



# Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?

Psalm 78

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## *Fern Lodge Focus*

October 1991

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# Who Can Be a Christian Science Nurse?

The Mother Church no longer requires or recommends a nurses training program for Church members who wish to represent themselves as Christian Science nurses. We are grateful that individual Church members naturally care for others as led by their love for God and man. And we are glad that now each is free to assess his or her readiness to apply to advertise in the *Journal* as a Christian Science nurse.

Although formal training is not required, the standard for Christian Science nursing has not changed. The *Manual* and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, by Mary Baker Eddy, always have set the standard by which nurses measure their faithfulness to the demands of Christian Science nursing.

An in-depth review of nursing over the last six years by The Mother Church Board of Directors led to a new *Journal*-listing policy for Christian Science nurses, effective September first. The nursing review was inspired and focused by the *Church Manual* By-Law, Article VIII, Section 31,

***Christian Science Nurse. Sect. 31. A member of The Mother Church who represents himself or herself as a Christian Science nurse shall be one who has a demonstrable knowledge of Christian Science practice, who thoroughly understands the practical wisdom necessary in a sick room, and who can take proper care of the sick.***

*The cards of such persons may be inserted in the Christian Science Journal under rules established by the publishers.*

This By-Law establishes requirements for Christian Science nurses and acknowledges that responsibility for fulfilling these requirements rests with the individual Church members who nurse. It indicates that Christian Science nursing, like the practice of Christian Science healing, is an individual demonstration of the loving care that

finds its source in God. The application for *Journal* listing asks how an individual has prepared himself or herself to fulfill the *Manual* requirements and also asks for letters of recommendation.

One benefit we see as a result of the change is that now individuals who wish to serve and advertise as Christian Science nurses need not go away to a nurses training school for a series of three-month periods. Each person is free to nurse as God leads, wherever he or she may be. Experienced Christian Science nurses everywhere are ready and willing to assist others who would like to learn more about how to give nursing care.

Fern Lodge will hold information meetings for Christian Science practitioners to share our understanding of the recent changes and our role in nursing. We will welcome questions and will try to answer them as fully as possible, but if you wish to know what The Mother Church intends or plans, please ask the Nursing Activities Department in Boston.

## Would You Like to Nurse at Fern Lodge?

Fern Lodge's mission is to offer Christian Science nursing services for our community wherever such care is needed. There are nursing opportunities now available here. We have openings for experienced Christian Science nurses. We also welcome inquiries from anyone who would like to begin serving as a nurse. We will continue to offer training and assistance for those who wish to learn while they serve. If nursing interests you, please call and speak with Pat Alvarez, Director of Nursing.



# God's Outstretched Arm, A Perspective on Insurance

When someone needs nursing the world may seem harsh and inhospitable, like the picture on our cover. And lacking funds to pay for care, he or she may feel lost in a wilderness with little hope for help. But God can provide help in this wilderness. The Bible repeatedly tells how man's needs are met by God, sometimes at the hand of others who are moved by love. Christian emphasis is on giving as a natural outcome of a love for God and man, and receiving as a natural result of God's tender care for His children.

## Christian Care and Benevolence — A Key to Eternal Life.

Christ Jesus' parable of the good Samaritan<sup>1</sup> is a Scriptural example of nursing care. Christian Science nurses are inspired by the Samaritan's example, and Christian Science nursing facilities may compare themselves to the inn where the kind stranger provided for the needs of his wounded neighbor. This story also offers a basis for charitable giving. The Samaritan paid for his neighbor's stay in a nursing environment and promised to pay whatever more would be needed.

Jesus told this story in response to the question, *Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?* He showed that the love for God and man which is the key to eternal life may be seen here and now in the tender mercy and generosity of the Samaritan, whose expression of Christian care illustrates the command to *love thy neighbor as thyself*. Jesus did more than just point out the good-hearted kindness of the Samaritan. He indicated that to inherit eternal life each of us must care for our fellow man, because it is our individual nature as an heir of God, Life, to manifest His caring qualities.

Throughout his ministry the Master served mankind — healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out devils, feeding the hungry, forgiving sinners. His overflowing love for God and man set the example for all who would follow him and

do the works that he did. Near the end of his earthly career he gathered his disciples to him and knelt down and washed their feet. This humble act of care was done to help his disciples know how to follow him. He said, *I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you*, and he added, *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them*.<sup>2</sup> Several times in the Gospels Jesus indicates that following him is the way to eternal life, and his example was one of tender care for his fellow-man.

