



VWA Newsletter

October 2017

VICTORIAN WELFARE ASSOCIATION

Christian Science Nurses Conference in Melbourne

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During the weekend of August 25-26, over 50 Christian Science Nurses, Carers, Practitioners, COP's and Nursing Support Board members met in Melbourne for a jointly organised National Christian Science Nursing Conference held in the new Middle School Centre at Huntingtower School.

Many interstate and international delegates gathered first for a tour of The Heights, where they gained a greater awareness and understanding of the work of the carers at our facility, and the range of loving care and comfortable accommodation offered there by the VWA.

The conference opening featured an inspiring keynote address by Bonnie Castroman, the manager of Christian Science Nursing Services at The Mother Church. She stressed how Christian Science nursing was a vital part of the healing mission of the Church by the insertion in the Church Manual of the by-law for the Christian Science Nurse – Article VIII, Section 31. The strict adherence to this by-law meant that the Christian Science nurses in their work were never weak, never exhausted,

never unsupported. She spoke appreciatively of the jointly caring relationship between the Christian Science Nurse and the Christian Science Practitioner in supporting the patient.

Leslie Connery, the Government Relation Counsel to the Christian Science Committees on Publication at The Mother Church, spoke succinctly about the interface between the Christian Science Nurse and the public, and how that in Australia, the Christian Science nurses' practice is regulated by various State and Federal Government policies.

Two Christian Science Nurses involved in developing training programs in Australia spoke passionately about the work they were doing in their own states, often in conjunction with the unique facilities at The Heights.

Karen Bartley from Queensland and Sharon Rooker-Brade from WA, are running training through the Le Verger program, while Kathryn Bouchard West now has two trainees in a mentoring program in Victoria. A team from New Zealand Care Society also reported on how an inspiring care program was developing in New Zealand again through the Le Verger program.



Bonnie Castroman, the manager of Christian Science Nursing Services at The Mother Church.



The conference was a wonderful opportunity for the many workers in the field of Christian Science care, nursing and support to meet together and discuss blessings and challenges. It is hoped that these meetings will be held more frequently in the future.

At The Heights we provide weekly transport to First Church, Waverley for both Wednesday and Sunday church services. We also take residents to Christian Science lectures and the Annual Meeting of the Victorian Christian Science Nurses Support Association.

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VWA Annual General Meeting 1st April 2017



VWA FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2016 by John Callaway

Good afternoon everyone and welcome. Thank you for giving time today to join us in recognising and being grateful for another year of steady progress for VWA. Before I discuss the 2016 Financial Statement I would like to give some personal observations about Christian Science nursing and VWA – an ever-growing area of cooperation.

'Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!'

This is the first verse of Psalm 133 and indicates the positive benefits of close, supportive relationships between both individuals and groups. Unity of thought and direction make us strong.

The Christian Science movement in Australia is blessed in having various arms which focus on and support the senior members of our Church family. The Church Manual-authorized Christian Science nursing activities provide outstanding healing care by visiting Christian Science nurses in private homes on request. The Heights Residence operated here by VWA has a focus on 'assisted living' for those relying on Christian Science for their health and well-being and this will continue. The assistance required may be with mobility, showering, dressing, companionship or other needs.

However, while it is not the VWA's intention for The Heights Residence to become a Christian Science nursing facility, it is nevertheless important to recognise that there are regular demands for high level care, even if for a period whilst healing is taking place. This is the reason that, some years ago, VWA Board authorised the construction of a dedicated care room where a family member or a Christian Science nurse could be close by and stay overnight if required. It is

interesting to note that, historically, Leslie House had, in the 1950s, a Christian Science nurse living on site at Power Street, Hawthorn.

It has been a special pleasure to be witnessing an ever-developing level of interaction between the work of VWA at The Heights and our Journal-listed Christian Science nurse supported by VCSNSA.

VWA Board's wish is to constantly develop and strengthen Christian Science nursing in our Residence. This has been increasingly evident through the dedicated work of our current Victorian Visiting Christian Science nurse, Kathryn Bouchard West, who, although having been in Melbourne for a relatively short time, has fostered a new awareness in our field of the work and importance of Christian Science nursing. Kathryn has given several well-attended workshop



John Callaway

ON THE PASSING OF JOHN CALLAWAY . . .

