

FERN LODGE FOCUS — MAY 2012

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSING IN PERU



In January Sharon Strong, Director of Christian Science Nursing Education, and I traveled to Peru to meet with Christian Scientists who are interested in Christian Science nursing. Our time there was encouraging and fruitful. We spoke at two evening meetings, lasting three-hours each, in First Church of Christ, Scientist, Lima. Discussions touched on a broad variety of topics and included lively periods of questions and answers.

Our first talk, with 22 attending, focused on the role of nursing in the practice of Christian Science and in the mission of Church—healing the sick and preaching the gospel to all mankind. We were grateful to meet these kind, knowledgeable and dedicated Christian Scientists who long for a deeper understanding and more practical knowledge of nursing.

Their goal is to be able to care for their own church and family members and to reach out to their greater community through their practice of Christian Science healing and nursing. They are working to have Christian Science nursing, including a small facility and thorough education opportunities, available for the Christian Science community in Peru as soon as possible, and we resolved to help in practical ways.

During the week we met individually with 16 dedicated and inspired Christian Scientists. We shared and learned much. It was a blessing for us to hear many wonderful and humbling accounts of the life work of these people—testimonies of healing that brought them into Christian Science, along with stories of nursing for family members, church members and co-workers, and more.

The evening before we left Peru, Sharon gave a talk to an audience of 24. Again the talk was followed by lively discussions. With humble gratitude we shared ideas that should enable these dedicated workers to immediately expand their Christian Science nursing activities in Peru. And we have a few ready candidates who are learning English to prepare to work at Fern Lodge for a period of time to gain supervised experience.



At the end of the second meeting, there was a party for us at the church, complete with a guitar, singing and dancing. It brought tears to our eyes as they sang and clapped us out to our car. These dear people truly embody the spirit of Christian Science nursing. There is much work to be done, most of it by the people in Peru, but we will assist as we are able, and we are confident that there will be steady growth in the Christian Science nursing ministry in Peru, as well as in other countries in South America.

George Strong
Administrator

ACTIVITIES AT FERN LODGE — A PERSPECTIVE FROM ROBIN BARBEN

“The natural fruits of Christian Science are harmony, brotherly love, spiritual growth and activity” (Miscellany 213:1-3).

Joy in movement class, baking cookies, Bible study, or going on an outing, in these activities patients express their freedom in Christ, and we strive to see this freedom more clearly each day.

It is wonderful to see strength and flexibility demonstrated as patients regain a sense of their dominion through God. In our daily Bible study, it is a joy to experience the unfoldment of a deeper appreciation for the importance of fellowship in Christ and the love we find ourselves experiencing anew. The laughter and joy at our weekly cookie baking activity is a needed reminder that even in the middle of a what seem to be harrowing life challenges, we can experience joy and a sense of purpose, contributing something tangible for the benefit of all.



One highlight of our Activities Program has been seeing our residents move into more active roles of participation. Limitations and restrictions are overcome, and we find that the desire to express love to one's neighbor can be the impetus needed to feel divine Love to a higher degree in one's own life. Progress from being read to, then reading to others, or preparing readings and conducting a church service, is just one of many examples of the healing grace that is more apparent at Fern Lodge everyday.

We welcome your participation. Would you like to come and share your favorite movie one night, or work on a puzzle with a patient? What about a one time visit to read the Bible Lesson aloud to someone and share what you are learning? Mrs. Eddy says, “True prayer is not asking God for love; it is learning to love, and to include all mankind in one affection” (*No & Yes* 39:17-18). We welcome your love!

FERN LODGE NEEDS A WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VAN.

We are asking for donations so we can purchase a van to help patients in wheelchairs go on trips and appointments. This would make a huge difference to those we serve!

ACCREDITATION NEWS

In April, 25 Christian Science nursing organizations from four countries met in St. Louis for a four-day meeting to adopt standards and a governing structure for a unified accrediting organization.



Discussions were lively and friendly, and after two and a half days, the proposed standards and governance plans were unanimously approved. Pictured at the left is the happy Organization Committee, along with Linda Kohler, who represented The Mother Church and provided invaluable guidance and perspectives. Specific transition plans will be determined in the coming months, and we — look forward to continuing close cooperation among Christian Science nursing organizations.

