

Christian Science nurse: an office of thought

By Carol Wootton, Development Officer



When you hear the term “Christian Science nurse,” what does it mean to you? Does it denote a person? An occupation? Or a profession?

The answer to these questions is both yes and no. Yes, the term “Christian Science nurse” is frequently used to refer to specific individuals, to an occupation, and to a profession.

But if you look carefully at the Christian Science Nurse by-law in the *Manual of the Mother Church*, you will see that Mary Baker Eddy was careful to distinguish the term “Christian Science nurse” from those members who *represent* themselves as such:

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.

As if to emphasize the point, the wording of her second paragraph reads “The cards of *such persons* . . .” rather than the more obvious “the cards of Christian Science nurses . . .”

Moreover, she placed this by-law under Article VIII, Guidance of Members. This infers that Mrs. Eddy intended the by-law to apply to *all* members of her church, and not solely to those who have chosen to pursue it as a profession.

We may need to spiritualize our concept of the term “Christian Science nurse.” It does not identify merely a person, although a person may properly *represent* himself or herself as a Christian Science nurse. It does not identify merely a job, although a person may indeed work full time in this capacity.

The term “Christian Science nurse” identifies first and foremost an *office of thought*. It is a holy state of consciousness—*expressed*. Its purpose is to nurse the Christian Science thought. Because the Christian Science nurse is an office of thought, it cannot be stereotyped. It is never the exclusive possession or domain of any one individual. It cannot be reduced to a job title. It does not confine itself to one specific form; therefore we should not think the Christian Science Nurse by-law can be given expression *only* in a nursing facility or *only* through an independent practice. The spiritual idea called “Christian Science nurse” is unlimited in its scope and application. Its activity is the human manifestation of divine Love’s infinite operation. In truth, it applies to and includes all mankind.

It is interesting to note that in the Manual, immediately preceding the Christian Science nurse by-law, Mrs. Eddy placed this by-law:

No Monopoly. SECT. 30. A Scientist shall not endeavor to monopolize the healing work in any church or locality, to the exclusion of others, but all who understand the teachings of Christian Science are privileged to enter into this holy work, and “by their fruits ye shall know them.”

This by-law points to the universal nature and scope of the office of the Christian Science nurse.

How each of us is led to demonstrate the Christian Science Nurse by-law is, of course, individual. While only some of us will publicly represent ourselves in this capacity, we all have opportunities to practice this office of thought to some degree in our dealings with family and friends and fellow church members. Whenever we find ourselves trying to turn a person’s thought away from a material claim to the truth of being, we are nursing the Christian Science thought.

We may enter this office gradually, perhaps tentatively or even unconsciously at first, or we may embrace it consciously and wholeheartedly from the outset, but one thing is certain: it is an office Mrs. Eddy expected each of us to enter. In *The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, Mrs. Eddy noted: “This church is impartial. Its rules apply not to one member only, but to one and all equally. Of this I am sure, that each Rule and By-law in this Manual will increase the spirituality of him who obeys it, invigorate his capacity to heal the sick, to comfort such as mourn, and to awaken the sinner” (p. 230.)

What a privilege awaits every student of Christian Science who enters, in whatever way, this precious “office of thought”!

Valuing the Activity of Christian Science Nursing

By Dean Wolfe, Coordinator of Christian Science Nursing Activities

The practice of Christian Science nursing touches every aspect of human experience. I've yet to reach a point where I 'know it all'! Even an experienced Christian Science nurse like me is at times fooled by mortal and limited ways of measuring and valuing this holy work.

Carol's lead article delineates so well what Christian Science nursing is: an office of thought individually expressed. Still, at times it's tempting to confuse physical activity for the substance of Christian Science nursing.

So it's important to value Christian Science nursing, but in the right context and for the right reasons. This very specific thought-activity, though outlined in the Church Manual, can't be circumscribed. It is not a thing, nor a widget-producing job or a 'clock-in and clock-out' occupation. It also should never be a dreary or burdensome responsibility that someone 'deserves a pat-on-the-back for'.

