

These mailings are inspired by Mary Baker Eddy's cogent comments in her article "Advice to Students":

*"To know the what, when, and how of error, destroys error. The error that is seen aright as error, has received its death-blow; but never until then" (Mis. 299:2).*

## **INFORMATION MAILING #55**

**FOCUS:**

### **Boston Church Alive Summit**

Our Church Foundation: Boundless basis for growth—  
A presentation from the Mary Baker Eddy Library

Compiled September 2011

**The information presented in these mailings is not the work of any one individual, but of many Christian Scientists. It represents the thinking of a broad spectrum of workers throughout the Field, who wish to share their knowledge and insights. The intent is never to harm, but always to bless.**

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# **Introduction**

## INTRODUCTION

It is of particular interest to see the pattern that has developed wherein the Church's history department is being used at "Church Alive" summits to suggest and validate changes to branch church activities. At the Pasadena "Church Alive" meeting, Lesley Pitts, Executive Manager and President of the Mary Baker Eddy Library, gave the keynote address entitled "Mary Baker Eddy's Concept of Church." At the Midwest "Church Alive" meeting in Chicago, the talk is described on the website as "Founded Secure: Mary Baker Eddy Library staff members Lesley Pitts and Michael Davis [Senior Researcher at the Library] debunk some of the myths and culture associated with the Church of Christ, Scientist."

The Boston "Church Alive" Summit, held the weekend before Annual Meeting 2011, featured a meeting titled "Our Church Foundation: Boundless Basis for Growth." It was a Mary Baker Eddy Library presentation moderated by Lesley Pitts and Mike Davis. The introducer described the meeting as "a deeper look at some of what Mary Baker Eddy had to say about the Church that she established" and said that the moderators would discuss the "foundational history of our Church and expose some of the myths about the organizational structure that Mrs. Eddy established." The video of this presentation can be viewed in its entirety at:

<http://christianscience.com/church-alive/our-church-foundation-boundless-basis-for-growth/>

A portion of the transcript of the Boston meeting is included in this mailing. The two moderators from the Mary Baker Eddy Library are promoting changes in branch church activities through questionable interpretations of history. They are not practitioners, teachers, or church officials, but they are presenting with authority what appears to be an official position of the Church. This technique would appear to absolve the Directors from any responsibility because they could claim that they didn't propose the change. However, it can be assumed that the Mary Baker Eddy Library employees would not be saying anything that does not represent an official position of the Directors – especially when it is on the Internet for the world to hear.

**Transcript**  
**(with commentary)**

**“Our Church Foundation”  
“Church Alive” Summit  
Boston, June 4, 2011**

The following is a transcript of a portion of one of the meetings held during the “Church Alive” Summit in Boston the weekend before Annual Meeting. This particular meeting includes a discussion between the two moderators of the meeting, **Lesley Pitts** and **Mike Davis**, from the Mary Baker Eddy Library. The latter part of the transcript includes some questions from the audience and answers from the moderators. *Observations by a “sheep” appear in bold italics within brackets.*

**Lesley Pitts:** So what about the activities that take place in a branch church? Does she [Mary Baker Eddy] say anything about that in the *Manual*?

**Mike Davis:** Well, she doesn’t really say anything about the branch churches in that regard in the *Manual*. Sometimes people ask us about the Deed of Trust in the appendix in the *Manual* [p. 131, #4] where Mrs. Eddy says that the activities in The Mother Church shall not deviate from “ordinary and usual uses of a church.” Now this Deed of Trust applies only to The Mother Church and not to branch churches, but still sometimes people wonder what was meant by “ordinary and usual uses of a church” in Mrs. Eddy’s time, and we do know that in her time this could include not only church services but also things like weddings and funerals, church suppers, and outreach activities to the community. But really the branch churches, there’s a lot of room for demonstration here as to what kind of activities they will hold in their edifices. You know, speaking of weddings and funerals, this is a question we get fairly often, too, in the research room. People wonder if Mrs. Eddy ever issued a directive that would prohibit branch churches from having weddings and funerals in their edifices, and we’ve never found such a directive from her in the archives. *[A funeral, as distinguished from a memorial service, by definition involves the presence of a dead body or a cremated one. Is Mr. Davis suggesting that Christian Science churches might accommodate the presence of a coffin in some kind of a service?]* So we’ve heard that today some branch churches have voted to have weddings and funerals in their edifices and then other branch churches have voted not to. It’s simply a matter for the demonstration of each branch church to decide such things. *[Does this mean that in such issues as weddings and funerals there is to be no consistent position – no right or wrong – in the Christian Science movement?]*

