

Our part in Church - Sharon Strong, Director of Christian Science Nursing

We often talk about the *Manual* bylaw for Christian Science Nurses, Article 8, Section 31. But there's another bylaw—Article 8, Section 15—which sets the stage for serving in Christian Science nursing *organizations*. It's called, "Church Organizations Ample," and it reads in part:

God requires our whole heart, and He supplies within the wide channels of The Mother Church dutiful and sufficient occupation for all its members. Christian Science nursing organizations are among those "wide channels of The Mother Church." They give opportunities for Mother Church members to be active in the healing work of Christian Science.

ern Lodge is an activity of Church, the "structure of Truth and Love"... which "rests upon and proceeds from divine Principle," Science and Health, 583. Some proofs of its utility are facility nursing care, home nursing visits, branch church workshops, and nursing education programs. All these activities are elevating the race and rousing dormant understanding, healing the sick.

Our dedicated staff reflects the divine qualities of cheerfulness, faithfulness, persistence, spiritual intuition, humor, dedication, and conviction of the Truth! They have cared for our full house of 21 patients over the last year. Some healings we have witnessed are: patients becoming more conscious of their worth; protection from, or quick healings of seasonal difficulties; increased mental clarity. The evening of last year's annual meeting a healing occurred involving a case of sudden, severe mental imbalance. The truths shared on unity were so inspiring that the nurse saw the impossibility of Mind being out of order or divided against itself, and healing resulted within 24 hours. This healing was shared in an article about Christian Science nursing in the October 24, 2005 Christian Science Sentinel.

Nurses Education: Our nursing education program consists of what we term simply, Christian Science Nursing 1 and Christian Science Nursing 2. The

Level 1 courses include an introduction to Christian Science nursing, ethics, mobility, personal care, moving and handling, bed care, foods and tray service. Level 2 provides instruction in dressings and bandaging, sudden needs, more ethics, advanced foods, special needs, care of mental needs, and home nursing. Nurses learn skills under the watchful guidance of instructors in a classroom setting, and are lovingly shepherded on the nursing floor by supervisors and mentors as they refine their nursing skills and approach.

The nursing courses at Fern Lodge cover the same nursing principles and practices as other Christian Science Nurses Training schools and facilities, such as those offered at Arden Wood or Chestnut Hill. One difference is that nurses at Fern Lodge may learn on a part time or full time basis, as fits their needs. We are committed to providing the field with Christian Science nurses who meet the high standards of the *Manual* bylaw, and whose prayerful focus and practical approaches are meeting needs with competency and poise.

Grass Valley Class: A unique group of three dedicated women has come together in the Sierra foothills to learn nursing. This God-inspired, innovative way of learning nursing is a blessing to the communities where they live. They've taken a responsible approach to identifying and meeting the qualifications for the Christian Science nurse, which includes being mentored by the experienced nurses at Fern Lodge.

he bylaw for the nurse clearly spells out the qualifications required —demonstrable knowledge of Christian Science practice, a thorough understanding of the practical wisdom necessary in a sickroom, an ability to take proper care of the sick—but in no way does the Manual define or prescribe a specific method in which the nurse must fulfill those requirements. This is between the individual and God.

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Slaying Modern Goliaths - excerpts from a talk by George Strong

Think about the story in 1 Samuel 17. The giant, Goliath, challenged Israel, shouting, "Choose your man to meet me. If I kill him, you shall be our slaves." For forty days, he repeated his challenge. David, a young shepherd, came forward to meet Goliath, putting his trust in God. David chose five smooth stones, and with his sling, ran to meet Goliath. He said, "the battle is the Lord's, and He will put you all into our power." One stone later Goliath was dead and his armies turned and ran.

Goliath symbolizes the fears —sickness, substance abuse, war, crime, poverty, mental illness, etc.— that appear so threatening. These fears say, "Fight me; if you lose you're my slave." A Goliath may be any collection of materialistic beliefs of "the basic error," which Mrs. Eddy defines by the term, "mortal mind." But the problems of our day, no matter how large they appear, are like Goliath. They can't carry out their threats if they are met with prepared reliance on God. David gives a model for how we can respond to challenges today.

challenge is a demand to identify ourselves, as in a sentry's, "Halt! Who goes there?"

