

We hope you will join us at the

Fern Lodge Annual Meeting

and hear a talk by

Thomas C. Asher, C.S. of Sacramento, CA

“Realizing God’s Care”

Sunday, October 24 at 2:30 p.m.

*First Church of Christ, Scientist
2 Eckley Lane, Walnut Creek*

Child care will be provided, and there is ample parking at the church.

A map and directions to the meeting are on page 8.

Fern Lodge Focus

September 1999

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Progressive steps in the office of Director of Nursing

Please see the special insert in this Focus.

Christian Science nursing forum—report from the March meeting

In March Fern Lodge sponsored a seminar on the theme, *Christian Science nursing is a religious ministry. What does this imply?* Discussion touched on facility nursing, contagion, benevolence, and nurses training. This article presents some of the ideas shared on the following topics: *What conflicts appear between individual and institutional responsibilities for Christian Science nurses working in facilities, and how can these conflicts be resolved?* and *What in Christian Science nursing can be taught, and where should this teaching take place?*

The consideration of how to resolve conflicts between individual demonstration and institutional responsibilities led to a thoughtful exchange of ideas. Most of the nurses had experiences they shared which demonstrated the power of prayer to resolve institutional problems.

In any nursing facility there appear to be collisions between the nurse's individual and institutional responsibilities regarding schedules, assignments, patient care, personalities, etc. A nurse may ask, "Is my life at the mercy of whoever makes the monthly schedule or assigns me my rooms every day?" It's how these issues are taken to God and resolved in the nurse's prayers that determine the harmony of the nurse's experience and also how helpful she is to the facility in which she works.

If nurses believe that the environment they work in can restrict their nursing then a whole list of mortal beliefs can arise. If we come to work or to a patient's room and see personality conflicts or physical problems, then we will need to deal with these by healing them for ourselves. If we recognize that the whole environment is under God's control then we consciously enter it with God's guidance. We live in this environment as God leads the way. Every aspect of the environment conforms naturally to divine law.

God cares for man. This does not mean that as nurses we have no responsibilities in our work. We need to "think and act rightly." It takes mental vigilance to make sure we do not abandon our responsibility for

our own practice of Christian Science. Such vigilance is expressed by seeing our assignments for each day balanced within our nursing ministry rather than hindered by it. We need to really pray to get from the thought which says, "God cares for man so it doesn't matter what I do," to "God cares for man and what is my place in it?" We need to be willing to do whatever is needed, and never think or act as though we are above the work that God has provided for us.

One nurse found that she had to examine and wrestle with her expectations of the facility. She realized she didn't need to agree with the facility, but she had to be in agreement with God. She saw this as her right relationship with God. This kept the work less personal and freed her from trying to be the "good nurse" according to the judgments of others and enabled her to focus on patient care. We need to be in harmony with God, divine Principle, first, and this should bring us into harmony with each other.

When we serve on boards it is essential to remember that there is no authority other than God's authority. It is important to get a better view of authority and stop thinking of boards on top, then administrators, then workers. A board's job includes setting policies that allow nurses to practice as they are led. The board can ensure that policies are understood as guidelines which encourage the nurses to have their own unfoldment. The board's work includes respecting and honoring God's guidance in the daily work of the administration and all the facility staff members.

Popular management theories and practices and world beliefs about institutions may seem to encroach on facilities and their nursing activities. We need to see an institution as fulfilling a divine purpose. The right idea of institution brings a sense of unity to individuals without binding the individual or interfering with his sense ministry.

We may wonder, "Why are we dealing with

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The Acts of the Apostles, part 2 — The Power of the Spirit in Paul

In the book of Acts Luke is answering the question, How is it that God's promises to Abraham have ended up in a Gentile church? It may seem that either God is not faithful to His promises or Jesus is not the Messiah, and either one is a bad choice. So Luke wants to show that the mission to the Gentiles was a continuous outgrowth of God's promises. The message of God's Messiah was offered to the Jews first, and they rejected it. But the power of the Spirit was so strong that it simply could not be contained.