It's an office that carries some specific responsibilities. He or she who represents him or herself as a Christian Science nurse must first and foremost be a practicing metaphysician. After all, what we are dealing with here is but a parade of mortal suggestions of every imaginable kind attempting to attach themselves to mankind. Frankly, not a task for the faint of heart!

I can't emphasise enough the high level of satisfaction that can be gained when you practice this calling *correctly*. How so? Because going much deeper than offering personal-based friendship, or companionship, or physical care-giving, you are taking a stand for the Christ in consciousness, and witnessing its healing

effect in your whole experience. How could ripping off the mask and lie of sickness and sin and aiding in revealing the true man, spiritual and pure and God-like, not be fulfilling and showing the highest form of love you can offer to your fellow man?

Mary Baker Eddy wrote in *The First Church of Christ, Scientist and Miscellany* (page 165): "As an active portion of one stupendous whole, goodness identifies man with universal good". For more on the topic of God's active goodness, please see below what Christian Science nurse Ruth Matthews shared with us recently.



We are Assured God's Goodness Will Never End

Every January, we start off the New Year with a Christian Science nurses' meeting. One of our Christian Science nurses, Ruth Matthews, volunteered to "set the tone" with selected readings from the Bible and Mary Baker Eddy's writings. We loved the title of the readings; we loved the readings; we were especially impressed with the forty and five years mentioned by Caleb since Sharon House celebrates its 45th year as an organization in 2010. Ruth graciously shared the citations with us and, in the interest of space, we have reproduced the citations only for your individual study.

Christian Science Hymnal

Hymn 93

The King James Bible

Joshua 14: 6,7, 9-11 (to 2nd,)

Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, by Mary Baker Eddy

305: 22
310: 11-18

Prose Works other than Science & Health by Mary Baker Eddy

Miscellaneous Writings:

341: 14-19, 21-22, 29-27

The First Church of Christ, Scientist and Miscellany
190: 7

Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures

200: 9-13
247: 13-15 (to .)

Admission Procedure for Sharon House

By Laurie Brady, Christian Science nurse, on behalf of the Admissions Committee

You will be happy to know the first response most of us want to give when we receive a call for admission is to say "Come on in!" Whereas this might be ideal, it is clearly not the reality. Given the fact that we are so willing, you may wonder why instant admission isn't adopted right now.

First and foremost, we need a little time to prayerfully and thoughtfully listen and then obey whatever divine nudge we are given. We are striving to have a deep listening sense about each case, to know how all can be blessed. Recently, we have been given loving counsel to assist us in this process for which we are so very grateful. We want our responses to come from divine wisdom leading the heart's response. We do want anyone who calls to feel our desire to give. As well, we want anyone who calls to feel assisted even if it turns out we cannot accommodate them.

Running concurrently with our prayer is our need to factor in some practical nuts and bolts. Those nuts and bolts look like questions:

- Do we have the skill set required?
- Can the Christian Science nursing presently needed be given by one Christian Science nurse, since we rarely work with more than one Christian Science nurse on a shift?
- Is there coverage and assistance for the rest of the house, i.e. Kitchen and/or Housekeeping,

These items must be considered, albeit quickly, to know if we will be able to give safe and effective care to those dear ones in need.

Since we work in a collaborative fashion, none of us makes decisions regarding admissions unilaterally. Usually, the individual receiving the initial call tries to meet the immediate need. Following that, and as simultaneously as possible, Dean Wolfe, our Coordinator of Christian Science Nursing Activities is called and in turn our Administrator, Anne Sorochinsky is consulted. Anne checks to ensure that the operation of Sharon House will continue uninterrupted to meet all needs, while Dean and the Christian Science nurses are considering the above mentioned factors.

However, we know that as we more trustingly rely on spiritual sense as our first guide, all these items will work together seamlessly. "Coming and going belong to mortal consciousness.", states Mary Baker Eddy in *Unity of Good*, page 61. The best case scenario would be for whoever needs the special care we offer to avail himself or herself of it in a gentle, unobtrusive way. All the details of coming to Sharon House, - acceptance, packing, informing and transportation are part of the healing, not separate from it.

