

## FERN LODGE FOCUS — AUGUST 2013

A few days ago a dear friend visited me. She had worked here for about 12 years, starting in the mid 1980s, but she had not been back in several years. After a tour of Fern Lodge and conversations with several staff members, she came back to my office and said that she just loved Fern Lodge; “You always have the best people working here.” I agree. The Fern Lodge staff members are hardworking, joyous and inspired, and they strive to maintain a healing atmosphere in the facility. Each one is dedicated to ensuring that patients who come to the facility for Christian Science nursing feel the love of God and are helped and healed.

Through the years, I often ask in prayer, “What is it that establishes and maintains an atmosphere and environment conducive to metaphysical healing?” It’s tempting to think it’s a fresh, new building, clean and well-maintained, maybe gracious grounds with flowers and comfortable places to sit in sun or shade, or perhaps a quiet peaceful retreat, with ready access to Christian Science literature in different formats. All of these conditions are pleasant, and they may be comforting, but from my observations, these conditions alone do not ensure that the atmosphere leads to healing. Many years ago, as I pondered this question and read through the Gospels, the following scenes caught my attention:

- A quiet bedroom in a well-to-do family’s house
- A crowded house with an opening in the roof
- The barren countryside among caves and tombs
- Busy city streets with crowds milling about
- A public pool with sick and infirm lying around
- Crowded roadsides on the outskirts of towns
- A funeral procession
- A tomb

What do these places have in common? Christ Jesus saw within each one of them an atmosphere conducive to healing! What specifically was shared by this wide variety of scenarios that made them opportunities for healing? It was the thought, the perception of the Master, who understood that the presence and power of God would replace sickness and death with health, harmony, and life. The desire to help and to heal as

Jesus did is what makes the Fern Lodge staff so wonderful. That desire is an essential quality of Christian Science nursing, and I am convinced it is an essential element for an atmosphere that promotes Christian Science healing.

Clearly the atmosphere conducive to Christian healing does not depend on physical elements and material conditions. We are talking about an atmosphere of thought. Christian Scientists promise to “watch, and pray for that Mind to be in us which was also in Christ Jesus.” God is Mind, and God is ever-present and eternally good. God, Mind, is divine Love, and therefore the atmosphere of divine thought is filled with qualities of Love. Love meets all human needs; Love comforts; Love heals.

When anyone acknowledges, reflects, and expresses the qualities of Love, then the healing effects of Love are evident right then and there. The Fern Lodge staff is dedicated to expressing the healing presence of Love. It’s no wonder we always have the best people working here.

Gratefully,



Administrator



THE NEWLY LANDSCAPED FRONT YARD PROVIDES PLACES TO SIT IN SUN OR SHADE, AS WELL AS ADDITIONAL PARKING SPACES.



## CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSING EDUCATION

Preach the gospel! Share the good news that Christ is here, demonstrating the love of God, the Love that is God. Christians are sent “into all the world” to preach the gospel to everyone. In this age the gospel message includes the revelation of Christian Science, teaching and demonstrating the healing and saving grace of God. Christian Science nursing is a vital aspect of the fullness of the gospel. What better news is there than the fact that God cares for His children, and in turn we reflect that care in the loving aid we give for others? Sharon Strong, Director of Christian Science Nursing Education, shares this good news in every facet of the Fern Lodge Christian Science nursing education program.

The individuals in this year’s classes show our eagerness to embrace the world. They have come from California and Colorado, Kenya and Peru. Fern Lodge has held Christian Science nursing workshops and a nursing course in South America, and we expect to return this year.



Victor, Eliane, and Charles practice using a lifter.