**Lesley Pitts:** Weren’t there in The Mother Church at least some memorial services...?

**Mike Davis:** Oh, yes, The Mother Church did hold memorial services for public figures who had died, and this happened both in Mrs. Eddy’s lifetime and in the years afterwards as well. *[There is rank deception going on here. Ms. Pitts and Mr. Davis, who are presented as experts in Christian Science history, fail to give any specific facts as is expected of honest, reputable scholars, such as: What memorial services? What public figures? When did these occur? A few hours of research by the writer of this information mailing has revealed that the only services that resemble memorial services in the history of the Christian Science movement were*

*held in accordance with Mrs. Eddy's indication that "the churches of the Christian Science denomination may properly respond to proclamations and requests from governmental authorities to hold special religious services or observances" (see "Items of Interest," Christian Science Sentinel, February 6, 1932, p. 451). Public figures for whom memorial services were held were President McKinley (during Mrs. Eddy's lifetime) and Presidents Harding, Franklin Roosevelt, and Kennedy (in the years after her passing). How can these facts (which Ms. Pitts and Mr. Davis only vaguely alluded to) be used as a basis for their legitimatizing for the Field the holding of ordinary funerals in Christian Science churches today? This is a clear case of using facts sophistically. For what purpose? Why would the Directors want to encourage branch churches to have funerals? Christian Science teaches the eternity of life and celebrates that fact in every church service. To have a funeral in the church would suggest one of the Roman Catholic sacraments, rather than the teaching of Christian Science.*

*The trusting attendees at this meeting are being told that it's OK to hold weddings and funerals in Christian Science churches on the basis that Mrs. Eddy never wrote a directive to say you couldn't. One important question to consider is, Why are weddings and funerals lumped together in this discussion? It appears to be based on the assertion that the researchers in the Library have never found a directive from Mrs. Eddy on either of these issues. And yet this writer asserts that all they have to do to find such directives is to read her published writings. There are many activities that Mrs. Eddy didn't say specifically that we couldn't engage in – such as serving alcohol or even coffee in churches – but a Christian Scientist knows from reading her published writings that she relates indulgence in these to having a "depraved appetite" (see S&H 406:28). Therefore, they would not be appropriate in a Christian Science church. Because a wedding is defined by our Leader as a civil – that is, legal – not a spiritual occasion, it would not be an appropriate activity in a Christian Science church.*

*Pure Christian Science sets the highest standard on earth for every human activity and function, and it sets these standards according to the teachings of the master Christian, Christ Jesus. It demands that its adherents lift consciousness to see the spiritual meaning of even the most mundane of human institutions. So the real student evaluates the rightness or wrongness of weddings in Christian Science churches according to the high standards set by the Master. What did Jesus teach about marriage? "...The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Luke 20:34-36). Apparently the whole question of weddings in Christian Science churches brings into question whether it helps the student or hinders him from understanding his being as the child of God – the child of the resurrection and the whole concept of overcoming the belief of death.*

*Jesus' instruction cannot be ignored or taken lightly, even though humanity seems at the moment to be a long way from demonstrating it in what is called the human experience. The Master's words set the standard – the goal for which every real Christian Scientist aims. He keeps that goal before him and strives to reach it by doing all he can to lift his present human life to that Christly standard. How can having weddings in Christian Science churches help the*

*sincere adherent of this religion keep that high goal set by Jesus before his thought? Wouldn't the wedding ceremony bring thought down to a material sense rather than lifting it to the spiritual? Mrs. Eddy says: "Whatever materializes worship hinders man's spiritual growth and keeps him from demonstrating his power over error" (S&H 4:32).*

*Isn't the whole purpose of a Christian Science church to teach man that he is not a mortal, whereas the Catholic church honors mortality by having both weddings and funerals in church? It's interesting to note that the Congregational church in which Mrs. Eddy was raised did not conduct weddings in their churches, because they did not accept marriage as a sacrament. The sole sacraments they honored were baptism and the Lord's Supper (that is, communion), because these were the only two "ordained by Christ our Lord in the Gospel..." (see Williston Walker, The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism, p. 397). Mrs. Eddy herself as a young bride was married in her parents' home, as was typical of Congregationalists of the time.*