Through the years we have discovered that those who best understand Christian Science healing to be a completely spiritual activity are soonest blessed as they receive Christian Science nursing. Again, while this is ideal, we understand we are all growing in our understanding. Our ministry is two-fold. We want to lovingly assist those in need as we bear witness to their Christly nature and spiritual substance. We also want it to be clear that this activity is entirely based on "radical reliance" on Christian Science for healing.

We see Sharon House as an activity even more than a place. It is a representative of the Church Manual's by-law for Christian Science nurse. It is our job to keep this point clear in our thought. How does using medication, drugs or dietary supplemental products and remedies, for instance, impact on the activity of Christian Science nursing? It tips the scale from total dependence on God and trusting in His revealed Truth for our spiritual wholeness. We, as Christian Science nurses, are here to defend each individual's spiritual identity or holiness (wholeness) as their ONLY identity. That wholeness is what we are nursing. We do not nurse sick bodies. "God is not in the medley where matter cares for matter..." (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, page 78.)

Our goal is to embrace our callers compassionately by sharpening our spiritual sense. It is also our desire to grow in our own understanding of Christian Science healing and support those relying on it radically as they have their healings. As "Each succeeding year unfolds wisdom, beauty, and holiness" (*Science & Health*, page 246), we thank you for your feedback and your support in our growth spiritward.

Annual General Meeting 2010:

The 2010 Sharon House Corporation Annual General Meeting takes place this year on **Saturday, April 10 at 1:00 pm**. Our location has been set for First Church of Christ, Scientist, Toronto, 196 St. George St (west of Avenue Rd and north of Bloor St), Toronto. The Call to Meeting will be mailed to all our members mid-March.

Remember, this year you must be a paid-up member to attend. Our membership fee of **\$60.00** must be received in the office before February 28, 2010. Those who regularly donate and those whose donation equalled or exceeded \$60.00 in the calendar year of 2009 are considered paid up members.

Christian Science Nurses:

Laurie Brady
Ruth Matthews
Elaine Scott
Jenny Solorzano
Dean Wolfe

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Peter Vaughan, Treasurer & Vice-President
Kathy Shuff, Secretary
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Carol Wootton, Development Officer

Housekeeper:

Alla Goncharova

Management Team:

Anne Sorochinsky, Administrator
Reet Tischenko, House & Home Manager
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Valuing Teamwork and ‘all things work together for good’ (Romans 8:28)

By Dean Wolfe, Coordinator of Christian Science
Nursing Activities

A group of Christian Science nurses working together under one roof is a special thing. There are, after all, only a couple dozen such facilities on the globe (and only two in Canada)!

Experience has shown me that good Christian Science nursing doesn't have a 'cookie-cutter' predictable representation. It is manifested and expressed in as many varied patterns as on snowflakes [for those who missed the lesson, no two snowflakes are alike]. It's very much an individual ministry. So how does it work for us at Sharon House, where there's a need for some consistency?

In 2008 the Christian Science nurses at Sharon House worked out a document called "The Team Focus for Christian Science nurses at Sharon House." Rather than take away the individuality of each team member's expression of Christian Science nursing, it has provided a secondary focus that we all willingly have a stake in:

"To cultivate a home-like environment where guests come to commune with their Father/Mother God while relying on Christian Science treatment for healing—in an atmosphere free of judgment, criticism, gossip, family cares, or conventional medical involvement.

"To daily demonstrate that Christian Science effectively heals the sick- our conviction which we uphold and cherish to be true."

This focus has proven to be a protection, helping us pull together when needed. It raises our sense of responsibility above merely our own practices to encompass this organization as a whole. It encourages us to uphold the office of Christian Science nurse and apply our best metaphysics and ethics to every challenging situation individually and collectively. It allows us to discuss ideas openly together and collaborate in carrying them through.

And speaking of teamwork, here's some exciting news: there's a newly formed association called "Canadian Christian Science Nursing Network" [or CCSNN]! Among its goals: promoting unity and inclusiveness for all involved in this healing ministry across our vast country; to be a resource; to hold annual conferences. This kind of togetherness and communication means that important facts, experiences, and, best of all, love for this profession is readily shared in a context relevant to Canadians.