

Monitor Passport Winning Essay

Annika Harris
NLC 2022Z

I never enjoyed reading the news before because it always seemed so negative and depressing. I also found the headlines highlighted false information and did not give the full picture or truth on a subject. This is partly why I didn't read the news. After reading an article on something negative, I immediately feel awful and think how terrible it is that I can't do anything to help. Reading the Christian Science Monitor was the first time I read the news in-depth. The outlook and perspectives it provided on the world were upbeat and insightful, and I found I enjoyed reading the news. I also became more confident, positive, and more prepared to pray for the world.

As Mary Baker Eddy stated, "The object of the Monitor is to injure no man but to bless all mankind." This is exactly what the Monitor does, it brings a more positive perspective that other news sources don't provide. It gives a new vision of light to the world. If people are only reading a negative single story, people can get stuck in their view. The Monitor helped me realize there are answers to the issues we are facing. People are coming up with creative solutions and hard workers who are willing to help others. These articles from the Monitor can inspire others. There are stories about people acting out of love because they care about other human beings and the environment. Selfless acts are what the world should be all about. It is encouraging to see examples of how the good outweighs the bad.

I read articles on various topics: a man running a charity organization out of his apartment, efforts to encourage sustainable tourism in Menorca, creating a group to empower the youth in Afghanistan, and not giving into a stereotype about those with

disabilities can and can't do. All of these articles helped me realize that there are amazing people and communities in the world that truly want to make a difference, and they have allowed me to see that I too can overcome these so-called limits and boundaries that seem to be set by other news outlets. I found these articles useful and insightful because they inspired me to apply these perspectives in my own life.

Applying Christian Science to my daily life has always been a struggle. Being given the task to pray for the world seemed very daunting. How were my prayers supposed to have an effect on the world when I barely can pray for daily occurrences in my life? This question bothered me when I started reading these articles. In the beginning, I wasn't fully comprehending them and didn't have any interest in reading them. However, as I continued to read more I found articles that pertained to my interests. I really enjoyed the "People Making a Difference" and "Aid to the Environment" sections, as I was able to see that there are those who care about the well-being of others or the environment. I am very passionate about helping both of them, and the articles encouraged me to recognize that I too can apply my prayers and thoughts to help those across the world.

A poem that my mom used to recite to me before I went to bed when I was younger was Mary Baker Eddy's A prayer 'To the Little Children':

Father-Mother God,
Loving me,-
Guard me when I sleep;
Guide my little feet
Up to thee

While reading these articles this poem came to mind, and the memory of feeling so safe and cared for as I fell asleep. I realized that prayer gives that same sense of safety and protection over all the challenges I was reading about in the world.

National Leadership Council

All Class Retreat

January 14–17, 2022



Additionally, reading these articles gave me a newfound sense of comfort, since there was proof good was happening in the world, and the Monitor shared that goodness with others. I was able to understand the purpose of reading the Monitors- as it brings light to new perspectives on negative subjects and shows actions people are taking and how the world is changing because of their brave and courageous acts.

I came across an article called “Glenn Hening strives to keep the ‘selfish’ out of surfing.” This man aims to create a more positive environment for the surfing community and founded the organization the Surfrider Foundation, which brings together surfing communities to clean up trash in the ocean. Not only does his program promote awareness for environmental issues, but it also creates a more welcoming community and atmosphere for those in surfing and beyond. Glenn said that “surfers can turn waves into a welcoming place instead of an aggressive arena.” This made me think of the Monitor and how when you change your perspective and expand your views to incorporate the more positive side of things you are able to create an uplifting atmosphere and mindset for yourself. This sense of preserving the beauty of nature to benefit others truly inspires and encourages me to want to do more in my community and utilize prayer to make a positive impact.

In this article Glenn also touches on the “spirit of generosity”, and how far a simple act of kindness can go. This reminded me of the class promise that my National Leadership Council (NLC) class and I made on our first summer together. A snippet of it says; We will create a safe space together, with gratitude and generosity to motivate us. Last summer on our service trip I felt as though we truly pursued and exemplified this promise. During our time in New Orleans serving with NOLA Mission included going out into the streets to deliver food to those experiencing homelessness. We also got to know the individuals we served which altered my entire perspective of people without homes; it showed me the value of approaching life with a more positive and grateful outlook, a shift

National Leadership Council

All Class Retreat

January 14–17, 2022



that impacted me beyond our service in New Orleans. They radiated kindness and joy, despite their struggles, and interacting with them taught me to be more considerate and understanding towards others. My interactions with them led me to see that I must look for the good in the world, and the great people that are making a change, versus how I was originally looking- which was more negative and only seeing bad things. With this change in perspective, I was able to approach life with a more positive outlook. This experience encouraged me to understand the power of prayer.

The Monitor has enriched my perspective on the world and approach to the news. One of the biggest takeaways that I have gotten from reading the Monitor and praying for the world is to not let bad thoughts and news distract my thinking and to only allow good thoughts in. Because once this is accomplished I am able to overcome the negative. By reading these articles in the Monitor I have had the chance to learn about topics and stories I had never heard of and seeing this I was able to grasp the understanding that news can have a positive impact and create change in the world. Overall, from reading these articles I've learned the importance of loving others and how one small act of kindness or generosity can have a valuable impact on someone or a community. Praying for the world has opened my eyes to see the good that already exists and to embrace this and spread the love.