*There is a valuable old saying: "It's not the water around the ship that sinks it. It's just the water that gets in the boat that sinks it." For members of a branch church of Christ, Scientist, to make the decision to hold weddings, or funerals either, in their church is like punching a hole in the boat and letting the water in. Instead the branch churches should be standing guard and defending themselves from the invasion that is tempting them to sink themselves into the pit of mortality promoted by the Roman church by punching such holes.*

*Again, if the student wants to determine the rightness or wrongness of weddings in Christian Science, he has but to read the first of the six Tenets of our religion: "...we take the inspired Word of the Bible as our sufficient guide..." (S&H 497:3). Well, I do believe that Mrs. Eddy and her followers would consider Jesus' instruction relative to not "being given in marriage" quoted above as "the inspired Word of the Bible," and so it would be her directive not to have weddings in Christian Science churches. If further proof is needed, one can read the Fifth Tenet.*

*If funerals and weddings in Christian Science churches were part of the "ordinary and usual uses of a church" that Mrs. Eddy was indicating, why were they not included in Christian Science church activities (both Mother Church and branch church) during Mrs. Eddy's day and throughout the years that her students were actively involved in managing the church according to the way she had taught them regarding the proper sense of church activities? In turn, her students taught the next generation to carry on our Leader's purpose, and so for over 100 years there have been no weddings and funerals in Christian Science churches.*

*These two Mary Baker Eddy Library employees are suggesting that there was never any reason for there not to be such functions. By doing so, they are defying logic, showing profound disrespect for the early workers, and ignoring the power of history – that is, the 100-year record of there being no weddings and funerals in the churches while under the direction of our Leader and her loyal followers, as well as the logical published reasons given by former Boards of Directors (see attached Sheep Alert from May 2010 about weddings in Christian Science churches and "Christian Science and the Marriage Ceremony" in The Christian Science Journal, February 1976, p. 112).]*



**Lesley Pitts:** Now is there anything in the archival documents that tell us how we're supposed to organize our branch churches?

**Mike Davis:** Well, we do know that Mrs. Eddy wanted the branch churches to have a very lean and streamlined organization. She once remarked that the churches are over organized and so not a complicated organization. Also, she never said that a branch church has to have an executive board. We hear some complaints sometimes from people who say that their executive board runs their branch church like a pope and shoots down every progressive idea that the members bring up. And, but actually if the branch church even decides to have an executive board, whether they want one or whether there is a state law that requires them to have an executive board, the executive board only has as much power as the members of the branch church vote to give it. So it's not really an excuse to blame the executive board, because they don't have any power other than what you give them in your branch church.

**Lesley Pitts:** Now another frequently asked question, and that comes from the appendix in the *Manual*, and it does cover branch churches, is that question on "Present Order of Services." We get that quite a lot, don't we?

**Mike Davis:** Yeah, because people want to know if that word "present" is there to indicate that we might change the order of service at some point and that it's deliberately there for that reason, but actually I can tell you why it's there. Before the order of service was placed in the appendix of the *Manual*, they used to be printed in the periodicals. For instance in the *Sentinel* the order of service would appear periodically with the heading "We herewith publish the present order of service in The Mother Church." And so, when it was decided to put this order of service into the appendix of the *Manual*, they simply, as Lesley mentioned earlier, cut and pasted that phrase out of the heading and put it in for the heading of the order of service in the appendix. So that's why "Present Order of Services" is there. We also don't have any statement by Mrs. Eddy or document by her in which she talks about any significance that the word "present" has. And, you know, sometimes people don't like the way our services are conducted these days, and they think that we can benefit by changing the order, but I've always felt that we can really have a radically different service and still be following that simple order of service in the *Manual* because we've built so many traditions up around those simple elements of the order of service over the years. *[What is Mr. Davis saying? Who are these "people" who "don't like the way our services are conducted these days"? Are they Christian Scientists? What is a "radically different service" that follows the simple order of service in the Manual? Doesn't the word "present" mean exactly what it says – that the order of service Mrs. Eddy established is the correct order for every age? It was the present order for her day, and it is the present order for this day.]*

**Lesley Pitts:** Now in the By-Law about the periodicals, Mrs. Eddy charges the editors to keep the periodicals "abreast of the times." And shouldn't we want everything in our services to be fresh and to progress with the times that we are living in?