Board members wish to acknowledge the wonderful contribution John made to the VWA. He joined the Board in August 2000. Shortly after he was elected Chairman and served in this capacity for almost 3 years. For the past 8 years John has been Treasurer and Company Secretary.

We remember the love and warmth he expressed in welcoming everyone - residents and visitors to The Heights and his sharing of the work of the VWA with supporters from all over Australia. Board members appreciated his dedication to his work for the VWA, his ability to explain complex financial statements and his practical solutions to so many situations.

Mrs Eddy states in Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, p.427:14,

'Nothing can interfere with the harmony of being nor end the existence of man in Science.'

*From Hymn 93, 'In perfect peace, with tumult stilled,
Enhavened where no storms arise,
There man can work what God hath willed;
The joy of perfect work his prize.'*

sessions to Branch Churches in Victoria.

Those attending gained enormously from Kathryn's insights and her willingness to answer questions put to her. Kathryn's workshops have addressed:

- The role of the Christian Science Nurse
- The scope of services provided by the Christian Science Nurse
- Christian Science nursing in the Christian Science facility
- An historical overview of Christian Science nursing
- What guides the Christian Science nurse in his/her work
- The specific ethical basis for Christian Science nursing
- Christian Science nursing qualities
- The Church Manual by-law (Article VIII Section 31)

It is a special benefit to VWA that Kathryn is living on site at The Heights and interacts constantly with our supervisory staff in The Residence. Kathryn has given training sessions for supervisors, emphasising both the practical and spiritual aspects of Christian Science nursing. She has offered training courses for those interested in becoming Journal-listed Christian Science nurses and one trainee is well into her course. There have been serious enquiries from others about training in the future, which is very pleasing.

This unity between VWA and VCSNSA is especially strong. It has been very beneficial to have one of VWA's Board members, David Fletcher, also as a Board member of VCSNSA. This is making communication much more effective and immediate.

The upcoming Australia-wide Christian Science nurse Conference will be held in August and VWA is pleased to be able to offer our facilities to Christian Science nurses and Christian Science nursing service Boards for activities of their choosing.

VCSNSA has been very generous in funding Christian Science nursing training provided in The Residence. This support is cause for much gratitude.

Another important component in this expression of unity in the care work for our Church family is the strong financial support we are receiving from the Christian Science Nursing Service of NSW (CSNSNSW). When the care facility in Sydney called Fair Havens closed, the property was sold and the beneficiary of the sale was CSNSNSW. The closure left The Heights as the only remaining Christian Science residential care facility in Australasia. Two years ago, the CSNSNSW Board made a very generous commitment to VWA to share 'a large proportion' of the annual income generated from the Fair Havens sale proceeds. In 2015 and again in 2016 CSNSNSW have donated \$200,000 towards our operating costs. This, together with full occupancy at Leslie House, has helped enormously in our financial operation. CSNSNSW have indicated that they see this support as ongoing.

The significance of this expression of unity from interstate is evidenced by the fact that the majority of our residents in the assisted living section of The Heights are from outside of Victoria. Clearly, we are being seen as an Australia-wide facility, for which we are very grateful. Our charges are moderate for the level of care and service we provide in The Residence. The villa units which surround The Residence provide 'independent living' options in a tranquil and supportive environment.

Recently I was reading some very interesting ideas from the New Zealand Care Society Inc. (NZCSI). NZCSI is the New Zealand equivalent of the VCSNSA and CSNSNSW in Australia. NZCSI is investigating the use of 'nurse helpers' as is done in Germany. We will watch developments with great interest.

There are many untapped possibilities for close interaction between Australian and New Zealand Christian Science nursing organisations using the common link of VWA's facilities. Although the potential of this has not yet been explored, the opportunity exists for our New Zealand friends to live in our 'assisted-living' wing in The Residence at The Heights or to consider life-leasing one of our garden units at The Heights. We look forward to developing these possibilities in the future and to assisting New Zealanders with the training of Christian Science nurses wishing to become Journal-listed and work in New Zealand.

My opening Bible verse is very applicable here.

*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell (and work) together in unity!
(Ps 133:1)*

The 2016 Financial Statements

It is very pleasing for a Treasurer to be able to report another operating surplus for the 2016 year.

