

We hope you will join us for Fern Lodge's Annual Meeting

Sunday, October 19 at 2:30 in the afternoon

First Church of Christ, Scientist

1701 Franklin Street • Oakland, California

Donald A. Jensen, C.S. of Gold River, CA

will speak on the topic

Christian Science Nursing, Confidence, and You

Donald Jensen is an experienced Christian Science practitioner listed in the *Journal*. He served for several years as an Air Force Chaplain, and his duties took him from Greenland to Pakistan. Mr. Jensen has served the Movement in a variety of other ways. He was a prison chaplain and chaplain to a state mental hospital. He has given talks at Annual Meetings of The Mother Church and has spoken to college organizations, youth meetings, and branch churches in the United States and Europe. In addition he has had a poem, *Joy*, April 13, 1946, and an article, *Impervious Armor*, August 6, 1966, in the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

At Fern Lodge we pray to understand more fully God's care for His children and to bear witness to that care made manifest day by day in health and freedom. We trust in the assurance that each of us can expect to care and be cared for through the daily expression of the ever-present love of God. We all need to recognize when the mental qualities of Christian Science nursing are needed and realize our ability both to use them in our care for others and rely on them for ourselves. We look forward to Mr. Jensen's talk, knowing it will help us understand how to do this more effectively, and with confidence.



The Annual Meeting will include a message from the Fern Lodge nursing staff and a financial report. Parking is available, and child care will be provided in the Children's Room.

Fern Lodge Focus

September 1997

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The opening verse of Hymn 278 in the *Christian Science Hymnal* has special meaning to us at Fern Lodge—we feel like pilgrims on a holy journey.

*Pilgrim on earth, home and heaven are within thee,
Heir of the ages and child of the day.
Cared for, watched over, beloved and protected,
Walk thou with courage each step of the way.*

We are thankful for the outpouring of gifts we received in response to the appeal we made last year for financial assistance. Each donation touches our hearts and makes us feel *cared for, watched over, beloved and protected*. It gives us hope, for the mission of Christian Science nursing and for the future of our Cause, to see the broad acknowledgment of the value of Christian Science nursing and benevolent care which these contributions represent. Our deep and heart-felt thanks go to Clearway Foundation in Southern California for \$10,000 in matching funds.

Included with the financial donations were comments of appreciation for the work done at Fern Lodge. These comments are precious. They contribute as directly to our nursing work as the money that accompanied them. A few of the gifts we received also included thoughtful questions. We are grateful for the encouragement and for the questions which urged us to think deeply about our mission and what we are doing and why and how we are doing it.

Fern Lodge is a Christian Science nursing facility. We are committed to assisting Christian Science nurses in the practice of their calling. We offer a place where individuals in need of nursing care can find help. We may help family and friends give the needed assistance to enable one to stay home. Christian Scientists who feel an overflowing love for others and who want to understand more fully God's tender care for His children can

come to Fern Lodge to learn ways to put their affection into practice and witness the healing power of reliance on God to meet human needs.

We serve individuals who for many years have relied on Christian Science for healing. Our guests have served the Cause of Christian Science as practitioners and teachers, nurses and committees on publication and who have served in branch churches as readers, Sunday

School teachers, Reading Room librarians, ushers, active members of the congregation. But our place is not just for deserving church members. We also serve those who may have just learned of Christian Science, who have turned to Christian Science for the first time, perhaps with their last hope for comfort, care and healing.

How did we decide what to charge for Christian Science nursing services? Our daily rate reflects our daily cost—the cost of providing a staff of Christian Science nurses; a facility and the staff to keep it clean and in good repair; food and the staff to prepare and serve it. The rate for a

stay at Fern Lodge is \$150 per day. This charge includes Christian Science nursing services, a room, meals (including special preparation as needed), and all supplies; there are no additional charges.

The Fern Lodge board and our whole staff is dedicated to providing service of the highest quality. We also understand that highest quality does not necessarily mean highest cost, and we seek to keep the cost of a stay at Fern Lodge as low as possible. Recent measures we have taken to contain costs include streamlining food service operations, with breakfasts prepared to order on the nursing floor, having staff members from different departments fill in for each other's vacations and other time off, cutting office staff time and having office staff members assist with some nursing tasks and maintenance work.