**Mike Davis:** Oh, definitely. I think Mrs. Eddy wanted *[This is a dangerous phrase. Who could possibly know what Mrs. Eddy wanted unless it could be found in her published writings?]* the entire Church to be kept "abreast of the times" *[If she had intended that, would she not have said so, as she did with the periodicals?]* Of course, we're not going to change our theology or

metaphysics or alter *Science and Health* [**Science and Health has already been altered**], but in many ways we can express ourselves in ways that really meet the needs of our neighborhoods and speak the language that people in our neighborhoods will understand today. [**“A slight divergence is fatal in Science” (Rud. 17:1). This is a very important point to consider. What has been changing? What has already been changed? For just a few examples, see Sheep Mailings #42 and #42A. See also attachment titled “The Dragon’s Flood.”**]

**Lesley Pitts:** Sometimes we get complaints about the new Hymnal Supplement, for example.

**Mike Davis:** Yeah, but it’s interesting. I was doing some research on the 1932 Hymnal, which of course is the hymnal that we’ve used in our churches for many years, and I found that when it first came out back in 1932, there was a lot of opposition to it in certain parts of the Christian Science field, and people would say things like, “If the 1910 hymnal was good enough for our Leader, it’s good enough for us today in 1932!” [**Most of the opposition to the Supplement has been in regard to its questionable content and quality, not the fact that it is new. See Sheep Mailing #44 on the Christian Science Hymnal Supplement.**]

**Lesley Pitts:** And then there’s been some innovations with the *Christian Science Quarterly*. We have a study edition now, and we sometimes have a different number of sections for the Lesson.

**Mike Davis:** Right. For many years, of course, there were six sections in the Lesson-Sermon and people often ask us, “Well did Mrs. Eddy really give a lot of advice to the Bible Lesson Committee who was in charge of the *Quarterly* and coming up with the Bible Lessons in her time?” And really, Mrs. Eddy was not the ultimate micro-manager dictating all these things. She was very good at delegating, and she seems to have left so much up to the decisions of the Bible Lesson Committee itself. I’ve only found three letters in the collection where she gives advice to members of the Bible Lesson Committee, and in none of those letters is there any talk of things like Bible translations or the number of sections in the Lesson-Sermon. These are things that the Bible Lesson Committee itself seems to have come up with. [**This is all very sophisticatedly spoken. It paints a picture of Mary Baker Eddy as not the divinely inspired Leader that she was. If what the Bible Lesson Committee “came up with” was not in accord with her inspiration and standards, wouldn’t she have corrected it? She makes it clear in the Manual that it is her Church (see p. 102). It is not logical to believe that she turned anything as important as the Lesson-Sermon, “on which the prosperity of Christian Science largely depends” (Man. 31:8), over to others without maintaining her ultimate decision and authority. See Sheep Mailing #53, which gives the accurate history of this issue about the number of sections in a Lesson-Sermon.**]

**Lesley Pitts:** Yeah. And I think when Mike looked at those three letters, they were mostly about her concern that Irving Tomlinson, who was a member of the Bible Lesson Committee, got his fare reimbursed from Concord to Boston. It wasn’t anything of real substance; it was a kind of a detail. So I just love the way that she didn’t let the By-Laws kind of restrict her. [**Again, there is serious sophistry here, including mockery of our Leader. What is Ms. Pitts saying? That Mrs. Eddy wrote By-Laws that were meaningless even to her? Or that she set an example of downplaying their importance to the governance of her Church? Is there a subtle implication that her followers have been mistaken in striving to be strictly obedient to the By-Laws, and that they should give less importance to that obedience and more willingness to accept changes made by**

*the Board of Directors?]* I think, Mike, you told me that somebody was talking to her about the way that they couldn't meet a certain By-Law.

**Mike Davis:** Yeah, I mean, I think, well, there are letters in the collection where Mrs. Eddy strongly insists that we follow the *Manual* and obey the By-Laws, but she had a certain flexibility in her own approach to the *Manual*, and sometimes when the Directors would contact her and say they were having trouble applying a By-Law in a certain instance, she would suggest that they do it some other way then. *[Wouldn't it be helpful to know some of the specific instances that would substantiate Mr. Davis' claim?]* So there was this kind of flexibility in her approach to the *Manual*, and yet at the same time, definitely wanting us to be obedient to it. *[What is he suggesting here? That Mrs. Eddy was not always obedient to the Manual and for that reason, we are allowed to be flexible with it? Or that Mrs. Eddy did not really believe what she had written? What do we do, then, with her statement in Miscellany: "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" (My. 230:10).]*

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#### **Questions from the audience:**