*My experience taking Cleansing & Bandaging class at Fern lodge this past winter brought a unique opportunity to share with two other fellow nursing students: one from Brazil, and another in Colorado,*



Janine Oubré

*with whom we shared class over Skype. This was a unique and joyful experience. We could see her smile, and also examples of her work on our computer. With our camera, we could share with her close up images of our work, showing how to correctly align the bandaging. It took the spirit of loving-kindness and cooperation to make the learning moments work for all. Our most kind, patient and technically able Instructor [Sharon Strong] helped to make it all possible.*

*We shared our laughter just like we were all sitting in the room together. We started each day with daily inspiration quotes from the BIBLE or SCIENCE AND HEALTH, poems or hymns, or word-delving for the spiritual meaning of words in the dictionary. Our friend from Brazil uses a number of online resources as she works to understand words and ideas in her native tongue of Portuguese. Given all these options, it was a very enriching learning process. I am very grateful to have had this opportunity and will always cherish its unique and special exchange in my learning of Christian Science nursing.*

*I am grateful to Fern Lodge, and also The Principle Foundation, and The Albert Baker Fund for their assistance and generous support for the learning experience of Christian Science Nursing.*

— Janine Oubré



## MY AMAZING SUMMER OPPORTUNITY — SOUSHA WEXLER

This summer I have had the privilege of interning at Fern Lodge. Upon my arrival, I was introduced to the patients and staff and given a tour of the facility. I must admit, it was so beautiful. I loved how many patients have a courtyard which has beautiful flowers or bushes. Walking into Fern Lodge, I heard the Bible Lesson playing in the hallway and in each room. It was so nice to know that each patient is working on their spiritual growth. I never got a cold or sad feeling at Fern Lodge; instead I felt happiness and saw laughter. For a couple of days I observed how each nurse and patient interacted. Right away I noticed LOVE, often through their sense of humor, which made patients laugh. There was no sense of nurses being dominating or authoritarian to their patient, but instead supporting each other as equals.

My internship included working with patients as well as in the office, and in maintenance. This was an amazing idea. I got to see how the facility runs as a business and experience what it takes to keep Fern Lodge looking beautiful. It was so beneficial for me to understand what it really takes to create such a wonderful and loving facility.

I worked with the activities head, Robin Barben, and her assistant, Janet Leon. These two women put so much energy and love into each activity that they plan for the patients. On Mondays, I got to bake cookies with the patients. This wasn't just measuring flour and sugar, but it was a chance to sit down with each patient, and learn about their life experiences and get to know them on a personal and spiritual level. Wednesday was "hair and nails day." Patients came for haircuts, nails, and a chance to get to know one another more. Each week a few new people came, and it was so enjoyable to see how they interacted on subjects ranging from Christian Science to their hobbies. While helping, I also got to know each patient.

One thing that really struck me is that Fern Lodge offers daily walks for patients. I thought it was a nice idea, but didn't know how much it meant to each patient until I started doing it. Each time I went outside with the patient, they wanted to look at something and talk to me about it. Seeing wild turkeys and even goats was something the patient and I looked forward to on each walk. Working at Fern Lodge wasn't coming every day to a job, but instead to my new family. Coming to work and always feeling happy and grateful



**Top, Robin Barben.**

**Bottom, left to right, Noelia Ley, Sousha Wexler, Janet Leon.**

was something I have never experienced before. I got to grow spiritually by observing patient and nursing care and also by getting the opportunity to do Bible studies every Friday. This provided a chance to learn more about the weekly lesson, but most of all, to hear what the patients shared and got from it. My experience at Fern Lodge this summer has been an experience I would not trade for anything. It was simply a joy to come to work each day and work with my new coworkers and new friends. I will always cherish every relationship I have made here and know how love is always present. Thank you Fern Lodge for helping me grow in so many ways, especially in gratitude.



## SCENES AROUND FERN LODGE



These photos show the love and joy that are such vital aspects of the Christian Science nursing ministry at Fern Lodge.



Put the date on your calendar! The Fern Lodge Annual Meeting will be held on

**Sunday, October 20, at 2:30 in the afternoon**

Donald Christensen, C.S. will speak on the topic

***Being Faithful and Obedient***

The location will be announced in the September issue of the **FERN LODGE FOCUS**.

