

Letter from Church History Department - Mrs. Yvonne Fettweiss

The First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston
Massachusetts

Church History

October 5, 1993

Thank you for your September 26 letter regarding the Church Manual. We're always glad to have an opportunity to clear up misconceptions about our Leader's continuing government of her Church.

According to the minutes of the Christian Scientist Association there was no meeting on April 19, 1879. The meeting at which the Association voted "to organize a church" was held on April 12.

You will find enclosed three statements from The Christian Science Board of Directors that were published in our Church's periodicals. The article in the April 19, 1924 *Christian Science Sentinel* explains the changes made in connection to the "Pastor Emeritus." The editorial in the October 1976 *Christian Science Journal* discusses the addition of the "Editor's note" on page 130 of the Manual. Finally, the statement in the November 1977 *Journal* goes into the addition of "and Branch Churches" on pages 120 and 127 of the Manual. It points out Mrs. Eddy's personal approval of these and other small changes occurring in the 89th edition.

You will note that the first paragraph on page 575 of the October 1976 *Journal* has been highlighted. This addresses the question of "informational, stylistic, and technical adjustments" for which you have asked information. We trust this answers your questions.

It is our hope that the information we have shared lays to rest any concerns you may have had about the inviolability of the Church Manual.

Sincerely,



Mrs. Yvonne C. Fettweiss
Manager, Church History

enclosures (3)

Now Jesus was the great Exemplar. What he did others may do. His effort was to prove that God's ever-presence was demonstrable, and that men could prove it to be so through the understanding of God's law. In other words, Christ Jesus made it clear in his life-work that in the degree men think and act in harmony with divine Principle, obeying spiritual law, they are witnessing to Truth, showing forth the Father.

Mrs. Eddy makes it very plain how it is that many fail to witness to Truth. They are believing in the reality of matter,—believing in the testimony of the material senses, which can never bear witness to Truth. She writes in *Science and Health* (p. 298), "What is termed material sense can report only a mortal temporary sense of things, whereas spiritual sense can bear witness only to Truth." Thus she states the fact that the only reliable witness to Truth is spiritual sense. It was spiritual sense which revealed to Jesus the real creation; it is spiritual sense which reveals to whosoever will this same real creation, giving to all who discern it power over the false material sense of things. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God," says Paul. And the children of God—those who are guided by spiritual sense—alone can testify of the Father. Christian Scientists are striving to let their lives testify that they have gained some understanding of God, the Father. In healing sickness and destroying sin through the truth, they are bearing witness to the ever-presence and omnipotence of God, divine Principle.

DUNCAN SINCLAIR

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From the Directors

To every loyal Christian Scientist falls a share of the responsibility for observing, so far as is humanly possible, our Leader's expressed plans and desires. To The Christian Science Board of Directors of The Mother Church are allotted the greatest responsibilities, as well as the greatest opportunities, in this regard. Upon them rests the duty of now replacing on page 21 of the Church Manual our Leader's name and title as "Pastor Emeritus," which was removed after she passed on. The Directors believe that the field will be interested in the reason for this action; and they are therefore giving a brief outline of the facts which preceded it.

In April, 1895, the then Board of Directors unanimously appointed Mrs. Eddy Pastor Emeritus "nominally; for the time and for all generations to come." On April 23 of the same year she accepted the ordination as conferred, and has since been regarded by Christian Scientists as their Pastor Emeritus. From 1895 until after she passed on in 1910 her name with the above title was always printed in the forepart of the Church Manual under the heading "Church Officers." Soon after she passed on, the Directors who were then serving discontinued the printing of her name in this list of officers in the Manual because of certain conjectures and surmises then afloat in public thought, which, they believed, might cause the retention of her name there to be misconstrued and misunderstood.