Since changing our reporting methodology last year to focus on our operating result, our financial situation is clearer to understand. Prior to 2015 the regular revaluation of our equities portfolio showed a decrease in portfolio value as a 'write down' and an increase as a 'write back'. However, these are 'fictitious' figures based on a snapshot of our finances on a particular day of the year – 31 December in our case. When included



John Bruce, June Buck and David Weil

in the income statement, as they were until 2014, 'write downs' showed as large losses and 'write backs' as large profits, whereas nothing was actually gained or lost because no shares were sold, just re-valued.

The Statement of Financial Position for 2016 on page 6 shows VWA's total assets as \$5,706,079 compared with \$5,726,735 in 2015 ie not significantly changed. Our total equity, ie assets less liabilities or what we as VWA members own, is \$4,495,275 – up \$33,044 on \$2015.

On the income side, board and rent at The Heights is \$110,324 – about \$15,000 less than in 2015 reflecting slightly reduced occupancy in The Residence. However, Leslie House rentals at \$175,328 are up over \$40,000 due to full occupancy of the flats. Of the 19 flats, 12 are leased to those with an affiliation with the Christian Science community. For several tenants, this extends over decades. These tenants have a VWA – subsidised rental of approximately 70% of market rental.

The other 7 tenants, paying the full market rental, are carefully chosen individuals who meet our criteria of compatibility with our existing tenants. As I explained at last year's AGM, this change was made on a trial basis and it has been an overwhelming success in every way. The managing agents, Roger Davis Real Estate, deserve great credit for the care they have shown in choosing our new tenants.

Our dividend income from our share portfolio rose to \$312,841 up over \$42,000 on 2015. What a result! A large part of that increase was dividends generated from our participation in share buy backs offered by Telstra and BHP.

In July 2016, the Board made the decision to further enhance our investment income by selling call options on a trial basis. The selling of a call option involves offering share market traders the opportunity to buy some of our shares at a time in the future (say in 3 months' time) at a pre-set price, called the strike price, regardless of the market price at the exercise date of the option. In return for the opportunity to exercise the call option, the buyer pays a 'premium' to the seller (VWA) which is bankable and non-refundable. VWA uses European call options, which can only be exercised on a pre-determined expiry date. This gives us the flexibility to roll the option expiry date forward if we so desire. We have made the decision to only offer 30% of our holding in any particular stock.

Between July and December 2016, our call options trading has yielded \$47,508 in premiums after brokerage costs. When added to our dividend income of \$312,841, the total income from our investing activities was \$360,349 an outstanding result. In a full year call options earnings should be in excess of \$75,000.

Options trading is highly technical and we are grateful to have the services of a very experienced stock broker, Kevin Lowther of Shaw and Partners, whose learned advice has been crucial to the success of our trading.

Donations to VWA have again been strong in 2016.

Several large donations were received – in particular:

Feb 2016	Pupils of Mary Pratt CSB	\$50,000
Jun 2016	CSNSNSW	\$100,000
Aug 2016	VCSNSA	\$21,390
Dec 2016	CSNSNSW	\$100,000

In 2016 VCSNSA support was also in the form of on-going subsidy of the costs in providing Christian Science nursing training at The Heights.

Equally importantly we received 57 individual donations, as well as one from First Church, Canberra and one from the Christian Science Society in Merimbula.

Every donation, no matter how small, is greatly appreciated and valued and has helped us achieve an operating surplus in 2016. Individual donations in 2016 exceeded \$8000. Total donations in 2016 were \$279,892.

Rising staff costs are our biggest financial challenge at \$660,648, up around \$31,000 on 2015. Overall our total income was \$1,082,320 against total expenses of \$1,067,511 giving a surplus of \$14,809 - a terrific result.

Our report shows our total financial assets, ie shares and cash, were \$3,512,493 – little changed from 2015. Of that sum \$966,400 were Life Lease loans held in trust on behalf of our unit holders. Thus, about a third of our capital is refundable when Life Leases are relinquished. This shows the vital importance of unit Life Lease monies in providing ongoing investment income to VWA.

Page 6 of the Financial Statements shows our property, plant and equipment are valued at \$2,193,586. This is an historical 'at cost' figure as is used in most not-for-profit audits. The current realizable valuations for our two properties would be approximately \$8,000,000 at Glen Iris and \$5,000,000 at Hawthorn i.e. a factor of some 6 times the 'at cost' figures.