***Fern Lodge Focus* — August 2013**

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## NEW SHOOTS FROM CHRISTIANITY'S SPIRITUAL ROOTS

A theme of the 2013 Church Alive Summit in Sacramento, CA was "Growing New Shoots from Deep Spiritual Roots." George Strong, Fern Lodge Administrator, gave the Friday evening talk titled "Church on Fire" that helped set the tone for the two days of discussion that followed. The opening was a one-minute video of about 20 pictures that showed a broad variety of signs proclaiming the importance of the Scripture, John 3:16. Perhaps you have seen people holding up these signs at various sporting events.

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### **CHURCH ON FIRE**

How many of us know immediately what John 3:16 says?

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (RSV).

How do we feel when we see people holding up those signs? Do we feel connected? Do we feel that we are part of a greater Christian community? Why, or why not? The Scriptures, and especially the Gospels, are central and fundamental to Christian Science. Our first tenet is "As adherents of Truth, we take the inspired Word of the Bible as our sufficient guide to eternal life." Word with a capital W, the Word that "was made flesh and dwelt among us." Do you see the parallel?

What is the promise of John 3:16? Eternal life.

What is the goal, or the promise, if you prefer, of our first tenet? Eternal life.

Is this just a coincidence, or does it have deeper meaning for Christian Scientists?

I remember my surprise when I realized years ago that Mary Baker Eddy did not set out to found a new denomination. From her biographies, we learn that she thought that the Christian church she had grown up in, the church she loved, would hear with joy her revelation of Christian healing in this age, and that the church would readily embrace and incorporate her discovery. She hints at her hope in this passage: "Until the author of this book learned the vastness of Christian Science, the fixedness of mortal illusions, and the human hatred of Truth, she cherished sanguine hopes that Christian Science would meet with immediate and universal acceptance" (*SC&H* 330:2).

Have you noticed that many of our weekly Bible Lesson topics clearly are intended to throw the light of Christian Science on some basic Christian theological teachings? I would say *Sacrament*. *Adam and Fallen Man* certainly is one, as are *Doctrine of Atonement*, *Probation After Death*, and of course a favorite, *Everlasting Punishment*.



Might Mrs. Eddy have chosen these topics to answer the “fixedness of mortal illusions,” making it possible for the established churches to accept Christian Science? Aren’t those answers much needed today? If our hearts are on fire, won’t we want to share these answers broadly with our Christian neighbors?

Let’s think for a bit about everlasting punishment. This concept has concerned Christian theologians for centuries. Think about the passage, Matthew, 25:31-46. Here’s a Cliff Notes version: Nourish the hungry and thirsty, visit the sick and those in prison, and inherit eternal life in the kingdom of heaven; deny nourishment or ignore the sick or imprisoned, go away into everlasting punishment.

Did you know that this is the only reference in the King James Version of the Bible that specifically names “everlasting punishment”? Might Mrs. Eddy have been aware of this? When I realized this fact, these verses in Matthew became for me all the more important to understand. But really, the verses aren’t at all hard to understand, are they? “Truth is revealed. It needs only to be practised” (*Se&H* 174:20).

#### ***SIMPLE ACTS OF KINDNESS — A CHRISTIAN DEMAND***

Helping others with simple acts of kindness, by love serving one another, is essential for eternal life. In fact, I think it is more than just essential. To the degree we get it right, to the degree that it is spiritually understood and practiced, service to God and man is eternal life.

Simple service to our fellow men, women and children is something many Christians do well. I have a facebook friend, Kantharao Gorrepally. He lives in India, where he ministers to mankind. He posts the most delightful photos of a local orphanage and of his missionary visits to small villages. I told him I planned to share his story briefly with you. He says, “I was born and brought up in a Hindu family but was saved by HIS grace. I have been reaching the people and raising orphans since 2006. We now are building permanent accommodation for the orphans, which has been in a rented building, from which we were evicted.” Kantharao deeply appreciates prayerful support for Christ’s work, and I am grateful that he and I are learning from each other.

Kantharao’s story is inspiring, but not unique. Humanitarian service has been an element of Christian worship for a long time. Yet, after hundreds of years of such service, we still appear to live in a world where suffering seems more common than salvation, even where there has been the most persistent humanitarian labors. Is something missing from the Christian service that is so wonderfully available around the world today?