**Audience member:** I think in the Order of Service in the *Manual* for the Thanksgiving service it says that the Reader is to invite Christian Scientists to give testimony or gratitude appropriate for the occasion. And I was at a Thanksgiving service a number of years ago and sat next to a lady, and after the service, I found out she had never attended a Christian Science church service of any kind, and she said that she wanted to make remarks during that period of the service because her daughter was the Second Reader. And she was very grateful for that, and she wanted to express that. But she said she didn't do it because the Reader had just invited Christian Scientists and she wasn't a Christian Scientist. So I was wondering, I attended other Thanksgiving services since then, and the Reader invites the total congregation to participate in that part of the service. So I was just wondering what your thoughts were on that, and if it is a literal translation of that section in the *Manual* that she is saying invite just Christian Scientists. How can we come to understand maybe a higher sense of what she meant when she did say things like that that might even apply to other parts of the *Manual*?

**Mike Davis:** Okay, there is some interesting history about this, in that, actually, the question that was just raised was also raised to Mrs. Eddy because the By-Law originally, not the By-Law but the Order of Service there for the Thanksgiving service, originally read "testimonies from members of the church appropriate to the occasion." And somebody wrote to Mrs. Eddy and said, "This is going to leave a lot of people out that might want to testify," so she changed it to Christian Scientists. Apparently she felt that that was a more inclusive term to use. And I've known of some branch churches that will say, "testimonies by students of Christian Science appropriate for the occasion," so that could even seem to be a more inclusive way. I guess in a sense everybody attending the Thanksgiving service is a student of Christian Science for the time they are in the service listening to the Thanksgiving Lesson. *[To make such a statement is nothing short of lunacy. Would that mean that if a priest of another denomination came to check out our service, he's a student of Christian Science for the time he's there?]* So I don't really know what the answer to that is, but it's kind of interesting that in the history, that Mrs. Eddy did apparently try to

make that part of the Order of Service be more inclusive. *[Mrs. Eddy does not indicate that the testimonial period of a Wednesday evening service should be restricted to remarks by Christian Scientists. Therefore, can't one presume that there is a reason she limited the remarks in the Thanksgiving service to just Christian Scientists? Having made a revision to the Thanksgiving Order of Service, as indicated by the speaker, she had the opportunity to delete the words "Christian Scientists" entirely to be completely inclusive. Is the speaker implying that we now have a better sense of what Mrs. Eddy meant to say, and so it is the First Reader's job to work around that shortcoming? One more comment here. Wouldn't that result in chaos in branch churches, rather than consistency and order? It would depend on the human opinion of the First Reader, and that is the very reason Mrs. Eddy wrote the Manual – to avoid that.]*

**Audience member:** We've been wanting to use other translations of the Bible in our Wednesday service. What should we do?

**Mike Davis:** There's nothing from Mrs. Eddy where she indicates what translation should be used in Christian Science services. I know we're using the King James Version currently for the body of the Lesson-Sermon on Sunday, but some branch church Readers have used other translations for their Wednesday evening meetings, and then some don't. So I think *[There he goes again – assuming some kind of authority that really does not belong to him. Why should we care what he thinks? Shouldn't the student of Christian Science care only what Mary Baker Eddy thinks – that is, what she has stated in her published writings forever?]* it's totally up to the branch church to decide things like that. *[This is not a true statement. It is not up to the branch church to decide. Mrs. Eddy has already decided. She is the one who got the message from God exactly how a branch church should function. While it is technically correct that Mrs. Eddy does not state in her published writings which translation should be used in services, the implication is clear through her example. The revelation came to her through the King James Version, and her use of it, both directly and through phrases and wording throughout her writings, make the use of any other translation in Christian Science church services a ridiculous contradiction of the Leader's intent. See Sheep Mailings #40, #40A, and #41 on the King James Version of the Bible.]*

**Lesley Pitts:** And if you look at Mrs. Eddy's library of books, she had many different translations of the Bible within her library. She consulted them often. Our cross-and-crown logo comes from the Revised edition of the Bible. Our Lord's Prayer that we say every Sunday comes from that edition of the Bible, too. *[This is a blatantly incorrect statement. It makes one wonder how Ms. Pitts could be head of the Library when she doesn't know any more than that. The translation of the Lord's Prayer that we say every Sunday comes from the King James Version of the Bible (see Matt. 6:9-13). In the Revised Version (also called the English Revised Version), Matt. 6:9-13 reads: "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which are in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Clearly, this is not the version of the Lord's Prayer printed in the Christian Science Quarterly and repeated in English-speaking church services around the world.]* So she was very open in her thought. The King James was the standard pretty much of her time. It is moving away from that right now, as we found out from talking with our neighbors here in Boston recently. *[The King James was the standard version of*