We will take up the story at the point when Saul comes on the scene. Saul was a righteous Jew, filled with religious fervor. He took on the task of ridding the world of the small, obnoxious little sect claiming that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. Saul felt they were a great threat to his religious beliefs. To get a clearer picture of what happened when Saul tried to stamp out the early followers of Christ Jesus, think of the image of a dandelion when it gets to the puff ball stage. In the process of stamping on them, the seeds loosen, and all those little seeds catch the wind and fly off to take root somewhere else. And that's what happened with the early church.

As Saul went around from house to house, trying to stamp out the people who believed in Jesus, he was finding that nobody was home. And that really made him mad, because he knew they were fleeing the city. And where did they go? They went all over. They went back to their extended families—back to the countryside, back to their roots. And of course, on their way, they were talking. They simply could not keep their mouths shut. This became a shining example of how God's plan of goodness overcame that which appeared to be very bad.

So while in fact Saul's intentions were to stamp out this movement, his actions were the most effective thing he could have done to make sure that it spread. Saul decided to go and find the believers, wherever

they had gone. So he got the right letters of authority, and he went out. On his way to Damascus, of course, he had that well known encounter with the Christ. It is the most significant human turnaround in the Bible. From being the greatest persecutor of Christianity, he became the greatest witness of the Christ. First he was blinded by light, and then he became a great light. There is no other example in the Bible of a conversion, or change in character, quite like this one.

Skipping forward in the book of Acts, to the beginning of chapter 13, it says that Barnabas and Saul were in the city of Antioch, where there was a flourishing church, for about a year. Now one day while they were praying, "...worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'" Isn't it

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interesting that all they're doing is sitting down, praying and fasting. They're not planning how to do mission work. And the Spirit says, "I want these two guys. I have work for them." So this is not Barnabas and Saul going off on their own. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, and it is not going to be contained.

The first thing Barnabas and Saul do is sail westward to Cyprus, and they do a lot of preaching and teaching on the island. Eventually they find themselves at Paphos, and there they meet a sorcerer whose name is Bar-Jesus, "a Jewish sorcerer and a false prophet." That's a key point, because it's very important for Luke that Saul is not seen as a renegade Jew. So who's the first person that they're going to meet on mission? a renegade Jew. He's the "attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus," and pretty soon this Roman authority sends for them. "He wanted to hear the word of God."

The Power of the Spirit in Paul — excerpts from a benefit...

Now, this was very upsetting for Bar-Jesus; "He opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith." Saul, who is also called Paul (here is the name change), had a very strong response. In contrast to the deception and the fraud this man was putting forth, Paul is filled with the Holy Spirit. And he says, "You are a child of the devil, an enemy of everything that is right. You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery." Now these would be harsh words all by themselves, but who else do we know who was able to look into people's hearts and to discern when others were not filled with the Holy Spirit? Peter, of course.

He begins with a brief survey of Jewish history. He manages to cover 450 years of history in five verses. Basically he talks about how God placed the Jews in the land that He had promised them. Then he runs right down to David. God said, "I have found David, son of Jesse, a man after my own heart. He will do everything I want him to do." And then Paul says, it has been through the line of David that "God has brought to Israel the Saviour Jesus, as he promised." The saviour, the Messiah God had promised, He now has delivered in Christ Jesus.

But then, he kind of takes a fresh start. He says to these people, "Don't be like the leaders in Jerusalem. This is the message of salvation we've been waiting for all these years, so don't be like the leaders in Jerusalem who have already rejected it. God raised

Jesus from the dead. We saw this. We are witnesses to this fact." Paul doesn't talk about his own experience, but he does say that he's the person who's been told to bring them the good news. This is his job. He's coming here to tell them what has happened — that the promises made to David have been fulfilled in Jesus. And he backs up his statements with scriptural quotes, using them as all kinds of examples.

Can you see how this is going to go? First we had Jesus; then we had Peter. Now we have Paul. This is very deliberate on Luke's part. He wants us to see this connection as being orderly. These connections have been planned. This is not accidental. Now Paul continues, "Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? Now the hand of the Lord is against you." The sorcerer is silent, but the proconsul sees what happens and believes.