As these erroneous beliefs no longer prevail, the present Directors have for some time been considering the action taken by their predecessors in 1910, and have now decided that our Leader's name as Pastor Emeritus should be replaced on page 21 of the Manual as it appeared for so many years prior to 1910. The Directors believe that the list of

church officers on page 21 should conform to Section 1 of Article I of the Manual, which distinctly and specifically names the "Pastor Emeritus" first among the church officers. There are other By-laws in the Manual which also refer to Mrs. Eddy as the Pastor Emeritus of her church.

Devoted Christian Scientists will ever continue lovingly to refer to Mrs. Eddy as "our Leader," a designation which is not affected by her being no longer visibly with us. With equal reason should she ever be regarded nominally as our Pastor Emeritus, for no one can possibly succeed her in either capacity. She became our Leader for all time, not because she personally led the movement safely over the obstacles and through the difficulties which confronted its earlier existence, but for the greater reason that her teaching and writings will always continue to lead the seeker after righteousness towards "the goal of Spirit, or life in God" (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 324). She is our Pastor Emeritus, not merely because she once officiated as pastor and minister of the early church organization, but because, as Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, her discovery will ever minister to the needs of suffering and sinning humanity, healing the sick and comforting the sorrowing through the impersonal Truth which she revealed.

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Christian Science Sentinel
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Enclosure 1

Editorial Section

GEOFFREY J. BARRATT, Editor
 NAOMI PRICE / PETER J. HENNIKER-HEATON, Associate Editors
 ALFRED F. SCHNEIDER, Associate Editor of the Herald

The Manual and the Church Universal

When Mary Baker Eddy gave the Church of Christ, Scientist, its present form as The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts, with membership open to Christian Scientists anywhere in the world, she made clear that it was a universal and not merely a local church.¹

However, she also made clear by the very title of her Church that physically, legally, and administratively it would forever be located "in Boston, Massachusetts." In taking the preliminary steps toward organizing the Church in 1892, she found it necessary to get a firm basis in Boston before proceeding to develop it as The Mother Church of a potentially worldwide organization with branches in many lands.

She was concerned at that time to form a Church with a Board of Directors which could hold title to the Church property in Boston as a recognized legal entity. This purpose was accomplished in September 1892 by a "Deed of Trust Conveying Land for Church Edifice," described also as a "deed of conveyance."²

This Deed of Trust cited Section One, Chapter 39, of the Public Statutes of Massachusetts as the statutory basis for the right of The Christian Science Board of Directors to hold property. As then worded, the statute granted the right only to bodies of church officers composed entirely of "citizens of this commonwealth," but it served Mrs. Eddy's immediate purpose adequately. She now had a Board of Directors

that could proceed to build "a suitable and convenient church edifice" for a "congregation" which thereafter would be styled "The First Church of Christ, Scientist."³ Three weeks later The Mother Church was formally organized by vote of its twelve "First Members."⁴ By the end of 1894 the Church existed as a visible building in Boston as well as a developing organization with members in areas far removed from Massachusetts.

In 1895 Mrs. Eddy brought out the first edition of the *Manual of The Mother Church*, containing the Rules and By-Laws governing the Church's activities. An Appendix included a copy of the Deed of Trust, with the pertinent Massachusetts statute quoted in a footnote. There is not a shred of evidence that Mrs. Eddy considered the citizenship proviso in the statute to be divinely inspired; on the contrary, she evidently valued the statute for what it permitted, not for what it restricted, and she clearly wished her Church to be as free as possible from limitation by state law. The only restriction which the Deed of Trust itself put on membership on the Board of Directors was that "no one shall be eligible to that office who is not in the opinion of the remaining members of the Board a firm and consistent believer in the doctrines of Christian Science as taught in a book entitled 'SCIENCE AND HEALTH,' by Mary Baker G. Eddy beginning with the seventy-first edition thereof."⁵

During Mrs. Eddy's remaining years here, the responsibilities of the Board were enlarged by the *Manual* far beyond the limited purposes set forth explicitly in the Deed of Trust, and the movement was increasingly attaining that universal character which our Leader expected it to have and which is inherent in the Science she discovered.

