

Do you long for the tender, loving care that meets human needs with comfort and healing while urging to more active spiritual growth? The Bible and Mary Baker Eddy's writings offer precious images of a mother bird, nurturing her nestlings while she readies them for flight.

Come to the

*Fern Lodge Annual Meeting*

and hear a talk by

*Marjorie Dagnall, C.S. of Aptos, CA*

*“You are God's Nestling”*

*Sunday, October 18 at 2:00 P.M.*

*First Church of Christ, Scientist  
1814 B Street, Hayward*

Immediately after the meeting you are invited to stay for a brief talk and a question and answer discussion that will give you an opportunity to share and to learn more about Christian Science nursing.

## A demand for consistent practice

It is important for us all to understand that seeking exemption from regulations that affect Christian Science nursing requires us to keep our nursing practice true to the theology of Christian Science. Our grounds for exemption are that compliance has an adverse impact on the practice of our religion. For our request to be honest, we first must understand Christian Science nursing as an aspect of Christian Science practice, and then we must act from that understanding. If our statements or actions belie our claim, we have no legitimate grounds for exemption. To clarify our understanding of nursing as a religious practice it may help if we ask some searching questions.

Is Christian Science nursing primarily a ministry? or is it primarily a profession? Is a nurse at work in a facility answering a call from God? or is she seeking a dependable paycheck, regular work hours, predictable time off, employee benefits, and so on? Does the nurse come to work because she is impelled by a desire to serve God and man? or does she come because she needs a job and nursing is one that makes her feel good?

Christian Science nursing may be seen as a profession, and a nurse should feel good about her work. Done well it merits a just wage, with opportunity for study, time with family and friends, participation in other church work, and whatever activities are part of her normal life. But if we are ministers the human amenities will be secondary, and we will be willing to answer God's call to serve whether or not working conditions are in accord with our personal ideal, trusting that God's calling is always His blessing.

In the *American Heritage Dictionary* the first definition of *ministry* is "the act of serving," and to *minister* is "to attend to the wants and needs of others." As religious ministers, Christian Science nurses should cherish the opportunity to serve before they think of how they will be paid, with the calm trust that divine justice and mercy

will provide fair compensation. As ministers, nurses will seek to meet needs in ways that emphasize each patient's independence and reason, instead of just trying to find the easy or efficient way of doing things. A nurse always will consider another's wishes, trusting God to guide patient and nurse to demonstrate safety and wisdom, secure in the assurance that, "He will give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."

In all cases the nurse will strive to serve God and His idea, man, and not yield to the temptation to view patients as suffering, perhaps confused or willful mortals. At the same time she will trust that patients are striving for the same goal, seeking the understanding of their identity as God's likeness, the understanding that heals. In proportion as we humbly minister, and are ministered to, we will deserve and make full use of an exemption from restrictive medical intrusion into our nursing practice.

Parents who are Christian Scientists and have accommodations to protect their children from medical intrusion know the demand on them. They must provide more

effective protection for their children than the laws from which they are exempt. They do this through prayer and consistent actions in family life. Christian Science nurses who work within an exemption on religious grounds have the same urgent demand. And they, too, fulfill this demand through their prayer and their action consistent with the ministry which earns the legal accommodation they cherish. Nurses must protect themselves and their practice more effectively than would the regulations from which they are exempt. A Christian Scientist's protection is always in God, in steadfast trust in His power, presence and tender care. A nurse avails herself of God's protection by abiding in divine Love and by serving as Love "inspires, illumines, designates, and leads the way," (*Science and Health* 454:18-19).

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## Protection from disease — a message from the Fern Lodge Board of Directors

We are writing to inform you of recently enacted government regulations we must comply with concerning the transmission of specific contagious diseases and to ask for your contribution in prayer as we request exemption. Christian Science nursing facilities are regulated by federal, state and local laws. Most involve what may be called "common sense." They have little impact on the practice of Christian Science, and we are happy to comply. There is, however, an area of regulation that troubles many Christian Science nurses, practitioners and facility boards. Facilities must provide information and training to nurses regarding certain diseases and use specific procedures to minimize their transmission. Fern Lodge is working with the Committee on Publication to find ways to exempt the practice of Christian Science nursing from these requirements.

