

## Spirituality supports safety in the skies—a healing response to fear

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It was Monday, November 12, 2001, in North America. In Brisbane, Australia, where I live, it was 4



a.m. on Tuesday, November 13. At about that time my wife, Beverly, was scheduled to arrive at the West Coast of the United States on an overseas flight from Australia. We had agreed that she would phone me on her arrival. After a short stopover she was to board a plane for the ongoing flight to the East Coast.

On the previous evening I had been at our home praying about peace and safety, with her travel very much in my thoughts. As a basis for my prayers I'd found comfort by what I read in the Bible and Mary Baker Eddy's writings. For example, I was encouraged by Christ Jesus' promise: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you .... Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Also, I was impressed by Mrs. Eddy's inspiring example as a peacemaker. At one time she wrote, "Each day I pray: 'God bless my enemies; make them Thy friends; give them to know the joy and the peace of love'" (*The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, p. 220).

***I felt numb when I realized that the plane that had crashed was the same airline my wife was using for her journey.***

Imagine, then, my utter disbelief and dismay in those early morning hours, when I tuned in to a news channel and was immediately confronted with the vivid display of a disintegrated aircraft engulfed in flames. The announcer reported that the crash had just occurred in the United States. I felt numb when I realized that my wife was flying on the same airline as the one mentioned in the news flash.



I hurriedly checked her itinerary, and was tremendously relieved to find that her flight number was different. Then other doubts and concerns poured into my thinking. How would this event affect other flights including the connecting flight my wife needed to stay on schedule? What about the people on board the flight that had crashed? At that stage, I was allowing myself to get into "panic mode." But even in the midst of these feelings, I knew I had a choice as to what I was going to do about the situation. I could either succumb to fear or turn unreservedly in prayer to God for guidance and assurance.

I quickly made my decision. It was as if I was hearing my own voice saying, "Whoa! Don't let yourself be hypnotized by fear. Take a firm stand for the spiritual perfection you know to be real and true. God is always in control of His perfect creation." Even the people in the airplane that crashed were still in God's care, inseparable from Him. Each of us is in His tender care—always.

***I still needed to assuage some lingering fearful doubts.***

These prayerful thoughts were helpful to me, but I still needed to assuage some lingering fearful doubts. Then I recalled this simple, comforting message from *Science and Health*: "The calm and exalted thought or spiritual apprehension is at peace." I would find peace by gently affirming that all right activity is in accord with God's perfect plan. That God was in complete control of time and space—as always.

Also, part of a favorite poem by Mrs. Eddy further strengthened my resolve to remain buoyant with hope. The poem's opening stanza proclaims:

It matters not what be thy lot,  
So Love doth guide;  
For storm or shine, pure peace is thine,  
Whate'er betide.

("Satisfied," *Poems*, p. 79)

This reassured me that God, divine Love, is present in every situation—guiding, guarding, protecting, and caring for our every move. We are never isolated, abandoned, or uncared for. We are forever enfolded in His all-embracing love.

***I remembered that one of my wife's friends lived in the city where the plane was due to land.***

As I prayed with these spiritual truths, I wondered if there was any practical action I could take to help my wife. I remembered that one of her friends lived in Los Angeles, and I phoned this individual to ask if Beverly could stay with her if her stopover was an extended one. The friend's loving and generous response was so calming and strengthening. She assured me that she and many others would be actively praying for safety in the skies and orderly calm on the ground. I was so grateful for her supportive care and for this immediate evidence of universal Love.

When my wife rang me from the airport at Los Angeles, I asked her if she knew about the airline incident in the US. She said she had just heard about it, but added "I've come all this way. I'm not turning around now. God always takes us *all* the way. I'm putting my complete trust in Him."

***We agreed to keep praying.***

So, we agreed to keep praying to know that all needs would be met, and safety for all would be assured by the presence of divine Love.

This helped to turn my thoughts to the plight of the relatives and friends of the passengers on the airline that had crashed near New York. I asked myself, "How can I best be of help to these people?"

These lines from a poem by Thomas Moore came instantly to thought:

Come ye disconsolate, where'er ye languish,  
Here health and peace are found, Life, Truth, and Love;  
Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your anguish;  
Earth has no sorrow but Love can remove.

(Thomas Moore and Thomas Hastings, adapted, *Christian Science Hymnal*, No. 40)

There was my answer. Pray for the healing of grief for all those associated with the airline incident. Pray to know that the healing balm of divine Love was bringing immediate comfort and lasting consolation to everyone concerned.

***Those associated with the airline incident would be sustained by the serene strength of divine Love.***

The power of divine Love could dissolve feelings of shock and distress for those dear ones as they received the distressing news. They would be sustained by heaven-borne assurances of love and peace. The serene strength of divine Love was right at hand to aid them in their time of dire need.

Some six hours later my wife phoned me again. She said she had arrived safely at her destination without any untoward incidents. The whole atmosphere had been one of heartfelt compassion and loving concern for the welfare of others. She had similar experiences when she made the long but uneventful return journey to Australia about a week later.

This episode was a salutary learning experience for my wife and me. It reemphasized to us that our well-being is constantly determined by ever-present divine Love. As Mary Baker Eddy put it in this wonderful insight in *Miscellaneous Writings*: "What a glorious inheritance is given to us through the understanding of omnipresent Love! More we cannot ask: more we do not want: more we cannot have. This sweet assurance is the 'Peace be still' to all human fears, to suffering of every sort" (p. 307).

When loved ones are travelling across the country or on the other side of the globe, the thought of being separated by gigantic distances may seem quite daunting and worrying. But distance and separation have no impact on the immediacy of divine Love and its protective, sustaining power. It is this spiritual assurance that brings peace and harmony into our lives—and keeps our loved ones safe.

*David lives with his wife, Beverly, in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.*

#### **Traveling safely with divine Love:**

##### **Science and Health:**

[506:11-12](#)

##### **King James Bible:**

[John 14:27](#)