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The Sermon on the Mount — from the talk given in January 1997 by Mary Jane Chapin

Last January we had a wonderful day, thinking deeply about Christ Jesus' *Sermon on the Mount*. There was far too much in the discussion to include here, so we will give you some highlights, comments Mary Jane Chapin shared on some of the precious verses in the Sermon. We have shared thoughts on the Beatitudes in a previous *Focus*, so we will take up the discussion at the point immediately following them. We hope these excerpts will interest you in coming to the discussion of *The Acts of the Apostles* Mrs. Chapin will give in February; please see page 6 for further information.

Ye are the salt of the earth. Precisely you people who are persecuted and slandered are the salt of the earth. So how are we like salt? If salt is essential to life, isn't it saying that the disciples are essential to the life of the world? Salt is a preservative. The disciples were meant to combat spiritual and moral decay. It is a fertilizer. The idea is to prepare the soil for the gospel. Salt doesn't show, it works hiddenly. But it is critical to note that something is still happening. Salt is not salt for itself, but for its uses. The disciples are not existing for themselves but for others. This is not to compliment them on their character or privileges. Rather it is to illustrate for them that membership in the kingdom is not for their own enjoyment but for the benefit of others. Moreover, there is a warning. We can lose our saltiness. We can compromise so much with the world that it doesn't matter anymore. Once it happens, the salt is worthless.

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. As hidden as salt is, light is not. It's open, manifest. Even the tiniest light at night lights up an entire room. Even from far away a city on a hill can be seen. But look at the order, salt came first. The quiet work, the hidden work, the inside work comes first. Then the light is visible. There is no warning here like there was about becoming saltless, there is only a promise. Disciples need both warning and encouragement. If they take their discipleship seriously, they are the light of the world. To think otherwise would be as absurd as putting a lamp under a bowl. Metaphorically speaking, we are to do likewise. We are to let our light shine; let it

keep on shining. We are to do good works so that people may glorify the Father in heaven. Works are to be transparent. Jesus did not promote his own glory, nor does he give warrant to his followers to seek any for themselves.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. "The law and the prophets" was a reference to the Scriptures, to what we know as the Old Testament. As a devout Jew Christ Jesus would have lived closely with these books and studied them. In this statement we are given a glimpse of his enthusiasm for them. He was sent by God. He is not here to destroy the Holy Scriptures but to fulfill them. He is saying that the law is valid. True, it had been interpreted to stress the act to be performed; it was externalized, legalistic. But does he set the law aside and say "Don't pay attention to that anymore, do this instead"? No, what he does is fill the law up full with meaning; he stresses the doer. He is saying, "Put it inside, internalize it." He is saying that character is important, following the letter of the law is not enough. The Pharisees, in their zeal for the minutest details of law and tradition, were apt to lose sight of the larger moral purposes the law was meant to serve. We must not make this mistake.

Now we are going to talk about commands. The Beatitudes, the blessings, came first in the Sermon. First we had to be filled up; we were shown God's love. Then we were told to share it. Now there will be further responsibilities for disciples. Our ability to keep the commands, however, flows from the blessings. First, we are blessed, then we can be a blessing to others. In a wonderful book entitled, *The Christbook*, a commentary on Matthew's gospel, Emil Brunner wrote, *The Beatitudes are not the mere preface of the Sermon on the Mount, they are its engine.* And one of his students wrote, *God loves me enough to accept me the way I am [the Beatitudes], but too much to leave me that way [the commands].*

Resist not evil. We can think of this command as focused here, with me; it's *my* rights that are at issue. The "you" pronouns in this command are all singular.

Obedience is first and foremost, personal and individual. How am I to act when it is my rights that are being attacked? What does it mean to "resist not evil"? The word in Greek is a compilation of two other words. Literally, they mean, "against" and "stand." It referred to going to court, standing against someone in court. So it came to mean, "Don't hold court. Don't mete out justice. Don't get even. Don't resist." The way the word "evil" is written, it could mean evil, the evil one or the evil person. They all work. What is really interesting about this is that evil has already been named. It has already been identified, that is not our job. Justice will be meted out; we don't have to do that.