The achievement of another surplus this year is due in large measure to the prudent and dedicated service given by our General Manager, Angela Parkyn supported by wonderful and hard-working staff – care, supervisory, office, house-keeping, provisioning, cooking, grounds and maintenance. They are all superb and 'go the extra mile' in their work. The special input of the VCSNSA-funded Journal-listed Christian Science nurse is also greatly appreciated.

Our success is also produced by having a very focussed and effective Board of Directors. Their unity and willingness to try new approaches is a wonderful asset to VWA. I sincerely thank our Chairman, John Bruce, and all the Board, serving in an honorary capacity, for their insightful decision making and careful consideration of proposals presented.

I began this report by expressing my increasing gratitude for the unity exhibited by all the care organisations working with VWA – especially VCSNSA and CSNSNSW.

I am looking to the time when other Christian Science nursing services in Australia and New Zealand will regard VWA's accommodation and care options as available to them all – in fact to all who choose to rely on Christian Science for their well-being and healing.

Hymn 264 in our hymnal has these words in verse 2:

*We are not divided,
All one body we,
One in hope and doctrine,
One in charity.*

Thank you all for being part of this unified care activity of our Church. We are achieving a great deal together and there are greater benefits to come.

Let us continue to go forward together.

With much gratitude

John A Callaway

1 April 2017



Photos from the VWA AGM



VWA CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

by John Bruce

Firstly, a warm welcome to all. Thank you for joining with us today.

And a special welcome to new Life Lease residents, Lauris Adeney in Unit 19 and Marion Harding Units 5/6.

Our Residence has been able to provide support and care for 5 permanent residents during the year as well as 17 guests for rest and study and/or visitors to Melbourne. There have also been 22 Short term guests staying in furnished units for periods ranging from a few days to some months.

Of our 18 Villa Units, we currently have 8 Life Leased plus one under option, 4 are rented to staff, and one to the VCSNSA for our Victorian Christian Science nurse. This leaves 4 units available for Life Leasing and in the mean-time these units have been furnished and made available for short term renting.

Activities

These activities are open to all House and Unit residents. Activities this year have included in-house films, Trivia, Scrabble, and crossword games and hymn

sings. On-line Lectures have been enjoyed and well as The Mother Church AGM.

Besides regular attendance to Sunday and Wednesday Church services and local C.S. lectures and daytime concerts, outings have included drives to Jells Park, Lysterfield Lake, Port Melbourne, Wattle Park, Maranoa Gardens in Kew, Mordialloc, Williamstown, Albert Park Lake and Yarra Glen.

Your Board has also had a busy year in many areas.

Existing Residence

We have spent considerable time and effort in studying plans for possible building alterations to assist our staff in their caring work for our residents including the potential of a 2nd 'high care' room. Our present facility effectively has six ground floor guest rooms of which 5 are occupied. Upstairs there are a further 5 rooms, all with en-suite facilities, waiting for short or long - term guests.

We are also looking to upgrade I.T. facilities for the Residence and Activities Room. A number of our

guests in the Residence are active in their use of JSH Online and receive their lesson and other TMC publications on their laptops or iPads – guided in this by George Rindel.

We are also reviewing the implications of the new NBN service for I.T. that we have been told will be brought to our entire site in the next few weeks.

Of course, all properties require on-going maintenance, and this year a major item has been the removal of nearly 40 years of moss growth from our terracotta roof tiles and all our concrete paths and paving. This was a huge job and because of the high pressure of water needed, there was considerable touch up work required from water penetration into the units. Our thanks to residents for their understanding and patience in this project.

All boundary fencing to our west is to be replaced in the next few weeks.

And of course, there is a constant need for pruning of trees and in some cases the removal of trees that due to age or size have become dangerous.

Upgrades

Those of you who were with us at last year's AGM will recall a discussion under 'General'.

It was noted even though our charges were very low compared to the general market charges, at that date we had 7 Villa Units available for Life Leasing,

Comments and suggestions were invited from the floor that were felt would make Life Leasing more attractive, or other suggestions that may reinforce the financial strength of our facility. Many suggestions were forthcoming from the meeting and in discussions after the meeting, and much time and effort has been spent in following through with ideas presented.