Looking again at the parable of the Samaritan we see not only an example of loving care, but also of two people who did not stop to help the wounded man. Jesus identifies them as a priest and a Levite, not just as two men. According to *Harper's Bible Dictionary* the priests in the time of Jesus represented a well-organized hierarchy which was deeply attached to sacred traditions and customs. The Levites were essentially servants of the priests, and together they may be thought of as representing the religious and political order of the Jews at that time. Might these examples indicate that the human organization these men represented would not meet the care and benevolence needs of individuals? And might this be a valuable lesson for us today?

## Philanthropy — Individual Opportunity or Institutional Responsibility?

Many people believe that insurance companies or the government can best provide the resources for nursing care. But ever-increasing costs of care and of health insurance, coupled with limited benefit payments, have been the results of recent government/insurance approaches to funding care. Institutional funding has not met the needs of individuals or society. Perhaps we should ask, "Are commercial or institutional programs as effective and beneficial to individuals and to mankind as individual philanthropy?"

(Please turn the page.)



Mary Baker Eddy's writings point out the many blessings of philanthropy. In *Science and Health*, she speaks of the *hallowed influences of unselfishness, philanthropy, spiritual love*.<sup>4</sup> And in *Miscellany*, our Leader writes of the influence of philanthropy on human lives and the progress of mankind. *Philanthropy is loving, ameliorative, revolutionary; ... it touches thought to spiritual issues, systematizes action, and insures success; ... it unselfs men and pushes on the ages*.<sup>4</sup>

Individual philanthropy met the wounded Jew's needs. Had he thought his affiliation with a religious or political organization would ensure his care, the priest and Levite passing by would have discouraged him greatly, and he then may have failed to recognize and accept the care that finally was offered to him. The Samaritan was a stranger of another race, one with whom the Jews had no dealings. The man's helper was an individual, not an organization. Is there a lesson for us here, too?

## Who Should Care for Me?

Might it be a Christian requirement to accept aid from other individuals who manifest the love of Christ? At that touching time when Jesus washed his disciples' feet Peter said, *Thou shalt never wash my feet*. Jesus replied, *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me*.<sup>5</sup> Many of us are happy to provide for the needs of others, but if we won't also let other individuals help meet our needs, are we being faithful in following our Master's commands? Let's consider health insurance in light of the fact that Jesus' examples emphasized individuals as the givers of care and benevolence.

Why do people purchase health insurance? A frequently cited reason is, "I don't want to be a burden on my family and friends." But is the opportunity to fulfill a Christian demand a burden? Should we seek to deny others their responsibility to demonstrate the care of the Samaritan? Instead can't we feel secure with the

understanding that God's caring qualities are always available for everyone to give and to receive?

We are grateful that in God's economy supply and demand are not two unrelated quantities. Beside the marginal heading *Benefit of philanthropy*, Mrs. Eddy states the relationship between supply and demand in this way: *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*.<sup>6</sup> The spiritual demand on each of us to care supplies us with the right resources and qualities, in sufficient quantity, to meet the needs of each day. Rather than thinking anyone could become a burden for others, we can rejoice in the completeness of God's care for everyone.

Another motive mentioned for having health insurance is to know that there will be money available to pay for care if there ever is a need. Recent news articles have indicated that most policies fail to provide sufficient funds to meet actual needs of the policy holders. But even if health insurance were a dependable source of funds, would it be the most appropriate means for meeting financial needs of Christian Scientists who receive nursing care?

Might a concern about future needs indicate a present need for greater faith in the ability and willingness of our loving Father-Mother God to provide a "table in the wilderness" for His children? We love Jesus' promise and counsel in his Sermon on the Mount, *Take no thought saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? ... seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself*.<sup>7</sup>



## Insurance or Assurance?

Most of us have a human desire to know what will happen in the future, or at least to make plans and preparations for future possibilities. Yet the Bible indicates that although man's preparations for himself are not adequate to meet every circumstance he may confront in his life, God's constant care gives all the resources necessary, along with the wisdom to use them, to meet every situation we may find ourselves in.