Early in the Church's history she expressed a wish that William P. McKenzie, a Scottish-Canadian, might serve as a Trustee of The Christian Science Publishing Society; a little later she chose another Scottish-Canadian, Annie M. Knott, as Associate Editor of the Christian Science periodicals; and in 1908 she wrote that Frederick Dixon, an Englishman, would make "a splendid Editor" of *The Christian Science Monitor*. Nowhere did she express a wish or belief that noncitizens of the United States should be ineligible for any office in The Mother Church.

Over the years the statute quoted in its 1892 form in the footnote on page 130 of the *Manual* has undergone a series of changes by the Massachusetts Legislature. Being a state law and not a Church By-Law, it is obviously subject to amendment at any time. No change made since 1892 has placed any new restriction on our Church or its Board of Directors. The only change that has affected the Church is one which the Board of Directors itself initiated in 1971, and it has had the happy result of removing from the statute what, from the standpoint of the worldwide mission our Leader envisioned for her Church, as well as from the standpoint of the state, was an unnecessarily limiting technicality.

For many years Christian Scientists, both American and non-American, had been questioning whether it was any part of Mrs. Eddy's intent that only United States citizens should serve on The Christian Science Board of Directors. Archival research at various times and an especially exhaustive search initiated in 1970 produced no evidence to support such an assumption, whereas Mrs. Eddy's own writings furnished

abundant evidence of the universality of her purpose. The Directors' legal counsel also found no valid reason why, under the *Church Manual* and the laws of Massachusetts, membership on the Board should be thus restricted other than the technicality of the statutory wording at that time.

As a result, the Committee on Publication was asked in 1971 to explore the matter with the legislature. Finding the atmosphere favorable to a removal of the citizenship restriction in the statute, the Committee on Publication prepared a bill which would accomplish that purpose, and the bill was introduced in the legislature. However, it was withdrawn when a committee of the legislature offered its own bill removing the restriction in the statute because it felt the proposed change was such a good one that its benefit should be available to all churches. This substitute bill passed the Massachusetts Legislature and was signed into law on May 13, 1971.

The change consisted of one word. Church officers affected by the statute were required only to be "residents" rather than "citizens" of Massachusetts, thus opening the office to noncitizens of the United States.

It is important to understand that this change in the state statute does not constitute a revision of the *Manual* or a change in its By-Laws. The Deed of Trust has not been changed, and in the nature of things it never will or can be. The statute cited in the footnote is the 1882 law referred to in the Deed of Trust. The "Editor's note" has been added to the footnote simply to explain the 1971 change in the statute, and the legal situation would be exactly the same whether or not this helpful explanation was included.

The integrity of our *Church Manual* is at the heart of all loyal members' concern. Its By-Laws came to our Leader through divine inspiration, and sometimes after hours and days of prayer and struggle. They have the seal of God on them, and it is unthinkable that they should be amended or revised by later generations. The prosperity of our Cause depends to a large

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degree upon the faithfulness with which Christian Scientists observe the *Manual's* provision for their individual and collective welfare. Its By-Laws will never be changed.

The addition of the Editor's note on page 130 does not constitute a revision of the *Manual* by any definition, legal or literary. It falls, rather, into the category of such informational, stylistic, and technical adjustments as the annual updating of the names of Church officers, periodic copyright notice changes, the addition of Mrs. Eddy's facsimile signature and the cross and crown emblem as registered trademarks, and adjustments in capitalization to bring certain terms into conformity with the usage finally approved by Mrs. Eddy for all her works but occasionally overlooked by her publisher.

In this connection, it is useful to know that when our Leader sent an article to *The Christian Science Journal* for publication, she would sometimes remind the Editor that she expected him to punctuate it and take care of any other details of style or form that might need attention. While she valued accuracy in small matters as well as large, her own gaze was necessarily and increasingly fastened on the great issues that would face her Church in the coming centuries. Increasingly, also, when the Board of Directors turned to her for advice, she would tell them that they must

learn to make their own decisions on the basis of Mind's guidance and her written rules and instructions.