One suggestion, that actually took many forms, was to fit out the units with new 'up-market' bathrooms and kitchens and other upgrades 'to move into the 21st century'. There were as many supporters to this proposal as there were who said, 'No I believe they are fine how they are'. We investigated costs and can advise the costs involved to anyone wishing to buy a Life Lease – ranging from \$30,000 upwards for new bathrooms, kitchens and or other changes. These can be done – at the purchaser's expense. The unit prices at The Heights are currently in some cases less than half typical costs of units in similar areas, so while major additional expenses can be undertaken, they would need to be at the cost of the Life Lease purchaser.

Our kitchens are replaced periodically when wear indicates it to be appropriate and we are also conscious that the current standard in kitchens and bathrooms is in line with a number of villages that we have been able to inspect.

One aspect that did show up, and was not a major cost item, could be the advantage in some circumstances

to have private back yards, to enclose pets or just for privacy. We have developed a number of proposals to make this possible for a number of the units, and this design work is ready to be implemented if requested by the Life Leasers concerned.



John Bruce, VWA Chairman

A proposal to sell off some of our land was considered, but, at least at this date, we feel it is not a practical nor desirable course of action for a number of reasons including the reduction of our 'community'. We would like more activity, not less, and this can best be affected with numbers, more not less residents.

To subdivide there would also be considerable challenges with respect to Town Planning and car parking provisions.

Where are we 'In The Retirement Village Market'?

Your Board is conscious of the importance that The Heights continues to provide a facility envisaged in 1978 'to provide a haven for students of Christian Science who feel the need for help and support in an atmosphere conducive to spiritual growth.'

In support of this facility we have Villa Units which are also part of that supportive haven.

However, in Victoria where there are literally hundreds of Retirement Villages, we need to be aware of how our facility compares to the general market.

We do keep an eye out to ensure that we are providing a good service and value for money. Other R.V. units that we have been able to visit generally are to a standard of finish comparable with The Heights. From our research, we believe that the rates asked for Villa Units at The Heights are well below their market value and in some cases in the order of 50% of comparable units, and the exit costs, which are a very important aspect to be conscious of, are less than any other Village that we have reviewed. (Most are 35%, we are 20%) This is not the time to go into details in this area, but we are very happy to arrange to discuss these matters on a 1 to 1 basis.

Similarly, the charges in the Residence are very modest

compared with other establishments, but in this area comparison is difficult because establishments registered with the Health Department, and therefore under medical supervision, are able to get support funding from the Government to a level that is related to the resident's financial situation. However, with an over simplification, I can state that the charges in The Heights for medium level care are exactly 1/3 the average cost for care in 700 nursing care facilities as reviewed by government researches, and full pensioners at these establishments are required to contribute 85% of their pension to the Home. (This information was obtained from postings on Government Web Sites).

Training Program For Christian Science Nurses

As announced in the last Newsletter a pilot program commenced in October at The Heights to train church members interested in becoming a Christian Science nurse. The training is being offered by the Victorian Welfare Association, who provide the necessary infrastructure and administrative services for the course. The course is being developed and presented by Kathryn Bouchard West, our Victorian Journal-listed Christian Science nurse.

Our first trainee Christian Science nurse is an enthusiastic and sincere class-taught student from Frankston. We have enjoyed having her as a trainee being mentored on visits by Kathryn for this training program. This pilot course is the first stage of training to be followed by further courses and ongoing experience that could lead to Journal listing.

We have a further 'expression of interest' in the training course for next year from a class taught student who has a background in Aged Care and is already working shifts as a Supervisor at The Heights.

Another trainee Christian Science nurse has also been working at The Heights with Karen Bartley, funded by CSNSSQ.

It is a great blessing to see this collaboration between the VWA and the VCSNSA in supporting and promoting the availability and the work of Christian Science nurses in Australia.

National Christian Science Nursing Conference

A Joint Committee has been formed to plan a National Conference for Christian Science nurses in Melbourne on the last weekend of August. Both VWA and VCSNSA Boards have supported the proposal and shared financial arrangements.

The Manager, Christian Science Nursing Activities at The Mother Church, Bonnie Castroman, is to give the keynote address.