"A MEMBER OF THE MOTHER CHURCH" WORKSHOP

What does membership in The Mother Church mean to us? was the question our staff gathered to discuss in a "think shop" facilitated by Christine Williams of Houston, TX. This was one in a series of workshops focusing on the bylaw, "Christian Science Nurse," found on page 49 in the *Church Manual*. The bylaw is addressed to "a member of The Mother Church." Church membership requires that one "loves Christian Science," is "Christianly qualified," and "can enter into full fellowship with the Tenets and Rules" of the Church. Members also are required to "read understandingly the Bible and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*," and other works by Mary Baker Eddy.

The staff found fresh perspectives on fellowship and community in these discussions. Since Christian Science nurses at Fern Lodge are members of The Mother Church, we thought together about what that means. We recognized that we have to watch and pray to put into daily practice our love of Christian Science. Our love is shown in constant expectation that healing is the natural result of Christian Science prayer and treatment. We give evidence of our Christian qualification in the tender, practical, spiritually-focused Christian Science nursing we provide.

In considering what it means to "enter into full fellowship with the Tenets" and how these Tenets apply to our work, we affirmed that fellowship is an important aspect of community membership. We identified Bible stories that depicted the challenges and rewards of membership in the communities in which Bible characters lived.

The goal of the workshop series is to expand thought to new realizations about the nursing work we do daily at Fern Lodge. Over the next months, we will host workshops to consider the standards set in that bylaw, "Christian Science Nurse."



WHAT ELSE IS NEW?

Multimedia eNewsletter: Our online newsletter includes videos, audios of talks given at Fern Lodge, and slide shows that cannot be featured in our regular mailed newsletter. If you are interested, please sign up for our newsletter at fernlodge.org.

Credit Cards: Fern Lodge now accepts Visa, MasterCard, & Discover Card. You may use your credit card to make a donation or to pay a bill you owe. This option is in addition to our on-line PayPal donation option. If you would like to learn more about this option to make or schedule a donation or make a payment, please contact our Business Office at (510) 886-2448 Ex. 215.

FERN LODGE ENTRANCE AND RECEPTION



Welcome to Fern Lodge! The new entrance and reception area are finished, and with just a little more landscaping, we'll be ready for summer. We hope you will come visit us. Our two Shirleys, Shirley Carroll weekdays and Shirley Sheals weekends, look forward to welcoming you warmly and helping you feel at home while you get to know Fern Lodge better.

A highlight of the reception room is the display of beautiful bouquets grown and arranged by our masterful gardener, Ken Gourley. On the website,

fernlobby.org, under the Videos tab, Ken gives some valuable tips for growing roses.



Shirley Carroll, smiling from behind the new reception desk in the picture to the left, says: "I love being at work at Fern Lodge in the new reception area. The character of the room itself enhances the 'lodge' part of our name, especially with the crafted redwood high beams used so artfully around the raised ceiling. And, the new windows gloriously let in the light and give wonderful views. The furnishings, decor, and office area are superb and convey a beautiful, serene, efficient, and welcoming sense to anyone passing through: visitors, staff, and residents. It says, 'Welcome to Fern Lodge.'"



SAVE THESE DATES, MORE INFORMATION WILL BE COMING SOON!

Christian Science Nursing Information Day, Sunday, July 22

Fern Lodge Annual Meeting, Sunday, September 23

Fern Lodge Focus — May 2012

18457 Madison Avenue
Castro Valley, CA 94546

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Living the Oil

A talk given at Fern Lodge by Linda Graser, CS on February 28, 2012

What moves a healing forward? What loosens a logjam in relationships? What unclasps a seeming hold on progress? In its spiritual significance, OIL! Are we USING the oil? Are we LIVING the oil? Do we know what the oil is?

Over the past four thousand years, oil has been one of the most useful commodities ever known to man! In Bible times alone, the many uses of oil do not cease to amaze. It was a regular ingredient in the daily diet, a basic component in bread making. Oil was used for cosmetic purposes and in ointments, and as an emollient to treat wounds. It was used to soften leather, and very commonly used to light lamps. We know, too, that oil was used in ceremonies to purify, anoint or sanctify.