It is in this spirit that successive Boards of Directors have tried to reach a just judgment on both the small details and the great issues that faced them as administrators of the *Church Manual*. Drawing their inspiration as well as their authority from the *Manual*, they have endeavored to follow their Leader as she followed Christ—the Christ in whom there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female; “for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”⁶

The present Board, confronted by a world in upheaval, has been deeply impressed by our Leader's vision of Christian Science as embracing the whole of humanity. We rejoice that the removal of one needless limitation by human law on the universality of her Church is in full accord with her own unfolding action as she moved from the limited purpose of the Deed of Trust to the organizing of the Church under the *Manual By-Laws*, “thus to reflect in some degree the Church Universal and Triumphant.”⁷

¹ See *Manual of The Mother Church* 19:1-6; Art. XIV, Sect. 1, and *Miscellaneous Writings* 382:32-3; ² See *Man.*, pp. 128, 130; ³ See *ibid.*, pp. 131-132; ⁴ See *ibid.* 18:12-27 and Clifford P. Smith, *Historical Sketches* (Boston: The Christian Science Publishing Society, 1941), pp. 184-186; ⁵ *Man.*, p. 130; ⁶ Gal. 3:28; ⁷ *Man.*, p. 19.

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Political Direction for Today

The meat of human politics is sometimes defined as working out who gets what (and when) of the finite “pies” of material power and wealth. The teachings of Christian Science—like those of Christ Jesus—are metaphysical, however. Eminently practical, they deal with the basic spiritual realities of power, man, substance, good—

with divine power rather than personal influence; spiritual supply rather than material wealth; divine good rather than physical goods; the universal family of God's concordant ideas rather than international rivalries. These realities reveal the spiritual truth in place of adverse material conditions.

Church in Action

News and Announcements

From the Directors:

The order of services in branch churches

From time to time questions are raised about a change made on page 120 of the 89th edition of the *Manual of The Mother Church*, which was published a few weeks after Mary Baker Eddy's passing. This change consisted in the addition of three words "and Branch Churches" in the heading of the order of services in *The Mother Church*.

It has sometimes been assumed that Mrs. Eddy did not authorize the added words. On the contrary, she both saw and gave her handwritten approval to the proof sheets of the 89th edition containing this and several other small changes, thus making that edition the last of the "subsequent editions" with changes approved by her after the 73rd that "shall be cited as authority" (*Church Manual*, Art. XXXV, Sect. 2).

There is no reason for surprise that Mrs. Eddy authorized this final clarification of her purpose in regard to the order of Sunday services. Even before the order as first prescribed was introduced into the *Manual*, she unequivocally stated on several occasions her intent that branch churches adopt the same order as *The Mother Church*.

As early as December 1891 she introduced a notice in *The Christian Science Journal* with the words: "That there be uniformity among Christian

Scientists in their Church services, I submit the following Order of Exercise." In her statement in the *Journal* printed in *Miscellaneous Writings*, pp. 313-316, she provided the format of "the Sunday services of our denomination." When she added the reading of the "scientific statement of being" and the Explanatory Note, she requested in the issues of the *Journal* for February 1896 and April 1897 that the branch churches incorporate these new items in their proper place in the order of service. Again, in the *Sentinel* of March 21, 1901, she announced in regard to the newly added correlative reading from I John 3: "All the Churches of Christ, Scientist (from this date), are requested to read at the close of services, and before benediction, the 'Scientific Statement of Being.' . . . And the correlative Scripture according to I John 3:1, 2, 3."

Other similar statements regarding the uniform order of services in *The Mother Church* and its branches were made by Mrs. Eddy in her public announcements and private letters at various times. Her final addition to page 120 of the *Manual*, along with a similar addition on page 127, was not an afterthought but rather represents a culmination of two decades of her consistently expressed desire that "the same form of religious worship shall be observed by all the churches of our denomination" (*Journal*, May 1896).

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS