



Online Q&A chat with Beverly Goldsmith, a Christian Science practitioner and teacher, on spirituality.com January 20, 2005

An event in the *Spirituality Live Series*

Event Introduction:

When tragedy strikes, and lives, homes, livelihoods and communities are devastated, the enormity of it can overwhelm us. When this happens, is there a way to deal with it? How do you begin the recovery? How do you rebuild? How do you restore shattered lives?

Spirituality.com host: *Welcome everyone. Beverly Goldsmith from Australia is here for the 3rd and final event in this series. Beverly, what are you thinking about today?*

Beverly: In last week's event I focused on finding comfort when facing loss and grief. Today I want to focus on recovery and restoration. People have been asking me,

1. How do you recover after tragedy?
2. How do you rebuild?
3. How can people stay safe as they undertake restoration work?
4. How do you sustain the loving required to restore shattered lives and communities?

Beverly Q.1. *How do you recover after tragedy?*

Mental health experts say it takes time for people to recover from such trauma. I've found that prayer aids and speeds the recovery process.

In 1969 I spent 120 days in Vietnam, singing 133 times for US and Australian troops. I was bombed, shot at, exposed to malaria and Agent Orange and had to pray for my life continuously. When I returned to Australia, I was physically and mentally exhausted. For days I simply lay on my parents' couch. At night I had terrible dreams. I'd coped with so much in Vietnam. Now I had to recover my mental well-being and strength.

I found help in the 23rd Psalm from the Holy Bible. Mary Baker Eddy wrote a spiritual explanation of this Psalm in her book *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* p. 578

"[DIVINE LOVE] is my shepherd; I shall not want."

This reminded me: divine Love made me well and keeps me well. I could never lose that.

"[LOVE] maketh me to lie down in green pastures:"

This told me: don't be frightened. God is right with me. He is keeping me safe.

"[LOVE] leadeth me beside the still waters."

This meant to me: God made me peaceful and calm and He keeps me peaceful and calm.

"[LOVE] restoreth my soul [spiritual sense]:"

This said to me: divine Love is restoring my health and well-being.

Holding to these spiritual thoughts, I improved rapidly. Shortly I was able to look for work and begin regular employment. The bad memories faded from me as naturally and as gently as darkness does in the presence of light. I was no longer fearful. I was restored in mind and body with no mental scars. It can be the same for everyone. All can recover. Divine Love helps each person be calm, peaceful, balanced, fearless and confident.

Event Transcript of Q&A:

Beverly's comments came during a live spirituality.com Online Event on January 20, 2005. She was responding to questions from the audience. Following is a transcript of the discussion:

1. Ant: *Does "recovery" mean more than just material things?*

Beverly: Yes. Recovery is, and relates to, the rebuilding of one's confidence, one's health, one's well-being. That kind of recovery comes to us from a divine source. It's a spiritual rebuilding that comes from knowing our oneness with God's goodness. That goodness may be evidenced in wellness, safety, a restored sense of family, hope for the future, a greater presence of God's love. These are the kinds of things that we can't lose. And they are more than just material things. Everyone in desperate need can regain peace, hope, a better future, love, family—right now.

2. Hens: *Beverly, this tragedy is so huge. Can you share how you pray?*

Beverly: Prayer is mental and silent. You can pray anywhere, anytime. You don't have to stop and close your eyes. You can pray while brushing your teeth or washing the dishes. Every time you think of people trying to recover from tragedy, take a moment to affirm good for them. Know that while you may not be present, divine Love is. Affirm in your prayers that people can feel divine Love's caring. That's what I'm doing.

I've been praying along these lines. "Divine Father, thank You for being present with everyone. You are loving and supplying every need, right here and now. Your laws of good govern everyone. Whatever is needed, is there in abundance. You are sheltering, protecting, defending, shepherding each survivor, orphan and aid worker."

3. Rmg: *How do you hold these spiritual thoughts in your daily life?*

Beverly: I affirm good spiritual thoughts moment by moment. When I hear a news report about some bad thing that's happened, I immediately affirm God's presence and power. I do this moment by moment. I don't put bad news aside and wait for an opportunity to pray about it. I say to myself, "Okay, let's affirm what's true about God and His children right now."

Sometimes I might say, for example, "Dear Father, You are divine Life and Love and You are keeping all of Your children safe and well." This kind of prayer is really aligning my thoughts with God's thoughts. If I said to God, "How do You see this situation?" what do you think He would say? My answer would be that He would see all of His children as healthy, well, safe, secure. That is how I need to be thinking, too.