The basis for our request is the understanding that Christian Science nursing is an essential aspect of the theology of Christian Science. Because Christian Science nursing is a religious practice, nurses must strive to ensure that every nursing activity and procedure has a sound theological basis. Nurses' actions need to be consistent with the Bible and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, by Mary Baker Eddy. This passage from our textbook indicates the importance of keeping religious practice free from regulation by a medical system. "The theology of Christian Science includes healing the sick... 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," (*Science and Health*, 145:31).

Christian Scientists share the common concern for public health and safety, and further, we are moved by a deep desire to see mankind free from the fear of disease, a fear that induces disease and leads to so much suffering in our world today. The regulations we seek exemption

from are designed to identify the source of certain diseases and to mandate steps to prevent their spread. But our understanding of the nature of disease is irreconcilably different from the medical beliefs which determine the regulations. Medical theories aver that material conditions cause disease and make it dangerous, contagious, etc. Our understanding includes such clear ideas as, "Colds, coughs, and contagion are engendered solely by human theories," (*Science and Health* 220:16). We cannot work from both standpoints.

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For Christian Science nurses to give care that meets the needs of patients relying on Christian Science for healing, they must keep focused on the nature of man as the spiritual image and likeness of God, protected from harm by God's presence and constant care. The regulations we speak of require "information and training" about the supposed reality of and danger from disease.

Information and training about disease would have an effect opposite to what is intended. A Christian Science nurse cannot believe another individual might be dangerous to her or to others because of a physical condition. All training a Christian Science nurse receives must be consistent with Christian Science; any other training or information works against Christian Science practice. In an interview in the *New York Herald*, Mrs. Eddy was asked, "Do you reject utterly the bacteria theory of the propagation of disease?" She replied, "Oh," with a prolonged inflection, "entirely. If I harbored that idea about a disease, I should think myself in danger of catching it," (*Miscellany* 344:16-20).

We appreciate your prayer, maintaining Christian Science nursing as it truly is, under God's government, free from being governed, more or less, by material systems of medicine. "The real jurisdiction of the world is in Mind, ..." (*Science and Health* 379:6). Thank you.

## *Fern Lodge repair and renewal update*

Thank you!!! In our last *Focus* we shared Fern Lodge's experience last winter, and we asked for financial assistance to help pay the cost of cleaning up the mess and repairing the damage. The response we received was generous, heartwarming and encouraging. Donations came from many of our faithful friends who have given in the past. We also received generous gifts from others who reached out to meet our special need. One gift, from the Isabel Foundation in Michigan, was sufficient to meet the entire cost of rebuilding the retaining wall that failed during the storm.

Though much of the needed clean up and repairs have been completed, there are still some tasks ahead of us. As we have worked in the building we've found several places where the floor covering was loosened by flood water. We will need to replace these portions of the vinyl flooring. In the older portion of the facility, the Hillside Wing, the laundry room requires considerable repair and renovation in order to make it usable again. And in a few places around the grounds our landscaping needs loving attention.

Now it's time to take steps to minimize the effects of future winter rains. Rebuilding the retaining wall is one of these steps. Another is to provide a drainage system that will prevent water from filling our parking lot and the area behind the newer wing of the facility. We are working with Gene DeBolt, a civil engineer, longtime friend and former Fern Lodge board member on this project.

We will be happy to have you come to Fern Lodge for a visit. You will be able to see for yourself the results of our labors and of the donations we've received. The building and grounds have never looked better! We have painted and carpeted the inside of the facility and tended to much of the landscaping outside. Our gardens are in full bloom, and it is easy to feel the love of our Father-Mother God surrounding us, just as it was easy to feel that love in the midst of the flood and falling trees.

Thank you once again for your support in the past, and for any gift you can make to help complete repairs while we give the benevolence needed by those who come for Christian Science nursing care.

Fern Lodge has an opening for someone to do regular maintenance and repairs. If you know anyone who could fill this position please call George Strong, Administrator, at 510-886-2448.

*FERN LODGE FOCUS — September 1998*

*18457 Madison Avenue  
Castro Valley, CA 94546*

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