rdktZ6g>).

As for the laws relating to care of children, while provisions recognizing religious practice may deserve rethinking as times change, we agree that no law should exempt religious parents or others from the duty of care and responsible decision-making required of all. As a church colleague noted in an opinion column (<https://l.facebook.com/l.php?>

u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.pennlive.com%2Fopinion%2F2017%2F04%2Ftaking_care_of_children_-_a_ch.html&h=AT2Kq9BsQxlvDQ3rCHMIEMymqfZopatfu_XnBC2wQ2s_Jhb29otBPblEbghhut4m74pqjlcndacdCB-eDjclEdMIMKFFbZ3hrsmL3eXhRDtdyh_OQ) last year, "Christian Scientists have raised many hundreds of thousands of children over the century-plus since the church's founding," and we've seen a lot of healing in this time. "Deeply as we value religious freedom, we recognize that it isn't absolute, but needs to be balanced with what's best for society as a whole."

Kevin Ness

The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston

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