

[A Christian Science Perspective](#)

Be a good Samaritan

Looking to God, divine Love, to guide us, we can find practical ways to be “good Samaritans” in helping individuals and our cities thrive.

December 3, 2021 By Susan Tish

My husband and I were walking down the beautiful new RiverWalk in our city of Detroit. The area used to be considered unsafe, so we were pleasantly in awe of this now vibrant and well-tended public walkway.

Soon we came upon a group of young girls playing and haphazardly kicking rocks onto the pathway. A jogger stopped to kindly ask them not to do that, explaining that there were many bikers and runners using the path, and someone could get hurt if they ran into a rock. The girls quickly apologized and began helping him clear the path. Here, I thought, were some good Samaritans!

The parable of the good Samaritan comes from the Bible, but its message still resonates as a call to civic responsibility today. In the biblical account, Christ Jesus discusses with “a certain lawyer” how the two most important commandments are to “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself” (see [Luke 10:25-37](#)). To illustrate who qualifies as a neighbor, Jesus proceeds to tell this parable.

In short, a man traveling on foot had been attacked and left to die by the side of the road. Individually, a couple of passersby avoided helping him by crossing to the other side of the road. But a man from Samaria stopped to help him. He bandaged his wounds and brought him to an inn to rest.

When issues arise, it can be tempting to believe that it’s someone else’s problem – much like the actions of those who “passed by on the other side” indicated. And when the problem concerns the decline of our major cities, it can be tempting to blame institutions such as the local government or the police, or even attribute it to the global pandemic.

Christ Jesus’ parable, however, illustrates that we are all neighbors, all interconnected and reliant on each other. It is everyone’s concern to love and care for our fellow citizens and for the surroundings in which we live. God, who is divine Love, freely gives to all. So, as His children, we naturally possess this same ability to unhesitatingly care for each other.

This impartial Love and its very practical help is at the heart of the global church established by [Mary Baker Eddy](#), who also founded this news organization. As she explains in her book “Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures,” “Love inspires, illumines, designates, and leads the way. Right motives give pinions to thought, and strength and freedom to speech and action” (p. 454). This impactful Love works in each of us and is available to heal the wounds of one person or an entire city.

A few years ago I was frustrated by the state of decline in Detroit, and inwardly I blamed our lagging inner-city schools. For years I had thought of becoming a mentor to a student but had kept putting it off, feeling as though my time could be better served praying for the whole community rather than just helping one student. Nevertheless, continuing to feel impelled to help, I finally signed up with a program to mentor a middle school girl from an impoverished neighborhood.

One month later, the pandemic closed our schools, leaving many inner-city children behind as they lacked the resources or support at home to keep up with online school. But this student and I kept in touch regularly so we were able to discern her practical needs. At first, she felt discouraged and alone. But, trusting divine Love to guide both of us, I was able to encourage her with the knowledge that she was very cared for and always had a place to turn for help.

This student eventually thrived during the shutdown, bringing up her grades and earning admittance into the best high school in the city. Divine Love had inspired and led the way to meet her needs. Deciding not to “pass” on this spiritual impulse to love my neighbor confirmed for me the power of every individual expression of God’s infinite and inevitably healing love.

Now, a few young people moving rocks off the sidewalk or an adult mentoring a young student may not alone be the solution to the challenges facing Detroit or any other city. But each such act is an indication of Love operating in human consciousness and practically meeting individual needs. Instead of lamenting the challenges, we can daily celebrate, in each city, every evidence of God’s loving and healing action.