Love your enemies. Some time ago I went to a talk where both Jews and Christians gave presentations. That night a rabbi talked about this statement. He pointed out passages in the Old Testament where it says we are to care for and do good for our enemy. There are texts in the Old Testament which command us to love what God loves, and hate what God has rejected. Obviously, that would be the Canaanites, the godless, the heathen, all those outside of Israel, our enemies, right? You can see where the thought comes from. But it takes some special discernment to read these texts. Their intention is to promote wholehearted service to God. That is honorable, but it certainly includes restraint upon any self-righteous crusades for God. We are not God's designated destroyers of His enemies. The love which is being commanded is an unselfish concern which seeks the good of others.

How are we going to love our enemies, not just be civil towards them, but really love them? It says, *Bless them..., do good to them..., and pray for them.* We may feel so separated from these people that our only access to them is through God, through praying for them. As we pray, we allow the divine will to permeate us until we are

able to feel God's love for them. We are to do this so that we may become the children of God. Now we have already been identified as God's children, so in fulfilling this command, we essentially become what we already are, that we might be in act what we are already in fact. Any reward for our loving behavior is rooted in our relationship with God, not in any material advantages or human gains.

Only a goal that seeks exclusively to please the Father is safe from human vanity and decay.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven... For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Treasure, it's not just money. It is whatever enslaves, whatever is sought that provides security. Typically, however, it often does just the opposite. It creates a great deal of anxiety. We have to get more, we have to secure what we have. We have lots of problems with it; Jesus mentions three. These are all examples of decay. A moth is nature's corrosion. Rust is time's corrosion. Thieves are humanity's corrosion. Jesus wants to liberate us from all that.

He wants to liberate us from a misspent life. He is not trying to remove these desires; he is redirecting us. He is saying, "Trust in heaven, be successful before the Father, please Him."

Jesus doesn't try to squash ambition; he elevates it. He is appealing to the adventure of faith. If our goal is to impress people, then our center will be people and their admiration. If our goal is to please the Father, then our center will be the Father and His honor. Goals determine our actions. Goals, even the most laudable ones, have to be lodged in a real relationship with God, otherwise they are always subject to the disappointments of earthly decay. Only a goal that seeks exclusively to please the Father is safe from human vanity and decay.

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and man. This is decision time. The attempt to win people's attention and God's is an impossibility. It's either-or. Either human or divine esteem will be lord. This seems really strict to us. Most of us can do two things at one time. Some of us can even do a lot more. So what's the problem? We can better understand this by going to the Greek word that's translated, "serve." The word is derived from *doulos*. A *doulos* was a slave. Now technically, serving is what he did, but he did it in the relationship of a slave. Slaves belonged to their masters. They didn't have any rights. The master had absolute life and death control over that slave. Now just imagine a slave having two masters. If one master said, "Go to the marketplace," that slave would have to do it right then. Suppose the other master wanted his laundry done at the same time. He would have to do that too. He simply couldn't be doing two separate things at the same time. Slaves didn't say to their masters, "I'll get to it right after lunch." It simply couldn't be. Each demanded him totally. Anything less than total obedience likely meant immediate death.

So how do we hear this? We're not slaves. Well, doesn't each of us have an ultimate loyalty? Isn't there a first place for something? Now after that, the loyalties may be shared, but not that first one. Jesus is saying that the goal of hard work is not personal success, but service to others. This is definitely at odds with the gods of culture. He's not asking for fanaticism here. He's asking us to be rational. He's saying, "You can't do this." He's offering to liberate us from trying what is impossible. Christ Jesus is asking us to turn our backs on the gods of this world and serve only the living God. The decision is ours to make, but this is a clear example of one case where if we don't choose, we in fact have chosen.

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Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. This translation doesn't really reflect the negative prohibition in the Greek. It would be much better if we would read, "Stop doing what you are doing. Don't do this anymore." We have books all over the place which tell us how to dress for success, what to eat to stay healthy, how to exercise, what cars to drive. We are supposed to do this in order to live happy and carefree lives. But does it work that way? The more we have, the more we fear its loss. So if we're fearing a loss, we may think we'd better get even more so we'll have some extra. This is a never ending, anxiety producing cycle.