Where possible, Christian Science nurses will be accommodated in units and rooms at The Heights, while billeting arrangements will be made for state representatives of support boards.

Offers of accommodation in family homes would be appreciated. Further information is available from David Fletcher.

Last Year's AGM

Memorandum and articles – and web site video

In my report last year, I included a reference to our 'Memorandum and Articles', and the follow through on this matter is to be covered in item 8 of our agenda today.

I also spoke of the short video tour of The Heights which is now on our web site, and we can now show it to this meeting.

Conclusion

To conclude I would like to express our sincere gratitude to our many supporters, and of course our deepest gratitude to our dedicated staff. They truly give of their all – beyond the call of duty. To dear Angie and to all your staff, our sincere and deepest thanks.

We feel in our work here the need to be ever conscious of the wisdom and comfort expressed in Hymn 53...

*'Everlasting arms of Love
Are beneath, around, above;
God it is who bears us on,
His the arm we lean upon.*

*He our ever-present guide
Faithful is, what'er betide;
Gladly then we journey on,
With His arm to lean upon.'*



*Glenn and his dog Bello,
visiting resident Pamela Lewis*

God's Golden Network

Address by Carey Arber, CS



I was delighted to receive an invitation to this meeting today ~ a golden opportunity! You'll hear that lovely word 'golden' quite a lot in this talk.

These days, we have such clever technology such as teleconferencing, video-conferencing, etc, but there is nothing like being together face-to-face, and especially with friends brought together for a common purpose by love.

People networks, as we know, are made of groups of people or organisations that are closely connected, and that work with each other – sometimes harmoniously, sometimes not. Human networks can be good and bad, and sometimes, a mixture of both. Thankfully, the un-useful, unhelpful, the bad and corrupt are temporary - they are shredded in the storms of life, only to disappear. The world and the news cry and shout about these false networks every day.

However, the divine network can only be good. Filled with hope, faith and love, it is honest, credible, and trustworthy, feels right and meets the high standard that divine Mind, Love demands of us. This golden network is infinite and eternal. And each one of us is absolutely part of it. What a joy to know, that we have the ability to see this golden network, and our part in it, because we live and move in Him. We are safely held in it – beneath, around, above. And no-one else can take or fulfil our unique part – only each one of us can do that!

There are many great examples in the Bible of both good and bad networks. Let's stay with the good and name a few. Christ Jesus, the great Exemplar, who called together his disciples and nurtured them to do wonderful, good works. The example of Elisha and the Shunammite woman: that special relationship gave Elisha a place to

stay whilst he also went about his Father's business. And Ananias, who was sent to help Saul during his spiritual conversion, also to go out and do great works. And the selfless work of the martyrs, who Mary Baker Eddy says: '*... are the human links which connect one stage with another in the history of religion. They are earth's luminaries, which serve to cleanse and rarefy the atmosphere of material sense and to permeate humanity with purer ideals.*' (S&H 37:9-12).



Carey Arber, CS

Throughout the Bible – our guide to eternal life - we can trace God's golden network.

The seamless, golden threads continue, through the discovery of Christian Science, by our beloved leader, Mrs Eddy, which resulted in The Mother Church, the Publishing Society and all the publications; the Christian Science nurses, practitioners, teachers, lecturers, branch churches with their Sunday Schools and Reading Rooms, and all the committees associated therewith. The residential care homes, like The Heights (VWA), and others around the world. There are many rooms in our Father's mansion! – enough to include everyone. We are in awe of God's

golden network. Can there be a better network of friends and workers, than the ones our Father-Mother God brings together? Of course, the answer is 'No!'.

A network connects us. There's a lot to be said regarding feeling connected. It's said by many who have suffered mental health issues, such as depression and loneliness, that even when they were surrounded by people, they felt alone. No matter what, nothing can break our connection with God. I'd like to share some of my healing experiences.