Our task is to respond with confidence, "We are children of the one God, and we have our place in His kingdom of love, health and harmony." Many people have had instant Christian Science healing from right identification. But what if the challenge doesn't let us pass? Are we at the mercy of Goliath?

For years I thought that David was an underdog—Goliath's armor, sword and spear against a defenseless boy throwing rocks. We've seen news photos of young men throwing rocks at a tank, and that's what I thought of when David met Goliath. But a sling has an effective range of over 100 yards, so David could stay out of Goliath's reach. Sling stones were up to three inches in diameter and made of flint, a very heavy material. And accurate! Soldiers could sling a stone and not miss their target by a hair. David was well armed, indeed. Most importantly, David knew his identity and proclaimed it to

Goliath, loud and clear: "I come to thee in the name of the Lord," with the strength of Spirit and Truth.

David was NOT the underdog, and he knew it! Neither are we underdogs when we face Goliath challenges today.

It is essential to remember where the challenge and the ensuing struggle take place. It's not at Fern Lodge, or in our churches or homes. The call and the battle are wholly within consciousness. Here is an important fact: There is one God; one infinite, eternal, spiritual, divine Mind, who creates and maintains man and the universe, expressed as individual ideas. There appears to be a lie about Mind, claiming that mind is finite, limited, and expressed by lots of mortal minds. This lie seems to generate its own set of conditions, which it calls the physical universe, including the material earth, and man with a precarious sense of health and happiness.

But mortal mind is a lie, and its creation always remains a lying collection of beliefs—beliefs of a lie and about that lie—without a shred of Truth. Many of the beliefs of mortal mind appear dangerous; these are its weapons, and they threaten our health, our happiness, even our lives. But remember that you, God's spiritual idea, are beyond the range of mortal mind's weapons. And remember that truth always destroys a lie, as light destroys darkness. In each case mortal mind is defeated—its beliefs are denied, and its weapons are ineffective. Goliath may have a lot of weapons, but he is killed with one stone.

There are practical applications to this understanding of the powerlessness of mortal mind to keep up any of its threats when it is opposed in the name of God. A man called a Christian Science practitioner for treatment of a cold. With the affirmation in prayer that man is God's likeness, immune to mortal mind's belief of sickness, the symptoms quickly vanished AND a cyst disappeared, for which removal surgery had already been scheduled.

Slaying Modern Goliaths...continued

On his way to meet Goliath, David selected his stones. He didn't take just any rock that was lying in the creek bed. Misshapen ones don't go as far or as accurately as the smooth ones he picked, proven to be hard by tumbling for generations in the stream of life. Let's select stones that will be effective in meeting the specific challenge Goliath throws down.

Mary Baker Eddy writes of Christ Jesus, "Of the lineage of David, like him he went forth, simple as the shepherd boy, to disarm the Goliath ...the three-in-one of error: the world, the flesh, and the devil." What were the stones Jesus armed himself with? When tempted by the devil (see Matt 4), he used some of them, and they had the form, "It is written," followed by a statement in Scripture telling of man's

Each stone we select will be an idea

of God's presence and our identity.

identity and his proper relationship to God. Jesus, like David, didn't just believe in God, he believed God. That is,

he trusted that if God promised, it would happen. Remember God's promises; they are spiritual stones, not just words. Here are just a few: "I am the Lord your God, your Deliverer...Have no fear for I am with you;" I am the Lord thy God...open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it;" I am the Lord that healeth thee." Each stone we select to put in our bag as we run to meet every Goliath-challenge will be an idea of God's presence and our identity.

