

Out of disaster: a new sense of community

By [Beverly Goldsmith](#), Christian Science [practitioner](#) and [teacher](#) in Brisbane, Australia.

While country towns in Australia are widely recognized for their sense of community, the suburbanized capital cities struggle to have citizens remain in touch with each other. Neighbours often don't know neighbours. Everyone just goes about his or her own business.



In Brisbane, Queensland, where a devastating flood has left this city of over two million people shocked and on its knees, something extraordinary is taking place. Out of overwhelming heartbreak and loss, a new sense of community is emerging. You can see it happening.

In the flood aftermath, thousands of citizens from every walk of life are helping each other. Politicians, sports stars, and complete strangers of all ages are turning up with shovels, brooms and mops to help the clean-up of more than 20,000 inundated homes and businesses.

Across Australia's third largest city, residents have stopped asking what they can do to help and have moved into action. They are doing anything and everything to clean away the smelly, brown, contaminated, silt-laden flood water from homes, buildings, roads, and paths. The outpouring of this roll-up-your-sleeve-and-prepare-to-get-dirty assistance is inspiring.



Evacuation centres staffed by volunteers from the Red Cross, community and church organizations are feeding, clothing and re-housing families and individuals who have lost everything. This love and care for one's fellow-man is bringing a sense of Christly comfort and hope to all who walk through these centres' welcoming doors.



In my life-time I've never witnessed such a tangible expression of a city's people showing love for one another.

It's community cooperation on an unprecedented scale.

It's impressive and heartening.

So what is it that stirs hearts, and moves individuals to pitch in and lend a hand?

I believe it is the Christ - the voice of good that is constantly at work, speaking to people, giving them ideas to benefit others. This Christly-intuition is what urges individuals to be loving and kind to others, to be good and do good. Christliness is a natural inclination. What's more it's within each of us. That's why so many are heeding and following this divine prompting right now on Brisbane streets.

The action of getting out into the community and showing love for those who have been hit hard by flooding, has a divine source. It comes from God, divine Love, and you see it all around on every flood-ravaged street. This love of God is not some vague, abstract thing.

God's love is manifested in concrete, practical ways.

A family member of mine who found his home spared in the flood, immediately began helping others to clean up. A man offered his home and electricity so that flood victims could come and re-charge their phones - such a blessing when you have no home left. A young boy, who only knew five songs on his guitar, busked in his street and raised over \$1,000 for flood victims. Such outpouring of generosity and unselfish assistance is spiritually motivated. It's the evidence of God's love.

Mary Baker Eddy shared this insight into the community-binding nature of God. *"Divine Love always has met and always will meet every human need."* *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* 494:10



It's true. No matter how dire the situations are that confront a community, or what the personal needs might be, God's love ensures that an answer is at hand. Every need is met through the grace of God. This has been my experience. Divine Love has never forgotten nor deserted me in my hour of need. That same loving care is on hand for every single flood-damaged householder and business owner.

Community spirit, rising up from devastation, pulling together, working as one, is the sign of God's love at work, binding up broken hearts and leading to restoration. Community in action also fulfils this Scripture. *"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."* [Galatians 6:2] That's why in times of disaster, the love of God and the spirit of the Christ ensures that every community emerges stronger and united.



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[Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures](#) by Mary Baker Eddy, is her textbook on Christian Science healing practice and her class textbook in teaching Christian Science healing.

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