In 1995, I relocated to Sydney, from the Isle of Man, where we'd lived for a couple of years after England. It was a particularly low time in my life. I felt totally isolated and with no sense of purpose. I'd never even visited Australia before, but felt so sure that we were being led to go there. Soon we were granted temporary visas, and upon arrival there was much to do, as we only had a 3-month contract in rented accommodation. If only we'd had Mr Google to help us out in those days! I registered with employment agencies and took up temp work. Once again, I was in a new country, without family or friends. We didn't know a soul. Everything seemed to be temporary, but there was great hope. I had a renewed sense of confidence that this move was made for all the right reasons, through prayer, and I could see His hand guiding us. We could trust divine Love's seamless continuation of goodness. Each time we'd moved, over the years, I sought out comfort mainly at Christian Science Reading Rooms. I'd made a couple of very dear friends that way in England and in the Isle of Man. As we come to know, church is one of the most important and obvious ways to find good friends. However, in the earlier years, I often only got to see my husband on the weekends, due to his work abroad.

Though I'd graduated from the Christian Science Sunday School, church was a distant thought. All the while, I was keenly aware of our Father-Mother God and His angels, and I'd experienced many healings along the way through spiritual means alone.

Very soon, naturally, the need to feel connected deepened – to feel needed and to be part of my new community. One of my first jobs was as a volunteer 'grace lady'. Actually, I didn't know what the job was called, until I was in it. I remember asking a staff member what the role was called. Her childlike laugh was so loving, and looking me in the eye she said, 'we are grace ladies!' What a lovely name, for a role associated with serving one another, and glorifying God in our work. A job description I shall always treasure, because indeed I'm often reminded to keep striving for the high ideals of expressing that golden quality, grace. So, what did we do? On Sundays, we prepared and served morning tea to residents, and thereafter read the Bible Lesson aloud to the residents. The place was 'Fair Havens' – in Willoughby, Sydney.

One of the residents had served as a Journal-listed CS practitioner for many years. Not long after joining these friends, I noticed that this lady would always quietly leave the room, as soon as we started reading the Lesson aloud. I believe, that it was while I pondered this, I had a strong message that I should be at church. The love that was shared with those friends was just what I needed, and now I felt the need for, and obeyed the call, to be at church.

New friends embraced me and I joined my first church. I began teaching in the Sunday School almost immediately, and year later served as Second Reader (morning and evening services). What followed was quite amazing. I was ready for a permanent job, and was pursuing a particular organisation relentlessly, in employment services – in those days it was called the 'Job Network' designed by the Government to assist people into sustainable employment. I felt

qualified as far as understanding what it felt like to need work, and to be part of a community, and I so wanted to help others. However, there were several hurdles to get through. I'd been told in the past, that I would need a certificate in psychology at least, and some work experience in the field. Nevertheless, the manager of the office I'd frequented – even though no jobs were being advertised to work there – called me for a formal interview. Two staff members suddenly had to be transferred and they needed a receptionist urgently. Though I was over-qualified for that position I was delighted to start work immediately. The office was two blocks away from my church! A year later, whilst still Reading, I received necessary in-house training and served as a recruitment officer. Employment in that office lasted exactly the three years that I was Reading. It was time to move again – I was transferred to a new division of their company, quite some distance away, to continue my journey in the wider community.

All the while, I was yearning to feel home. We'd rented accommodation for almost a decade, and moved many times, just with a suitcase each. I needed home as Mrs Eddy expresses it: '[Home is the dearest spot on earth...](#)' (S&H 58:21-22). Again, through prayer and foot work, we found our first home together. The more I turned to Him, the more clearly I could see God's golden network!

For another five years, I worked in employment services, with various not-for-profit and commercial organisations. I loved this work so much. The last one was my favourite – a national Christian organisation. Just to give you an idea, each week we were sent emailed newsletters, which included a prayer list for us to include in our work – for those who wanted to participate – as there were employees of all faiths and no faith. Soon I found that job seekers often wanted to discuss things pertaining to God, however there was a fine line professionally, and we were not permitted to go into religion but focus on placements. I turned to divine Mind once more, and this

time asked for full-time work in His Field.

Little did I know that Fair Havens would employ me once more – this time to work part-time in their office, at the same time as I transitioned from the employment services work, into the part-time role of the Christian Science Committee on Publication for NSW office. Every step of the way, divine Mind kept me fully employed, and all my needs were met.

God's golden network! We are all drawn to it. We are all in it – God's children – living and moving in Him. Really finding that, '[whatever blesses one blesses all](#)' (Mrs Eddy), and from the Bible, '[...and I will bless them that bless thee.](#)' (Gen 12:3). Practising the forever Golden Rule: '[As ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them](#)' our Leader says is, '[the direct rule for practice of Christian Science.](#)' (Mis 282:8-9).