Paul recalls a prophecy from Habbakuk (1:5) and says, "Wonder and perish for I am going to do something in your days, that you would never believe even if someone had told you." This is Paul's challenge to them. Now the response to this speech is incredibly positive. They aren't even out of the synagogue yet, and people are saying, "You're going to be back next week aren't you?" The response was overwhelmingly positive. And it says, "they took every opportunity to urge them to continue in the grace of God."

Then, in Acts 13:13, they leave Cyprus and go to Antioch. The first thing Paul and Barnabas do when they arrive is to go to the synagogue, where they sit down among the congregation. Obviously they're newcomers, and the leaders of the synagogue recognize this. After the readings of the law and the prophets, the leaders sent word inviting them to speak. No one ever has to ask Paul twice! He's always ready. He stands up, motions with his hands to get their full attention, and begins, "Men of Israel, and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me." These synagogues had a mixture of Jews and also God-fearing Gentiles who were interested in some of the teachings. So Paul addresses both, the Jews and the Gentiles.

Now, the problem comes the next Sabbath day. This is what it says, "Almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord." Now who do you think made up all these new people? I don't think they were

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Jews. The Jews should have already been there on the last Sabbath day. So more than likely, all these new people would have been Gentiles. And there they are, ready, willing, and eager to hear the word of God.

These God-fearing Gentiles just couldn't stop thinking about the preaching that occurred on that last Sabbath. They had gone out and that entire week, dinner table conversations probably included, "Did you hear about the man who spoke in the synagogue? Did you hear him last week? No? Oh, you've got to go then! He's going to be back on Saturday. You've got to come and hear what he has to say." And they showed up. Almost the entire city was there to hear Paul. Then it says, "When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy." Isn't that sad?

Now those Jews have probably been members of this community all their lives. This is where they were born. This is where they grew up; it's where they went to school. They've probably wished all this time that more people would come to their synagogue services. They probably wanted these people to be interested in God for a long time. How come Paul can do what we've never been able to do? Or maybe it went a little deeper like, "Who do these people think they are? We are the Jews. We are God's people. We have been recipients of the covenant. And now they expect to just walk up here and be in the same position we are?" Imagine a room full of Gentiles trying to share in God's blessings without "paying their dues." It was enough to give one pause.

The Jews start talking abusively against what Paul is saying, so Paul turns away from them and faces the Gentiles. Not because of human planning, but because the Lord deemed it so. He reminds them of a quote from Isaiah where "the Lord commanded, 'I've made you a light for the Gentiles that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'" Now, this obviously made the Jews feel a lot more grumpy. The Gentiles,

on the other hand, were rejoicing. You can imagine how happy this has made them. They just realized the gospel was also for them. This was such good news as far as they were concerned. And it says, "The word of the Lord spread through the whole region."

Acts 14 recounts the story of Paul in Lystra, healing "a man who was lame from birth." Does this remind us of anything? We might expect some similarities with the story in which Peter healed a lame man in Acts 3:1-10. But in this case, some of the language, in a few phrases, is identical to what it says about Peter. It says, that "The man jumped up and began to walk," just like the lame man who was lying in front of the temple. The phrasing is exactly the same. Paul discerned "that the man had faith to be healed," and he said to him, "Stand up on your feet." Exactly the same. Just as Peter had, Paul has made the connection between faith and healing.

Eventually Paul and Barnabas go back to all the places where they had been, back to Lystra, Iconium,

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and Antioch—all the cities that they got kicked out of. There is no sign, however, of public preaching at this time. What probably happened is that they went back quietly, to the people who were already believers. It says, that they were "strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith." No doubt they needed this encouragement. Paul warns them that many hard times will lie ahead; they only have to look at his own experience to know that. So he institutes leaders in all those churches. It says, "they appointed elders for them in each church."

Lots of scholars have a real hard time with this. Would Paul have really entrusted something as

The Power of the Spirit in Paul

important as the leadership of these small churches into the hands of people who had perhaps only a few months of experience? Ideally no. But on the other hand, these little churches certainly were in need of spiritual guides. They would be facing serious obstacles. Someone had to hold it all together. God would have to see to the maturity of their leaders.

