

Metaphysical Roots for the “For the Love of Church” panel First Church, Mountain View

- S&H 583:12

“CHURCH. The structure of Truth and Love; whatever rests upon and proceeds from divine Principle.

The Church is that institution, which affords proof of its utility and is found elevating the race, rousing the dormant understanding from material beliefs to the apprehension of spiritual ideas and the demonstration of divine Science, thereby casting out devils, or error, and healing the sick.”

- Use Webster’s 1828 Dictionary (<http://1828.mshaffer.com>), which was the primary dictionary Mrs. Eddy used in writing Science and Health, to look up key words throughout the definition of Church.
- S&H 256:25, “A finite and material sense of God leads to formalism and narrowness; it chills the spirit of Christianity.”
- Acts 5: 38, 39, “And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.”
- S&H 323:9, “Beholding the infinite tasks of truth, we pause, — wait on God. Then we push onward, until boundless thought walks enraptured, and conception unconfined is winged to reach the divine glory.”
- Matt. 6:33, “...seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”
- Matt. 18:20, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”
- Man. 48:21, “According to the Scripture they shall turn away from personality and numbering the people.”
- S&H 337:5, “Material personality is not realism; ...”
- S&H 204:27, “... in Science it can never be said that man has a mind of his own, distinct from God, the *all* Mind.”
- S&H 191:4, “As mortals give up the delusion that there is more than one Mind, more than one God, man in God’s likeness will appear, and this eternal man will include in that likeness no material element.”
- S&H 452:20, “We soil our garments with conservatism, and afterwards we must wash them clean.”
- S&H 398:27, “The one Mind, God, contains no mortal opinions.”
- S&H 280:31, “The only excuse for entertaining human opinions and rejecting the Science of being is our mortal ignorance of Spirit ...”
- S&H 283:4, “Mind is the source of all movement, and there is no inertia to retard or check its perpetual and harmonious action.”

Possible Resources and Practical Steps to Support Church Renewal

- Make a list (not too long) of spiritual qualities that you feel your church should express. (Simplicity should be one of them.) Then seek to manifest those qualities in all activities. Claim the already, ever-presentness of those qualities in and by everyone, and in all that is done.
- Constantly affirm, individually and collectively, the truth that there is only one Mind, and that Mind, which is God, is the Mind of each of us. And refrain from having human opinions, which is the belief of a personal mind separate from the one divine Mind.
- Invite someone from outside the church to give one or more metaphysical talks to the church.
 - Ask them to pray for your church and handle whatever specific beliefs would seem to hinder this church's growth Christianly and Scientifically
- Go through The Manual of the Mother Church and discover what Mrs. Eddy says to do that is specific for branch churches and for all churches.
 - For further clarification of anything contact the Mary Baker Eddy Library.
 - Use Webster's 1828 Dictionary (<http://1828.mschafter.com>), which was the primary dictionary Mrs. Eddy used to write Science and Health, to gain a deeper sense of the words she chose based on what they meant in her time. Many are very different from current usage.
- Have the entire membership read Paul Nixon's book, "I Refuse to Lead a Dying Church".
 - Use his six key choices as a guideline to examine all aspects of the current church organization. Those choices are: "Choosing life over death, community over isolation, fun over drudgery, bold over mild, frontier over fortress, now rather than later."
- Regularly read biographies of Mrs. Eddy to gain a fresh view of how church continued to evolve and unfold for her, how she grew spiritually, and what she told her students to do to strengthen themselves as metaphysicians.
- Visit other CS churches and appreciate every effort to fulfill their mission
- Read in the Christian Science publications and on the church website of the efforts of other churches, and see what makes a good fit for your individual church.
- Continually keep in mind the newcomer. Look at what things look like from their perspective. Can they quickly understand what is going on from the parking lot to their seat, as well as during a service or meeting? If not, what can be said or done to smooth over any transition or awkwardness for them, and make it warm and loving? For example, I've noticed that when we've finished reading the Responsive Reading together and then move into the Sermon, newcomers start flipping through the Citation Quarterly wondering what is next and what are they supposed to be doing. We've started giving them the Full Text Quarterly explaining to them that they can follow along with the Sermon as it's printed in there. Each time there's been a really grateful response from them.
- And most important ... pray, and ask God to show you what He wants you to know about His / Her church. For example: "What do you want *our* little church to be like, to express, to do ... all for Your glory."