David's victory over Goliath has special significance for Christian Science nurses. Christian Science nursing demonstrates man's reflection of God's care for His children; it is a human expression of God as Mother. The qualities of our Mother-Love are those we associate with womanhood—nurturing, nourishing, cherishing, and bringing out the best in everyone. Remember this idea, and consider the statement, "Materialistic hypotheses challenge metaphysics to meet in final combat. In this revolutionary period, like the shepherd-boy with his sling, woman goes forth to battle with Goliath." Woman—the expression of mothering, cherishing,

nursing qualities— battles with the materialistic hypotheses which suggest that men and women are merely material, mortal beings, subject to the whims of chance and the sufferings of age, accident, disease, mental decline, and so on. Mrs. Eddy also wrote, "The ideal woman corresponds to Life and to Love," and to "...faith armed with the understanding of Love." The battle of faith armed with love describes Christian Science nursing.

We're not killing big men. We are utterly destroying the appearance of evil in consciousness through the demonstration of divine Principle, Love. We're standing up with Christ, Truth, in the face of aggressive mental suggestion, that comes disguised as a giant in our thinking, demanding that we be

> afraid. We are standing up for our true identity in the face of lies and the liar, mortal mind. Now let's take a look at some

challenges and pick out some smooth, tried and true stones of Life and Love that will meet each one with a correct identification of ourselves and overcome Goliath, each appearance of mortal mind.

Challenge #1: Christian Science doesn't really heal; it's not as effective as modern medical practice.

"The ancient Christians were healers. Why has this element of Christianity been lost? Because our systems of religion are governed more or less by our systems of medicine." We should be clear that our system of religion cannot be governed in any degree by current systems of medicine. We can put off any suggestions that material means and methods are effective in meeting material challenges. Then our stones will be tried and trusted ones, not weakened by the influence of material modes of treatment or health maintenance, and not misdirected by fear of future needs.

Mrs. Eddy wrote, "It has been said that the New Testament does not authorize us to expect the ministry of healing at this period," and she concluded her response, "...the shepherd's sling would slay this Goliath." The promise is, "Stick to the truth of being...you will heal the sick."

Let me illustrate the aggressive nature of material medical hypotheses. Not long ago I suddenly felt sick. As I prayed for God's help, I was aware of physical symptoms indicating an internal problem, challenging me to submit. At the same instant, I was aware of a brand of medication, advertised as able to reverse the symptoms I felt. I just laughed out loud. I saw that the Goliath of sickness was nothing more than mortal mind's description of itself, offering itself to me for acceptance as my experience.

The symptoms, the diagnosis of a specific illness,

Science, or on what a Chrother medication, and
the advertisements for that medicine, were all just one thing,—
materialistic hypotheses of mortal mind, the liar and the lies it tells, including our love for each other! In the symptoms, we have to show our love for each other.

of mortal mind, the liar and the lies it tells, including the lie that material medicine is more effective than Christian Science. As I laughed, I flung a mental stone of Truth at that liar; I was completely free of the symptoms, which did not return.

Challenge #2: Christian Science doesn't appeal to people these days. "Millions of unprejudiced minds—simple seekers for Truth, weary wanderers, athirst in the desert—are waiting and watching for rest and drink. Give them a cup of cold water in Christ's name, and never fear the consequences...

Those ready for the blessing you impart will give thanks."

Hear this call for us to love and to witness the effects of Love. We need to "reduce to practice the real man's divine Principle, Love."

Divine Principle, Love, reduced to practice, heals.

It's natural for Christian Scientists to think of Principle and Love used as equivalents, as synonyms for God. But many people believe that love is something people can give or withhold, and that often loving is just too difficult. It is not yet understood that Love is the very substance and law of man's being. When our lives bear witness to our nature as active expressions of divine Principle, Love, we will heal. And we will be known as children of God — and as followers of Christ Jesus.

Jesus promised, "This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples—when they see the love you have for each other" (John 13:35, *The Message*). By our love for each other, we will help mankind grasp our Leader's revelation of Love as divine Principle. I'm comforted by Christ's promise. To maintain His church, all we have to do is love each other. We don't have to agree on every theological point, or on how to further the mission of Christian Science, or on what a Christian Science nursing

facility or church should look like.

But no matter what else we do, we have to show

our love for each other! How? Jesus gives an answer, "This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends," (John 15:13). Putting your life on the line for your friends describes Christian Science nursing. Every day nurses put their lives on the line for our friends in Christ. We face Goliath in the fears expressed by patients, in pictures of disease, and in lies of mortality, and we are willing to sacrifice our own comfort to cherish Christian healing.