4. Kr64: *Although we come from such diverse regions, are prayers from around the world 24/7 supportive, productive and protective?*

Beverly: Yes they are, and it's comforting to think that every moment there's somebody, somewhere, praying and giving spiritual aid to those recovering from tragedy. No one can be left out of God's tender care. Good is there for each one. There are no "haves" and "have-nots." God's goodness is universal and immediately available to everyone. Affirming that in our prayers will ensure that aid reaches those in need. That's the law of God.

5. Jni: *How do I help my children pray about this tragedy?*

Beverly: One way is invite them to pray that the tsunami children will recover by feeling God's love; that they can stay safe. Your children can listen to God for ideas to pray with, and you can explain to them that God never hurts anyone. He loves us. God made us to be safe and well. Divine Love is ever-loving and full of compassion.

Beverly Q.2. *How do you rebuild?*

The massive clean-up and rebuilding is underway. But how do you re-establish a normal life when you've lost everything near and dear to you? Mary Baker Eddy, the author of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, had to face that question in her life.

As a child she had a loving, normal family upbringing. She loved her mother dearly, adored her siblings and respected her father. As a young woman she married, lost her husband to illness, had to move back home, lost her mother and brother, and was separated from her young son. She married again, only to have it end in divorce. By now she was alone, in mid-life, without a home of her own, no career, and no steady means to support herself.

At this low point she made a life-changing decision to rebuild her shattered life. She turned to divine Love to help and guide her. Step by step, Mary Baker Eddy began to move forward. She never gave up. She went on to recover from setbacks and forge a whole new life, helping others around the world. She had multiple careers as a healer, teacher, author, publisher, speaker and founder of the Church of Christ, Scientist.

Mary Baker Eddy's life story has encouraged me in my life. The ideas in her book *Science and Health* have shown me how to recover from unemployment, financial crisis, loss of loved ones and illness. I've learned that no situation is ever hopeless. The universal laws of Life, Truth and Love have helped me find solutions to problems.

That's why I'm affirming that divine Love is with all the people trying to rebuild. They can recover. They can restore their lives, homes, livelihoods and communities.

6. Spi: *The death and destruction is huge. How do we even begin to rebuild?*

Beverly: The rebuilding process starts in thought. It's a mental process. Divine Mind gives us the right ideas to rebuild our lives, homes and livelihoods. The laws of divine Mind govern everyone rebuilding in devastated areas. I've been affirming that people have the right ideas to help them move ahead; that prayer helps in the rebuilding process; and that full restitution is available for everyone, because divine Love has an abundance of good that cannot be destroyed.

7. Die: *How do we pray so different factions will work together to rebuild?*

Beverly: Affirm the presence of the one divine Mind or intelligence. Don't accept the notion of many conflicting minds. This is important when there are various political and religious tensions. Affirm that the one divine Mind unites all interested groups. Expect to see cooperation, harmony, unity, love, support for a common cause to be expressed by everyone. Divine Love includes, not excludes.

8. Sr: *I believe a number of Western nations have offered to freeze debts?*

Beverly: Yes. The world is pulling together in a way it's never done before. I'm encouraged by the generosity of people around the world. To me it's an expression of God's love. I trust we'll see greater unity, cooperation, love, and generosity. We can affirm: "**Divine Love always has met and always will meet every human need.**" [*Science and Health* p.494] We can affirm this in our prayers for individuals, organizations, banks and governments.

9. Up: I hear there's corruption with donations. How can we pray about this?

Beverly: Pray when you donate. Pray for guidance who to give to. Pray to know that your financial aid will reach the people for whom it's intended.

I've been affirming that the divine Mind is governing this restoration process. Divine Mind is honest. Therefore, God's child, made in His image, is honest. No one can take advantage of this situation. What's been given is to aid recovery and restoration, and people can honor that generosity. I'm also affirming that there's no evil influence to engender stealing. God's children can say "no" to wrong thinking and wrong acting. They can listen for and obey divine Love's direction.

10. D5: What about "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" in Lord's prayer?

Beverly: Yes. Our debts are not always financial. They can be hateful feelings of greed, resentment or envy. Forgiving debts is really forgiving others of hurt. Forgiving ourselves and others is very important and healing.

Beverly Q.4. How can people stay safe as they undertake restoration work?

Prayer can keep people safe from disease and harm. That's what I've found in my life.