Services, Readers, Prayers in Churches, and Wednesday Meetings

- 1) Sunday Services
 - a) The definition of "service" from Webster's 1828 Dictionary (which the Mother Church confirms was the primary dictionary Mrs. Eddy used in writing Science and Health. It's online at: <http://1828.mshaffer.com>.)
 - i) "In a general sense, labor of body or of body and mind, performed ... for the benefit of another."
 - ii) So it's an *unselfed* act of mind or body.
 - b) Praying for the congregation during the service.
 - i) Definition of "Reader" from Webster's 1828 Dictionary: "One that reads... particularly, one whose office is to read prayers in a church."
 - ii) Really! So what might be the prayers being read by the Readers in church?
 - (1) The entire church service! All the statements of truth read: the hymn verses, Scriptural selection, solo, Lord's Prayer and its spiritual interpretation, Explanatory Note, Golden Text, Responsive Reading, Lesson-Sermon, Scientific Statement of Being, Correlative Scripture, benediction, etc.
 - iii) "The prayers in Christian Science churches shall be offered for the congregations collectively and exclusively." (Manual 42:1)
 - (1) It does *not* say "the prayers during silent prayer." It's *all* the prayers before, during and after the service.
 - (2) As members you have committed to being there for the congregation during their time of need.
 - (3) We should be praying non-stop for the congregation from when we arrive, to when we leave.
 - (4) So, what are we doing while the Lesson-Sermon or other statements of truth are being read?
 - (a) If it's a "service", then what we're doing is an unselfed act of mind or body.
 - (i) Rather than focusing on ourselves and looking to benefit personally from the service.
 - (b) It should be prayer for the congregation!
 - (c) We could be praying the Lesson-Sermon *itself* as it's being read, and all the other statements of truth.
 - (d) For example: "This is true and this is real. We all hear it and understand it, and are putting it into practice. And nothing can prevent us from doing so."
 - iv) "The Readers of The Mother Church and of all its branch churches ... must keep themselves unspotted from the world,--uncontaminated with evil,--that the mental atmosphere they exhale shall promote health and holiness, even that spiritual animus so universally needed." (Man 31:4 The)
 - (1) What is the "mental atmosphere" the Readers are exhaling?
 - (2) Couldn't it be praying and reinforcing each statement of truth as it's being read?
 - v) If all the church members were praying and reinforcing every statement of truth as it's being read...
 - (1) That would be being of "one accord" (one Mind), "in one place", like in the Pentecost.
 - (2) Wouldn't we then experience the influx of the Holy Spirit like the apostles did?
 - (3) "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting... And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost ..." (Acts 2:1,2,4)
 - (4) S&H 588:7: "HOLY GHOST. Divine Science; the development of eternal Life, Truth, and Love."
 - c) In First Church, Mountain View, all the members are praying unselfishly and reinforcing the truths being heard.
 - i) And the visitors, attendees and members feel the spiritual uplift during the entire service.
- 2) Wednesday meetings
 - a) Mrs. Eddy *never* uses the phrase "Wednesday Testimony Meetings". Just "Wednesday Meetings" (Man 122:1).
 - i) These are NOT "Testimony Meetings". These are just meetings!
 - b) Webster's 1828 Dictionary definition: "MEETING. A coming together; ... as a happy meeting of friends."
 - c) So, why aren't these just *happy meetings of friends*?
 - d) The Wednesday meetings include "Experiences, testimonies, and remarks on Christian Science." (Man 122:11)
 - i) But a remark on Christian Science could be "I don't understand citation #8 in the Bible Lesson."
 - ii) And the other remarks could be what other people understand about citation #8.
 - iii) It would be building up each other. Rousing the dormant understanding. Helping and supporting each other.
 - e) In First Church, Mountain View, our Wednesday meetings are happy gatherings of friends.
 - i) We stay seated, don't use a microphone, don't use the standard formula for testimonies ("Thank you for the readings. I'd like to express gratitude for a recent experience I had... I'm very grateful for Christian Science.") We've taken out all the formalism in our sharing. (Think about how you'd share with a sibling or best friend, a healing you've had.) We share healings, but also experiences and remarks on Christian Science.
 - ii) We laugh, joke, interrupt, comment, and support each other.
 - iii) And we all look forward to supporting each other at each Wednesday meeting in whatever ways meet the current need.
- 3) So the Sunday services are the unselfed giving of ourselves and our prayers for the benefit of the congregations, and the Wednesday meetings are for both giving and receiving inspiration, support and help.