Can't we trust God to guide, guard and provide for us every day of our lives? We don't always need to see His means in advance, *for we walk by faith, not by sight.*<sup>8</sup> Relying on God to meet our present and future needs, we will have work to do. We will express those caring Christian qualities He provides as we demonstrate a life of service to our Maker. And our dear Leader offers this comforting assurance,

*Beloved brethren, to-day I extend my heart-and-hand-fellowship to the faithful, to those whose hearts have been beating through the mental avenues of mankind for God and humanity; and rest assured you can never lack God's outstretched arm so long as you are in His service.*<sup>9</sup>

George Strong  
Administrator

1 Luke 10:25-37

2 John 13:3-17

3 *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, 462:25-30

4 *First Church of Christ, Scientist and Miscellany*, 287:19-2

5 John 13:8

6 *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, 385:7-11

7 Matthew 6:25-34

8 2 Corinthians 5:7

9 *Message to The Mother Church for 1901*, 1:1-6

Why doesn't Fern Lodge offer Medicare-financed nursing? Since our services could be covered under this federal program, isn't it a ready source of funds? As we have said, we feel that government funding for care should be considered in the same light as health insurance.

The experience of many Christian Science nurses and nursing facilities, including ours, indicates that payment by third parties, such as Medicare, Medi-Cal and health insurance, often has a subtle negative impact on the healing efficacy of Christian Science treatment. For this reason alone, we feel it would be wise for us to seek to quit reliance on Medi-Cal, rather than to add Medicare coverage at Fern Lodge. Also of interest is the following table, edited and reprinted with permission from the Canterbury Crest Nursing Services (for Christian Scientists) newsletter, June 1991.

### Medicare Participation

#### Provisions

- Some assistance (up to 60 days)
- With some bills (\$628 deductible)
- For some patients (Over age 65 who **need** C.S. nursing from a *Journal*-listed nurse)
- Under some circumstances (Remain in facility; same level of nursing need)
- Some of the time (Patient pays \$157 per day for the 61st to 90th day, then no coverage)
- Government recognition of Christian Science
- Government reimbursement for some of the care costs
- A degree of satisfaction that Christian Scientists are getting a share of the tax pie

#### Limitations

- Designed to reimburse costs of medical care
- Real name: Federal Hospital Insurance Program
- Maximum benefit only through use of medical treatment in medical facilities
- NOT designed with Christian Science in mind
- Places medical laws and beliefs on Christian Science care
- Compromises "radical" reliance on God for complete care, including supply
- Recognizes Christian Science only as an alternative health-care system
- Irregular and partial reimbursement
- Requires routine review and reporting of nursing needs
- Continues the fallacy that individuals "pay into" a fund for their care and should get something back



# Before You Buy Insurance...

The article beginning on page 3 presents thoughts about funding for Christian Science nursing, looking at it largely from a Biblical and spiritual perspective. Here are some further considerations for those looking into health insurance coverage. These considerations take up the issue from the standpoint of current media research and the experiences of Christian Science nurses and nursing facilities.

First, think about the implications of health insurance. Is it consistent with Christian Science to prepare for a disability you don't believe in? Does it support the practice of Christian Science to expect problems while praying to know the unreality of them? Is it even a form of malpractice to plan for a future illness?

The premise of insurance is reasonable. Many contribute in order to benefit the few who need coverage. Isn't that what your contributions to Christian Science nursing are doing, making nursing care available to those in need *now*? If all who consider buying insurance would instead contribute a similar amount monthly in support of nursing activities in their area, financial assistance to pay for care will be available as needed. An added advantage of donations to non-profit Christian Science nursing activities is that they may offer a tax savings for the donor.

If you feel insurance will provide for your needs you should know that several reports in local and national news media have pointed out some pitfalls in the current state of health insurance. The June 1991 issue of *Consumer Reports* presents a comprehensive discussion of health insurance in the United States, with particular emphasis on nursing home care and home care coverage. The title of the article indicates its message: *An Empty Promise to the Elderly?* If you would like a copy of this report Fern Lodge has some to share, or you may obtain one by writing to — CU Reprints Department, 101 Truman Ave., Yonkers, NY 10703-1057.

Our experience at Fern Lodge confirms the common concern that many policies do not cover the specific problem that may have led a person to seek Christian Science nursing care. It seems that in order to receive payment a person must be the right kind of sick and receive the right kind of care from the right kind of person in the right kind of place. Over the years fewer than half of those who have come to us with health insurance policies have found that the policy covered the care needed, and of those policies that did pay, several paid only a portion of the cost of the nursing care received.