This is another example that shows how practical Paul was. He always took care of the practical aspects. He knew that the only way those churches would survive is if somebody was in charge. So they appointed elders. The Bible story doesn't specify what the elder's duties would have been, just that someone had to be in charge, somebody had to administer things. But this decision was never the result of human planning. Paul, Barnabas and those who

Eventually Paul's journeys led to his being taken as a prisoner to Rome. Luke's postscript says that "for two years, Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to visit him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the lord Jesus Christ." The story doesn't say what happened to Paul. What happened after his two years of house arrest? Did he stand before the emperor? The story ends by being unfinished. But this never was meant to be a story about Paul. This was story about the Holy Spirit.

At the very beginning of this course, we were asked to think about whether the Holy Spirit who filled and impelled these people had changed. Did we think that the Spirit had diminished in any way? Well, maybe it hasn't, and if it hasn't, then maybe it doesn't

matter what our human circumstances might be. Even if they are difficult, we can "speak boldly and without hindrance." Because the Spirit is unstoppable, even when circumstances are difficult. And the reason we know that is

When they prayed and fasted the Holy Spirit told them what to do.

believed always prayed, then they fasted, and then they knew. When they prayed and fasted the Holy Spirit told them exactly what to do.

because we know Luke's story of Paul. So when that Spirit is out there looking for the next receptive heart, all we have to do is want that heart to be ours.

From now on the story follows Paul, and look what happens. Essentially the entire Jerusalem church will say that the mission to the Gentiles is valid and that those Gentiles are just as Christian as the Jews, equal in every way. This isn't just Peter or Paul speaking any more; it's the entire governing body of the Jerusalem church. What Luke has been diligently showing is that the mission to the Gentiles was orderly, predictable, unstoppable. That process has now been recognized and sanctioned. In a way, the people are finally catching up to what God had told them a long time ago. When He said, "You're going to be a light to the Gentiles," He really meant that. And finally the people get it. But look how much time has passed. Look how patient God has been.



institutional problems?" Because we are in the world, and the world is dealing with institutionalism. Healing institutional problems is part of the mission of the Christ, "to take away the sins of the world." Meeting and overcoming institutional problems is an essential part of the ministry of Christian Science. Nurses should not feel that they or their facilities have failed just because there are problems at the facility. As in all aspects of human life, error of thought and action needs to be uncovered and destroyed by Truth. The work that accompanies this process is ours to do, and when done well this work is rewarding and satisfying.

Here are three ways mortal mind would tempt us to think when working in an institution: "They don't appreciate me; They don't know what they're doing; They're wrong and I could do better." The way to meet and deal effectively with each of these temptations is to recognize them as aggressive mental suggestions, and to treat them as Mrs. Eddy has instructed. In each case it will be the nurses' spiritual perception of the institution and of their fellow workers that will heal, resolving difficult issues in the best way.

The issues concerning teaching Christian Science nursing led to a lively discussion. Nurses who attended all had received some kind of training, and they also had a broad variety of other training experience, including work as nursing superintendents, on job trainers, and nurses training school instructors. Here are some ideas shared.

It seems necessary for a nurse to be taught certain nursing skills in order to enable the nurse to give assistance and care without harm to patients or to herself. But instruction in skills does not necessarily give a Christian Science nurse what she needs to act rightly in the wide variety of situations she will encounter in her practice.

Metaphysical maturity is needed. Spiritual intuition will guide her to do what is the right thing even in those situations when the need is to discard the rule and follow the inspiration of the moment for a

better answer to meet the need. Love for God inspires the nurse to seek direction from divine Love and keeps her from merely doing the mechanical activity of the job. We can't teach how to love, but we can continually encourage the nurse to grow spiritually and strive demonstrate a sincere love for God and man.

Spiritual preparation is important. How do we help prepare the nurse with skills and at the same time keep it clear that the understanding and practice of nursing is not bound up in the learning of those skills?

Facilities generally accept all kinds of people into introductory nursing positions. The facilities trust that these individuals will demonstrate their readiness and ability. Those who are not prepared at first but have a willingness and capacity to learn will grow into the requirements of nursing work.