Worrying can't add to our lives at all. It becomes rather ironic in light of the latest studies which show anxiety probably shortens our lives. Let's talk about lilies. What do they contribute to their beauty? Nothing. They don't toil, they don't spin, their life is brief, yet they have a glory beyond the historical glory of Solomon. Again, if God can so beautifully clothe the grass which is here today and fuel for the fire tomorrow, how much more will He clothe us? So what does it mean to say, "Stop worrying"? This is not a command about others. This is meant to take our eyes off regarding our desires for ourselves, to turn our eyes from ourselves to God. God is simply not to be left out of anything.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. We are to turn our backs on the world and seek first His reign and righteousness. It's not arguing spiritual versus material, inward versus outward. We are not trying to beat the pagans at their own game. These are God's things not our things, His righteousness not ours. His reign means His rule on earth, not ours. And it says all these things will be added. He is not preaching asceticism. We receive these things as gifts, not acquisitions. Consider

The Sermon on the Mount (continued)

this story. Imagine being in our living rooms, serving guests, being very merciful, giving glory to God, and the delivery man brings a great load of supplies to our back door. These are the same supplies that the secular world is spending all their time shopping for. The text doesn't say we don't need these things. It says the Father knows and we are to trust Him to provide them for us.

Every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand. This is a person who thinks the words are great to hear but they are too hard to do. That person built a house. And he also had storms, but his house fell. This is the way the Greek reads, "And the rain came down, the rivers came up, the winds blew and they hit that house, and it fell. And its fall was great." The last word in this sermon is "great." That it was a fall which is great stands as a deeply emphatic comment on the issue of greatness. Throughout this sermon greatness has been an underlying theme. People of God strive for great righteousness and mercy, for great faithfulness and obedience. People of the world have other goals, other aspirations. However, the people standing at this point, are the ones who have gone through the right gate, they have the right message, their lives are behind them, they have heard these words but

they choose not to do them. If at this point, they choose greatness apart from this sermon, they will have a great fall. If the world's standard of greatness is their goal, then a great fall will be their reward. It is the fall that will be great. This is not a happy ending, this is a brutal warning. But, it is the end of the Sermon on the Mount.

The Sermon on the Mount calls us to be doers. But is the Sermon on the Mount an impossible legalism? a vehicle to overwhelm us and weight us down? a description of Utopia? an interim ethic? limited to inner attitudes not action? a non-violent program for peace? No. Perhaps, the essence of this sermon cannot be captured in a simple label. It describes a process, a way of living in a relationship with God and with people. These moral imperatives of the sermon are firmly rooted in an unconditional relationship with God. They are neither totally unattainable nor easily attainable. They are neither the cause for hopeless despair nor foolish optimism. The path will be difficult, but it is inexorably tied to the Christian imperative to be in practice what we already are in reality as the children of a loving Father, Mother God. It remains a standard for those who possess the Christ spirit.



Coming in February — a new Bible talk

A Fern Lodge benefit talk on the Bible

The Acts of the Apostles

will be given by Mary Jane Chapin

Saturday, February 7
9:30 to 3:30

Marines' Memorial Club
609 Sutter Street at Mason
San Francisco, CA

Mary Jane Chapin has received a Master of Arts degree, majoring in both the Old and New Testaments. As a class-taught Christian Scientist she brings a special perspective to the text of the Scriptures.

We're enjoying her current series, *Experiencing the Gospel of Mark* in the *Christian Science Journal*, and her 1997 benefit talk for Fern Lodge, *The Sermon on the Mount* excerpted above, was very much appreciated.

We hope you will join us next February for Mrs. Chapin's discussion of the *The Acts of the Apostles*. More information will be in our next *Fern Lodge Focus*.

The cost of around the clock nursing care, in a facility or at home, can be quite high, and if the need for care persists, the cost of a stay at Fern Lodge will be over \$4,500 a month. Few individuals have assets to enable them to pay this amount. Fern Lodge is not a Medicare provider. Many of the patients who come for care have used their Medicare benefits elsewhere or their stay extends long beyond the Medicare coverage limit. We are a MediCal provider. This program is available to anyone who has a financial need, and is used by as many as 90% of the patients at Fern Lodge. This program does not have a time limit, but it provides a fixed amount of aid, regardless of our charges. Medi-Cal provides only about half of the funds needed to meet the cost of care.