Newsletters from other accredited Christian Science nursing facilities around the country regularly speak of the need for caution and careful research before a health insurance policy is purchased. Here are some questions that should be answered about any policy under consideration:

- Does the policy cover the actual cost of care? Many pay a daily rate far less than the cost.
- Does it pay practitioners' fees? Some do, but many do not.
- Will it pay for Christian Science nursing care in a person's home? Few policies do.
- Does it cover nursing for a condition that may have existed prior to the start of the policy? Most do not.
- Are Medicare payment guidelines used to determine insurance coverage? If so, the policy may cover less than people realize.
- What kind of verification of physical need and documentation of nursing services will be required before payment will be made?

Taking all the above factors into account, we do not know a health insurance policy we can recommend.



# Development Activities

## Response to Our Letter

We know you will rejoice with us over the \$70,000 which arrived in 500 donations after our urgent May letter to you. 114 of these were new first time donors! And it is apparent that some are responding to our need for regular monthly contributions to meet the requests for benevolence we receive each month. Thanks to each of you!

Thirty-three churches now give to Fern Lodge. We welcome four new donor churches plus two that sent generous extra amounts over their regular contributions. Eighteen churches now give monthly, eight quarterly and the rest yearly.

In our letter we mentioned we were seeking a loan, but we have not found a bank willing to mortgage our property. We would rather not have to get such financing, but we still have loans to private individuals to repay. We keep praying.

One lovely result of our letter was the quick formation of "Fern Friends" as a separate non-profit organization to support benevolence at Fern Lodge. These loving people opened a shop in Walnut Creek. In September they made a donation to Fern Lodge — after being open just two months! Please read their message below.

**Rainbow's End** consignment and thrift shop for the benefit of Fern Lodge has been operating since the first week in July. The shop is located at 1389 - D North Main Street in downtown Walnut Creek. We can use as many volunteers to serve as want to come. Consider bringing a friend or carpooling for a regular three hour shift from 10 am to 1 pm or 1 pm to 4 pm, Monday through Saturday. Have fun sorting and preparing merchandise or pricing and cashiering. There's a spot for everyone! And Fern Lodge is blessed with the fruitage. Call the shop at 932-8489 days, or Norma Smith, 256-7127 evenings.

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## Connie Stricklin Bible Talks — A New Format

Many have enjoyed the all-day Bible talks by Connie Stricklin, given as benefit programs for our *Fund for Care*. In January Mrs. Stricklin will give four shorter talks on the Scriptures, with questions and answers. Each talk will be unique, but all will share the theme, *One Shepherd, One Fold*. Here is a schedule of the talks so you can plan. More information and reservation forms will be mailed later.

Friday, January 24 from 7 - 9 pm, in Saratoga

Topic: **The Ten Commandments**

Cost: \$20

Saturday, January 25 from 10 - 4, in San Francisco, with luncheon

Topic: **The Four Gospels**, their background and differences

Cost: \$50

Sunday, January 26 from 1 - 5 pm, in San Anselmo

Topic: **God as Father-Mother**

Cost: \$50

This will be a workshop for searchers, with registration limited to 50.

Monday, January 27 from 7 - 9 pm, in Walnut Creek

Topic: **The Beatitudes** — bring your Sunday School teenagers

This talk will be held at First Church of Christ, Scientist, Walnut Creek.

Cost: No Charge,  
but donations will  
be appreciated



# New Information Projects

In response to suggestions we received after our May letter to the Field, Fern Lodge will offer two new information publications for the Christian Science community.

*Services Available for Christian Scientists*, is the title of a card we have prepared for distribution to branch churches, reading rooms and *Journal*-listed practitioners throughout California. This card gives the name and telephone number of those organizations which offer services of interest to Christian Scientists. It includes, but is not limited to, Christian Science nursing facilities and services, financial aid organizations, and residential facilities.

A *Calendar of Programs and Events*, is a planned project to aid northern California branch churches and organizations in scheduling lectures, meetings and other activities. We will be sending a questionnaire to churches and organizations to determine if there is a need for a service of this kind. If so, we will prepare a calendar quarterly and send it to branch churches.

## *Fern Lodge Focus*

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address correction requested

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