These days, oil also brings to thought loosening, freeing or clearing something. When our car is filled with oil, we expect it to run smoothly.

We've all read Bible stories that exemplify the healing effect from the expression of spiritual qualities like love and compassion; humility and listening; confidence; preparedness; and persistence. And what underlies it all is the Christ, revealing that ever-important oil of seeing beyond the material picture to the perfect, spiritual idea —the man of God's creating.

Let's focus on this spiritual significance of **oil** and how we can live it.

Let's first take a look at the Anointing Oil

Sometimes we may doubt that we are fully prepared for the task in front of us. But we don't have to stay in that rut! We have only to look at that beloved promise from Psalms 23, "Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over," and we're immediately assured that God, our trusted Shepherd and loving Parent, has blessed us and is with us every moment to protect, guide and provide for our every need.

Years ago, when feeling a bit overwhelmed with the demands of motherhood, I remember asking a practitioner if I was actually capable of maintaining a sense of balance, peace and joy while running a household with three active little boys under the age of 4. I will forever remember the loving look she gave me, and the words that so matter-of-factly went with it:

"Dear, don't you know, God anoints whom he appoints!"

Mrs. Eddy put it this way, "It is safe to leave with God the government of man. He appoints and He anoints His Truth-bearers, and God is their sure defense and refuge," *Ret.* 90:29.

Those words from the practitioner that day were a huge relief and helped me realize that it wasn't about MY plan unfolding through prayer; God's plan was unfolding. I just needed to relinquish the personal responsibility I was feeling to not fail. I needed instead to be still and listen to God, and then move!

If we find ourselves doubting our ability to follow through in a job or activity we feel we have been led by God to do, we can confidently accept the encouragement that God **does** anoint us when He appoints us. It may be more correct to say, God **anoints** us **before** He appoints us!

After all, God is the most ample and willing provider there is—in fact, the **only** one! And He does not overlook blessing any one of His loved ideas by providing the **means** for accomplishing what he has lead us to do!

The Oil of Compassion/Love

No one could be a better example of living Love than Christ Jesus. Our textbook puts it this way, “Out of the amplitude of his pure affection, he defined Love,” 54:3-4.

In her *Message to The Mother Church for 1902*, 8:29, our Leader writes this, “Spiritual love makes man conscious that God is his Father, and the consciousness of God as Love gives man power with untold furtherance. Then God becomes to him the All-presence—quenching sin; the All-power—giving life, health, holiness; and All-science—all law and gospel.”

Recently, a Sunday School student asked me, “Did Jesus heal people he didn’t even know—people he wasn’t really friends with?” We reasoned together that, yes, he did heal thousands upon thousands of people whom he certainly didn’t know personally. But he DID know their true, spiritual, flawless identity as God’s child—this was the man he always saw and always loved—and always healed!

Jesus promised that we, too, are capable of healing as he did. We can realize this fact as we practice his example of “living the oil” in our compassion and love for all “whom [our] thoughts rest upon,” *My* 210:10.

No one could be a better example of living the idea of loving-your-neighbor, than Christ Jesus. He even commands us to love one another as we love ourselves, without exception. So no one is left out!

The Oil of Confidence

Our Leader writes, “The confidence inspired by Science lies in the fact that Truth is real and error is unreal,” *S&H* 368:2-4.

Confidence is *a firm belief in the truth, or in the reality of a fact*. Jesus said, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,” John 8:32. We definitely feel confident when we know the truth! But we must claim it. Jesus so humbly said, “I can of mine own self do nothing,” and “the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works,” (John 5:30; 14:10).

We won’t feel very confident if we are trying to rely on our own wits! But with personal sense out of the way, we place our confidence in God alone, and we will experience this promise, “with God all things are possible,” Matt 19:26.

We know that Moses humbly and continually turned to God with the utmost confidence, especially when he faced a great trial, and God delivered, every time—Truth was there to meet the need in the most remarkable ways. This is a great example for us, to see that trust and confidence in the right place can certainly provide the needed oil that carries us forward in our human experience and is sure to bless others.

Mrs. Eddy wrote in conjunction with Moses' expression of confidence, "All God's servants are minute men and women. As of old, I stand with sandals on and staff in hand, waiting for the watchword and the revelation of what, how, whither. Let **us** be faithful and obedient, and God will do the rest," *Mis* 158:19 (emphasis added).

The Oil of Preparedness/Readiness

A good friend of mine once shared with me how she works to defend herself daily, as we are required to do in the *Church Manual*. She calls it her "Daily Identification Work" which she learned to do years ago when she was in the Christian Science nurses training program! The students were taught to practice identifying themselves spiritually with qualities they felt related to the different synonyms for God, and then, live them, and claim them in others as well.

This work is invaluable to our daily defense. It prepares our thought to meet the false suggestions that come to us with confidence that God is on the field, and with Him we are ready!

The Oil of Persistence and Importunity

We're all familiar with Jesus' parable in Luke 11 of the urgent, persistence of a man, knocking on his neighbor's door in middle of the night, asking for a loaf of bread to feed his surprise visitor. Finally, he does get the bread—not because of friendship, but because of his importunate persistence. This story encourages us to never give up when we pray and don't seem to have an immediate answer. We **do** know the truth, and we must acknowledge that fact, and hold fast to it, and not give in to discouragement.

We can cling to the fact that the true identity of a spiritual idea can only be found by aligning thought with God's view of His perfect, flawless creation. We don't want to "check" to see what *matter* is doing. That only sends us on a wild goose chase away from the spiritual facts that support our healing.

One day I received a phone call from a school nurse saying that while playing football, our son had been run into by the head of another large boy and deeply cut open his eyebrow. She asked that he be picked up immediately and taken to the hospital to have stitches. I talked briefly with our son and then left to pick him up. We assured the nurse he would be well cared for and left.

When asked how he wanted to handle the situation, he said he didn't want to go to the hospital, but felt confident that we could meet it through prayer. We were able to pick up a bandage and continued affirming his completeness as God's dearly loved child. We agreed that the divine law of Love had been present and in operation on that football field, and it was continuing to govern him every moment. This meant that there had not been a lapse in God's law—which always

maintains order and harmony--therefore, there couldn't be evidence of an accident, and we could expect complete healing.

The next morning, however, we both felt very discouraged when his eye was swollen shut. He really wanted to go to school, but it didn't seem like a good idea since he could only see out of the one eye and felt awkward walking that way. We decided to go back to our own rooms and prayerfully reaffirm the truths we had known and felt so sure about the day before, regardless of the physical evidence to the contrary.

Mrs. Eddy writes, "When the illusion of sickness or sin tempts you, cling steadfastly to God and His idea. Allow nothing but His likeness to abide in your thought," *S&H* 495:14-16. She also has included in our textbook Webster's definition of "IDEA" as "the immediate object of understanding," *S&H* 115:17. That word "immediate" means *instant; present; without the intervention of time*. We can "cling steadfastly" to the fact that, as God's reflection, we forever remain the perfect effect of a perfect cause. Therefore, there can be no delay in the evidence of our perfection.

As we came back together, both of us had reached the same conclusion, I would drive him to school. During that 20-minute car trip, we didn't look at the bandage, but continued affirming the absolute truth to ourselves as Mrs. Eddy guides us: "mentally, meekly and importunately" (*Misc.* 127:10). When we were almost there we looked at each other. He saw my big smile and looked in the mirror. All the swelling had gone down and he could see perfectly. We were so grateful we had persisted in our prayers with the confidence that Truth is always the victor! After a few days, the bandage was no longer needed.

Discouragement is a trick that mortal mind would try to have us buy into—it is often the outcome of believing the false claim of delay. But our true source, being ever-present Mind, our wholeness, completeness, and perfection, is in the eternal NOW. It can't ever be delayed!

One last word about oil. Water birds have little sacks of oil on their bodies at the base of their feathers. From a very young age they are taught to preen their feathers in order to clean them as well as **spread the oil** so that it makes them waterproof. That way when they swim or dive, the water doesn't soak into their feathers and pull them down.

We already include all that it takes to spiritually preen or "activate" the oil. We're **already** anointed!

We've seen how **living** the oil of Love, confidence, humility, listening, preparedness and persistence brings into view the real, spiritual idea, the man of God's creating, and is essential to healing. This is actively living the healing oil of the Christ, Truth in our daily lives.

This OIL blesses one and all. So let's live it!