I don't know the fullness of the answer to my question, but I do know this: Christian Science uniquely demands that man be understood as the exact spiritual image and likeness of God, Spirit, right here, right now. Christian Science rejects all suggestions that man is material or that man is at all or in any way separated from God, ever.

Does our service affirm that God loves all mankind and meets all human needs? Does our service reflect God, Love, and God's loving care? Do we intend to heal? Or is our service a well-meaning humanitarian activity that is coupled with the belief that man is separate from God? Do we think service is a means by which we can earn our way to the kingdom of heaven if we do enough charitable work?

We can't judge by looking at what we do. Service given out of a sense of obligation, or to be seen by others to gain their respect, or with no more inspiration than pity for the poor, looks the same as service given out of the recognition of infinite Love. We have to look at our motives and consider carefully how we identify ourselves and how we see those who call us for help.

Service in Christian Science is not merely helping a poor mortal until God saves him. Nor is service in Christian Science a way for mortals to earn their way out of condemnation and into salvation. Scientific Christian service is not merely a result of our decision to help others instead of withholding from them.

#### ***CHRISTIAN SERVICE IS OUR TRUE NATURE***

Christian service is not a decision at all. True service is the realization that we love because we reflect divine Principle, Love. From that standpoint our motives are pure, our success is sure, and we live eternal life; we are saved.

This brings us back to John 3, and this time verse 17, which reads, "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." And as John 3:16 has a parallel with our first tenet, focusing on eternal life, John 3:17 resonates with the mission of our Church and its focus on salvation.

Have you thought about the mission of the Christian Science church? Frequently I've heard that it is "to commemorate the word and works of our Master, which should reinstate primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing." Is that our Church's mission? Let's take a look at the Historical Sketch in the *Church Manual*. There we find that Mrs. Eddy and her students did found a church with that mission statement, but that church was dissolved in 1889.



I like to think that the following statement in *Science and Health* indicates that the early church organization had fulfilled its purpose: “To-day there is hardly a city, village, or hamlet, in which are not to be found living witnesses and monuments to the virtue and power of Truth, as applied through this Christian system of healing disease. To-day the healing power of Truth is widely demonstrated as an immanent, eternal Science, instead of a phenomenal exhibition” (*Sc&H* 149:31-150:6). Mission accomplished! Church dissolved. And it’s up to us to maintain that accomplishment.

But clearly Mrs. Eddy saw a need for church in this age. Three years later, in 1892, “Mary Baker Eddy, twelve of her students and Church members met and reorganized, under her jurisdiction, the Christian Science Church and named it, The First Church of Christ, Scientist. At this meeting twenty others of Mrs. Eddy’s students and members of her former Church were elected members of this Church” (*Man* page 18).

### ***THE MISSION OF THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST***

Our Church’s mission statement closes the Historical Sketch: “The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Mass., is designed to be built on the Rock, Christ; even the understanding and demonstration of divine Truth, Life, and Love, healing and saving the world from sin and death; thus to reflect in some degree the Church Universal and Triumphant.” Note that this mission statement acknowledges that healing sickness in demonstration of Truth, Life, and Love has been accomplished, and again I remind myself that maintaining that accomplishment is our ongoing task.

“Healing and saving the world from sin and death” —that’s our mission, and in fulfilling that mission we are brought into eternal fellowship with mankind, reflecting “in some degree the Church Universal and Triumphant.” I love and long to live up to the standard Mrs. Eddy sets in this description: “Scientists aim highest...with hearts overflowing with love for God, they help on the brotherhood of men” (*Mis* 348:1).

How shall we do it? Let’s resolve to have a renewed commitment to sharing with mankind the promise of salvation and eternal life, the promise of the fullness of Christian Science healing. I’ll close with a question. Can you imagine a time when people, with hearts on fire, would hold up signs that said ***Science and Health* 468:9?**

Thank you,  
George Strong