It was the sacrifices Christ Jesus made, his limitless expression of love, that led Mrs. Eddy to recognize Love as the Principle of the Master's life. Love is the Principle of our lives, too. And we will sacrifice our wishes, wants and opinions in order to love. We have to do this. Remember, we are vanquishing the Goliath that claims Christian Science doesn't appeal to people today. Let's acknowledge the vital role played by Christian Science nursing in forming the stone of Love which lays that giant to rest.

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Challenge #3: Our work is fraught with lack. There are too few Christian Science nurses, and we lack funds for benevolence, and other activities.

Our Father-Mother, Love, tenderly cares for each of His children. Man, as the reflection of God expresses Love's care everywhere. We cannot be afraid of the Goliath-claim that there aren't enough Christian Scientists who are willing and able to nurse. We cannot be afraid that a lack of funds will keep us from providing loving care. But to meet these challenges we must understand God's law of supply and demand, identify ourselves with this law, and run to meet the giant with a practical response.

Science and Health includes a nursing example to illustrate the truth of supply and demand. "Florence Nightingale and other philanthropists engaged in humane labors have been able to undergo without sinking fatigues and exposures which ordinary people could not endure... The spiritual demand, quelling the material, supplies energy and endurance surpassing all other aids, and forestalls the penalty which our beliefs would attach to our best deeds." 13

Supply and demand are qualities of God, which, like tenderness and might, coincide in all of God's creation. Man expresses the divine coincidence of supply and demand, and our lives demonstrate the fact that spiritual demands supply whatever qualities are needed to meet them. God's demand for care supplies each of us with energy and endurance, patience and persistence, mercy and affection, readiness and resources, and so on. The demand and the supply must be inseparable. Lack and insufficiency are aggressive suggestions that are native to mortal mind. Lack is nothing more than mortal mind's admission to itself that it is not capable of supplying the needs of man.

"God gives you His spiritual ideas, and in turn, they give you daily supplies." Animal magnetism may suggest that daily supplies are material things which man demonstrates. But man is God's spiritual idea,

and spiritual ideas don't demonstrate material things. When God meets our needs, then that which we call daily supplies— health, nursing staff members, or financial resources—are our objective experience of our understanding of God's spiritual ideas.

Our understanding of God's ideas is the work of Christ, the "divine influence ever present in human consciousness, and repeating itself..." Christ comes to the belief of life in matter, and repeats the nature of God, our real identity. As God's idea, we have no fear or experience of lack, and that's what Christ repeats to us. We hear what David heard; Goliath is not a threat; we are better armed. We know we are fully supplied. Supply is not the addition of things to material lives, it is Christ's revelation of the abundance of divine Life and Love to man.

Is another Goliath standing in the valley, shouting a challenge and threatening to enslave us? Let's pick up some of the plentiful stones lying at our feet, smooth and trusted ideas from the Bible and *Science and Health*, and let's run to meet the challenge, doing whatever God directs.

George Strong April 2, 2006

¹ Mary Baker Eddy, Misccellaneous Writings (Mis), page 162

² Isaiah 43:3, 5

³ Psalm 81:10

⁴ Exodus 15:26

Mary Baker Eddy, Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures (S&H), page 268

⁶ S&H, 517:10

Mary Baker Eddy, First Church of Christ, Scientist and Miscellany, 278:10-12

⁸ Mis, 195:13-30,

⁹ S&H, 418:5

¹⁰ S&H, 146:2-6

¹¹ S&H, 570:14

¹² S&H, 490:14

¹³ S&H, 385:1-11

¹⁴ Mis, 307:1-2

¹⁵ S&H, xi:16-18

Our part in Church, continued from page 2

Occasionally these pioneers have been asked if their training "counts," or "when are they going to get real training?" And we sometimes hear that the only way a nurse can be properly trained nowadays is by taking courses at Arden Wood or Chestnut Hill. Our dear friends at these facilities don't believe that! They appreciate the individuality of each student, and the many ways that people learn. This training is as real as it gets.