I once worked in an Asian country where malaria was rampant. My employer urged my colleagues and me to take anti-malaria tablets every day to protect ourselves from the disease. My colleagues did, but I decided not to.

For a number of years, I'd relied on the practice of Christian Science healing, the divine laws of God, to care for my health. I'd had many healings. I felt confident about relying on divine Love to keep me well. Each day I prayed for myself with this idea. **"The history of Christianity furnishes sublime proofs of the supporting influence and protecting power bestowed on man by his heavenly Father, omnipotent Mind, who gives man faith and understanding whereby to defend himself, not only from temptation, but from bodily suffering."** *Science and Health*, p. 387

This reminded me that not only had God made me well but He was keeping me well. No matter where I was living, I was still His child, created in His image. I had the spiritual capacity to defend myself from sickness. I knew God was the only Creator. He was all-powerful. Everything He made was good. God never made anything bad that could cause me to be sick.

I reasoned that good health was actually real and powerful because health came from God and sickness did not. My true nature was spiritual, perfectly healthy and well. I didn't have to suffer. I could pray so that bad things didn't happen to me.

I also prayed with this Bible verse. **"Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling."** [King James Bible. Psalm 91:9,10]

This Bible verse assured me that my health couldn't be threatened by disease. God was my refuge. I was exempt. As a result of my proactive prayer, I didn't contract malaria then or afterwards.

I'm confident that the spiritual ideas in the 91st Psalm also apply to those rebuilding. All can stay safe. The laws of divine Life and Love operate for everyone.

11. Mo: *The UN has reported that the expected outbreak of disease hasn't occurred. Is this a tribute to the love going out to help and heal?*

Beverly: Yes. I'm sure our prayers are helping to alleviate and offset suffering. Health authorities have to issue warnings, and these give us the opportunity to pray with the **91st Psalm**. Everyone can stay safe from disease.

When I hear of outbreaks of disease, I defend myself. By that, I mean I affirm my immunity as God's child. I remain confident in the Allness of God, good. I know that divine Love is protecting me. This is also true for everyone else.

Beverly Q.4. *How do you sustain the loving required to restore shattered lives and communities?*

I've found that heartfelt, scientific prayer undergirds persistence and helps maintain determination. It keeps love fresh and vital. It prevents weariness. It speeds recovery.

In giving spiritual aid for recovery and restoration, you and I can do 5 things.

1. Be persistent, unceasing, in affirming that divine Love is bringing renewal and restoration.
2. Expect full recovery and restoration for everyone.
3. Shut out discouragement and doubt.
4. Affirm that divine Love's goodness is ever-present. Believe it. Rejoice in it. Expect it.
5. Affirm that divine Love has many good ideas—new opportunities, for restoration and progress.

12. D26: *How can we best maintain our support over the coming months?*

Beverly: In praying over the long term, we need to keep thought fresh and vital and we need to have persistence and perseverance. Aid workers have said rebuilding will take a long time. Our prayers can help that process move ahead.

Let's not lose sight of what's needed to rebuild these communities – even though this tragedy is moving down the news reports. Let's ensure it doesn't move down in our prayers. Those five things I mentioned can help us keep up our spiritual aid everyday.

I particularly like "Step 4. Affirm that divine Love's goodness is ever-present. Believe it. Rejoice in it. Expect it." Let's do more than affirm that divine Love's goodness is present. Let's have confidence in it and expect to see it. Expectation is very important in healing. Christ Jesus said if we had faith – confidence, we could move mountains.

13. P-A: *The Latin root-meaning of con-fidence is 'with-faith'. Everyone can move forward with faith in God, Buddha, etc.*

Beverly: Yes. Universal divine Love is known by different names but it's still the one, divine Love. That divine Love, the Bible says, is no respecter of persons. Divine Love is impartial, universal, available to people of faith, and those of no faith.

Sparrow: *Beverly, thank you for your devotion to this prayer project. You have inspired so many of us to stay alert to the continued need for our prayers.*

Spirituality.com host: *Thanks so much Beverly. We're almost out of time. Are there any closing ideas you'd like to leave us with?*

Beverly: Keep praying about exchanging horror for hope; comfort when facing loss and grief; recovery and restoration. Disasters aren't the wrath of divine Love. They can't hide the healing and restorative power of divine Love. Divine Love is present with everyone to comfort, heal, renew and restore. Thank you so much everyone, for participating.

References in chat: *Science and Health* p. 494:10-11, 387:27, 578:4-18. **KJ Bible:** *Matt 6:12, Ps 91:9,10, Matt 21:21,22*