Some individuals have health insurance to cover possible future nursing needs. In many cases the insurance helps but is not sufficient to meet fully the charges incurred, and the patient seeks additional financial aid. We do not discourage anyone who feels that health insurance is a wise financial plan for them, but we do not recommend any specific insurance carrier or plan. In addition we feel that the decision to purchase health insurance could include consideration of an alternative.

Donations to meet current benevolence needs of Christian Scientists could be given to local Christian Science care givers, perhaps in the amount of an insurance premium. Accompanying the donation would be the understanding that if there is a need for financial assistance later similar donations from others will meet the need as effectively as insurance. This means of funding has a Scriptural foundation, seen in the parable of the Good Samaritan and in Christ Jesus' assurance, *Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again, Luke 6:38.*

Why don't we just charge more for our services in order to fund benevolence? In the first place we feel it is not in keeping with the spirit of Christian Science nursing to charge more than it costs for care. And since many of those who apply to Fern Lodge do not have funds to pay our current charges, increasing the charges would simply lead to requests for more benevolence.

There is an on-going need for funds to aid those who receive Christian Science nursing care at Fern

Lodge. During the first half of this year patients here were given nearly \$23,000 in benevolence every month, a total of \$137,000. We need your help. Since the first of this year our financial position has been stable, thanks to generous donations and bequests we have received from many supporters who see the value of having Fern Lodge available to serve those who need Christian Science nursing care.

During the first half of this year patients were given \$137,000 in benevolence. We need your help.

Do we have a long range plan to meet benevolence requests? Yes! We pray to see the daily demonstration of our Father-Mother's care for each of His children, and resulting Christian care each child shows for his fellows. Although we do not always know His means, we are grateful to trust that God always provides the resources that meet each human need, in the right place, at the right time, with the right expression. We appreciate each donation, bequest and gift.

We are preparing a brochure to help explain the various ways in which individuals, churches, associations and other organizations can give to help in the work we are doing.

Thank you for your prayers, your care for others, and for the generous support you give for Christian Science nursing at Fern Lodge.



Government funding news

You may have heard that a recent court ruling found the Federal law unconstitutional which allowed Medicare and Medicaid payments for Christian Science nursing, because the law specified payments for members of only one religion, Christian Science. The Mother Church has worked with members of Congress to draft legislation allowing payments for others who rely on nonmedical means for healing, avoiding conflict with the Constitution. Such legislation has been signed into law. Here are some highlights of the new law:

The new statutes do not mention Christian Science, Christian Scientists, The Mother Church, or the Commission for Accreditation of Christian Science Organizations (Commission). They identify a new category—"religious nonmedical health care institution."

To qualify for reimbursement for services in a religious nonmedical institution, an individual must sign an "election" form stating that: (1) he or she is conscientiously opposed to acceptance of medical treatment; and (2) acceptance of medical treatment would be inconsistent with

his or her religious beliefs. Individuals may not, without affecting reimbursement for nonmedical nursing benefits, repeatedly switch between nonmedical nursing and medical treatment.

A patient receiving services in a religious nonmedical institution cannot be forced to have medical examination, treatment, diagnosis, etc., nor may the religious institution or its personnel be required to submit to medical supervision, regulation, or control.

It is expected that the Commission will be authorized to accredit Christian Science facilities, and it will apply to fulfill this purpose. The new provisions went into effect August 5, 1997, but the Federal government has until July 1998 to issue new regulations. Facilities that now qualify as religious nonmedical health care institutions should continue to receive reimbursement.

If you have any questions about government reimbursement, accreditation, or another issue, please call George Strong, Administrator, at 510-886-2448.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

We recently learned that Fern Lodge's one remaining long-term debt must be paid as soon as possible. The amount owed is approximately \$45,000. If you are able to assist us to retire this debt, we will be deeply grateful for your gift at this time.

Fern Lodge Focus — September 1997

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Address correction requested

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