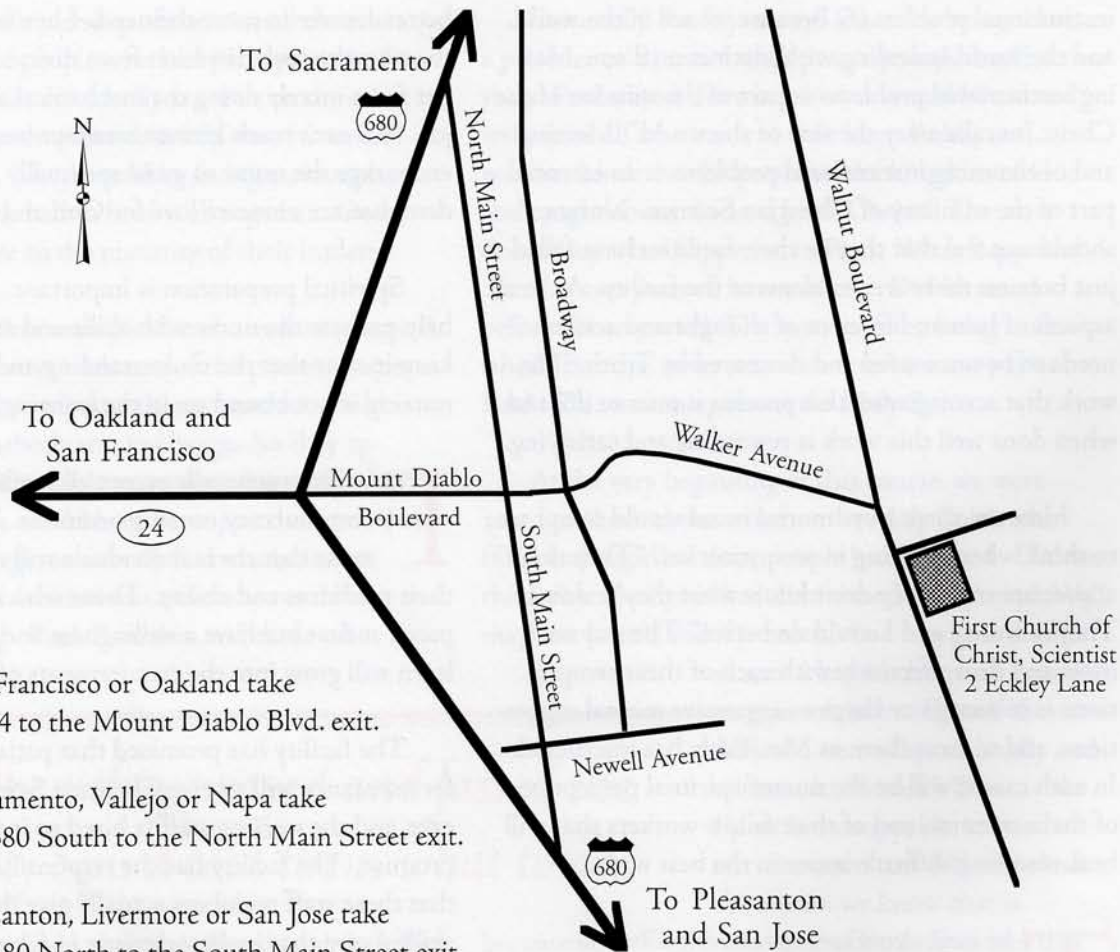
The facility has promised that patients who come for assistance will receive Christian Science nursing care, and the nursing staff is hired so it can fulfill its promise. The facility has the responsibility for seeing that these staff members actually give the tender, skillful care that is characteristic of Christian Science nursing. It's important to find within each facility the balance which enables a nurse to learn and progress without compromising the Christian Science nursing care given to patients.

Instructors need to realize that they teach by their own example more than by the lessons they prepare or the explanations of skills they use. Students will learn from the instructor's quietness, gentleness, trust in God, and thoughtful approach to each situation.

If we as nurses, board members and administrators see a need for Christian Science nurses for which there appears to be an inadequate supply, what are we to do about it? Perhaps we should ask ourselves, "Are we preaching the gospel of good news about what Christian Science nursing is and does?"



Map and directions to the Fern Lodge Annual Meeting



Fern Lodge Focus — September 1999

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Castro Valley, CA 94546

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