In Retrospection and Introspection, Mrs. Eddy refers to where Jesus taught his students, and it means a lot to those of us engaged in creative training programs: "When he was with them, a fishing boat became a sanctuary, and the solitude was peopled with holy messages from the All-Father. The grove became his classroom, and nature's haunts were the Messiah's university," (page 91).

We have a new Bilingual Christian Science nurses training program! In 2004, we employed a nurse from South America who had a vision for teaching nursing to those who speak little English. We translated our nursing text into Spanish with the Spanish directly under the English. Three individuals from Peru obtained visas after we prayerfully revised all our embassy documents. These nurses are so happy to be nursing, and the patients love being cared for by them. And the best part is that these nurses are beginning to read *Science and Health* in English, which means a great deal in gaining the original vision and meaning from our Leader.

Some of the nurses coming for nursing education will return to their native countries and teach nursing to sincere Christian Scientists there. There is a great need now for the tender ministrations of Christian Science nursing in Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries. This is one modest but quickly expanding way in which Fern Lodge is reaching out to help meet the needs of the world.

What are our current needs? Funding for our precious nurses education program so we can continue providing instruction for those whose lives require a flexible work schedule and classroom hours. Funding is needed for upgrading halls and rooms with paint and updated equipment and furnishings. We'd love to carpet our halls to control noise so that our patients can experience a quieter, more peaceful environment for healing. Funds are needed to continue serving those who have little means to contribute to their care but who are worthy of receiving it. And we are so grateful already for *all* the donations which come in to fund these worthy programs!

eekly and quietly, we are accomplishing much in the name of Christian Science and for Christian Science nursing. We remain devoted to healing and to providing the highest standards of nursing care and expressing Christian love for our fellowman. We take and keep some tough cases and rejoice in seeing progress. Mortal mind would appear as a Goliath, shouting that it is impossible to do what we do; taunting us with lack of funding to do what divine Mind inspires and directs us to do; even suggesting that the work is too difficult or tiring, or that the nurses are unappreciated or overlooked.

We are grateful for David's words, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him." Your servants, Christian Science nurses, are going face to face with these Goliath-taunts daily, and they are defeating them with *gratitude*. Our hearts overflow with so much gratitude for *all* Christian Science nurses and practitioners, working with all patients for Christian Science healing.

Sharon Strong Director of Christian Science Nursing

A Letter to the Field from the Fern Lodge Treasurer

Dear Friends of Fern Lodge,

From glory unto glory,
What great things He hath done,
What wonders He hath shown us,
What triumphs Love hath won.
From glory unto glory,
From strength to strength we go,
While grace for grace abundantly
Doth from His fullness flow.

These words from Hymn 65 of the *Christian Science Hymnal* could be the Treasurer's report for this year. The patients, the staff and my fellow Fern Lodge Board members are grateful beyond words for your loving support and for everything that "abundantly doth from His fullness flow."

Our financial story remains essentially the same as I reported last year. Our annual budget is almost \$1,600,000 and the funds Fern Lodge receives as patient payments amounts to \$600,000. In 2005 the cash reserves at Fern Lodge decreased by \$100,000.

Our largest expense is salaries for the dedicated staff of Christian Science nurses and support people. In addition to our staff, Fern Lodge itself is in need of tender loving care. Recently we have needed a new furnace, a dishwasher, a freezer, a washing machine, nursing reclining chairs, and we never really know when a piece of equipment will need replacement.

What am I saying? I am telling you that Fern Lodge provides \$1,000,000 of benevolence per year. Let me say that again, One Million Dollars in Benevolence per Year. Currently Fern Lodge has one full pay patient and 19 on full or partial benevolence. As you know, Fern Lodge has always offered Christian Science nursing care to all who need help without regarding one's ability to pay. When you are considering giving either on an annual basis or when doing your estate plan, please consider Fern Lodge. Your gift will be appreciated!

If your have any questions about my report or other comments regarding the finances of Fern Lodge, George or Sharon Strong would be happy to tell you how to reach me.

Sincerely,

Robert Burch Treasurer

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