How can we grow and expand this golden network? How do we grow anything? We nurture it. We love it. Here's a superb example – whether our desire is to grow our branch churches, our memberships, our homes. Referring to The Mother Church, Mrs Eddy writes, '[Throughout my entire connection with The Mother Church, I have seen, that in the ratio of her love for others, hath His love been bestowed upon her; watering her waste places, and enlarging her borders.](#)' (Mis 127: 3-6).

It's all about love!

We are in awe of His continuous, seamless, good plan – His golden network. When we – each one of us – stop still and think about it, we can see His amazing, ever-active, unfolding plan – visible and invisible. In the Bible, Paul says, '[For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.](#)' (Col 1: 16). And our Leader puts it this way, '[As mortals gain more correct views of God and man, multitudinous objects of creation, which before were invisible, will](#)

become visible.’ (S&H 264:13-15).

I thought of a little analogy. Do you remember when stereograms were all the rage in the 80’s? - Certainly when I was in England. The picture is made up of patterns and you have to keep staring at it until you saw the 3D picture behind or in it. Lots of fun! The first time I experienced this was very frustrating, but with perseverance, I got it. So, picture a network of golden threads - free of dross – just the gold. The warp and the weft are strong, flexible, permanent. These golden threads catch the light, and are visible to the spiritually minded – to you – and the picture behind it is whatever divine Mind, Love is giving to you. All good.

From Science and Health, ‘The visible universe and material man are the poor counterfeits of the invisible universe and spiritual man. Eternal things (verities) are God’s thoughts as they exist in the spiritual realm of the real.’ (S&H 337:22-27)

And so, we must persevere and strive to see what’s really going on.

The Heights. It’s great to know that there is this bright light in the Australian community, giving and receiving true care and fellowship. Connecting like-minded friends and Christian Scientists, who understand that we are all God’s children, and that there is only one God. Turning to, and striving to rely, on Him alone

for healing. The mission and high standards set by the VWA, enable and encourage residents and employees to live in the manner of ‘earth’s luminaries’ – ‘which serve to cleanse and rarefy the atmosphere of material sense and to permeate humanity with purer ideals.’ (S&H 37:10-12)

It’s great to be actively working in our communities, in unique ways and in His time. What of ‘stationary power’? Mrs Eddy says, ‘The best spiritual type of Christly method for uplifting human thought and imparting divine Truth, is stationary power, stillness, and strength; and when this spiritual ideal is made our own, it becomes the model for human action.’ (Ret 93:13-16)

There’s nothing new to our Father-Mother God, but today, right now is a new moment, offering fresh pinions of light. Mrs Eddy says, ‘We own no past, no future, we possess only now.’ ... ‘Faith in divine Love supplies the ever-present help and now, and gives the power to ‘act in the living present.’ (My 12: 20-21; 26-28).

The question is: how can I do more to serve? Because serving keeps us awake and alert and loved! And what to do if mortal mind tries to interfere? This is a touching poem Mrs Eddy shared in her Dedicatory Sermon in Pulpit and Press (Pul 4:3-6).

‘What if the rain should say, ‘So small a drop as I Can ne’er refresh a drooping earth, I’ll tarry in the sky.’

Individually, each of us is a very important ‘drop’ and together we are an ocean. We should strive to be ready to serve one another, with all our love, and so fulfil our unique part in the golden network of golden threads -- ‘the only suitable fabric out of which to weave an existence fit for earth and heaven.’ (Mis 228:17-19).

Our Father-Mother God knows exactly where each of us is, and exactly where we should be, in His forever, golden network. The best part is that we are directly linked with divine Spirit.

Let’s conclude with some thoughts from the Christian Science Hymnal:

*Love is the golden chain that binds
The hearts that faithful prove;
And he’s an heir of heaven who finds
His bosom glow with love.
(Hymn 126)*

*In seamless gratitude, I weave
A silent, healing prayer,
With shining threads of ceaseless joy;
For man is God’s great heir.
(Hymn 146)*



Spring scenes at
The Heights



Photos on page 2 & 12 are from the CS Nurses Conference 2017 in Melbourne

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