*the Bible, so much so that it was referred to as the Common Version, and Mrs. Eddy refers to it as “our common version” (see S&H 488:12; 523:20). However, it was certainly not her only choice. “The period of inception and completion of nearly all the improved translations of the Scriptures – the Revised and others – was simultaneous with the birth period of Christian Science” (The Christian Science Journal, July 1890, p. 178). This article indicates that, for a while, Christian Scientists were enamored with the Revised Version of the Old Testament and the Rotherham Version of the New Testament. However, Mrs. Eddy did not adopt either of those translations for primary use in her writings. A statement from The Christian Science Journal of January 1891 (p. 460), written during the excitement of the Rotherham Version, prompts us to express the humility contained therein, “Science demands law and order: and since the truths expressed in Science and Health are all derived from the common version, is it wise for us, who have demonstrated so little of the Principle, to choose a translation of our own?”]*

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**Audience member:** Mike, you mentioned in your remarks that Mrs. Eddy was not much of a micro-manager. I can think of some instances, I believe, in her life where it seems she paid great attention to fine detail. The one that popped into my thought was, I believe she chose the typeface for the *Monitor*. Could you just speak a little more to that question about Mrs. Eddy as a micro-manager or not?

**Mike Davis:** Well, she was selective in what she micro-managed, let’s put it that way. At the same time that she was selecting the typeface for the *Monitor* and making decisions about the *Monitor*, she was also writing letters saying that she did not want to be involved in all the details of the *Monitor*, so she was micro-managing a few things, but not wanting to micro-manage a lot of other things. So I think this is the case, I mean, Mrs. Eddy had extremely busy days. I mean, she did enough managing that she kept very busy each day of her life, but there were so many things that went on in the Church that she was good at delegating, that she did not micro-manage and did not want to micro-manage. In fact, towards the end of her life, she was really telling the Directors more and more that they had to take responsibility for their own decisions, even in cases where the *Manual* required her signature, and towards the end, she even refused to give her signature at one point and said that she was tired of deciding business matters for the Directors and that they really needed to do their own thing. *[Isn’t stating that Mrs. Eddy felt that the Directors needed to “do their own thing” misleading when Robert Peel makes the point: “Increasingly she refused to make important decisions when the Directors turned to her for advice. They had the Manual and her other writings; let them turn to that source for the rules and to the divine Mind for guidance, as they would have to do in the decades and centuries to come if Christian Science was to fulfill the destiny she saw for it” (Years of Authority, p. 321).]*

**Lesley Pitts:** I think she was very involved when something was a new activity that she was starting. So with the *Monitor*, obviously, she was really looking at the big picture. I just love the genius of it. When you look at the first edition of *Science and Health*, if you go into the Library and read some of that, it’s a very personal book. It talks, it names names, it speaks about her own experience, and as we’ve seen from the editions following, those personal details begin to fall away. As I said in my remarks, she was the healer, she was the teacher, and then the book became the healer and teacher. So, I think as you see her life progress, she receded from it, because she

knew we had to carry it on. *[This appears to be another partial truth. As Annie Knott remembers, the Directors and the editors of the Christian Science periodicals were summoned to Pleasant View in 1905 and rebuked for an error in statement that had been allowed into the Christian Science Sentinel for September 30, 1905 (see We Knew Mary Baker Eddy, Third Series, p. 85). The Journal's first issue was April 1883. This makes it safe to say that Mrs. Eddy's interest in accuracy did not just lie in new activities.]*

**Audience member:** Her micro-management brought up the thought that many things she says cannot happen without the permission of the Pastor Emeritus. We would be standstill. So what did she think about that in perpetuity?

**Mike Davis:** Well, we know that Mrs. Eddy consulted one of her lawyers, Samuel Elder, and he assured her that upon her death, the power of her signature would pass to the Christian Science Board of Directors as the next in command. *[The use of this terminology – “the power of her signature” – is a particularly aggressive claim for the absolute power of the Board of Directors. Is there hard evidence to prove that use? If Mr. Elder's assurance to Mrs. Eddy was in writing, why does Mr. Davis not produce it right here for his listeners?]* And also, another lawyer, Henry Baker, who was a cousin of Mrs. Eddy's, also assured members of the Church that that's what would happen legally, so Mrs. Eddy well knew that this was going to take place. And, as I just mentioned, right near the end of her life, at one point, she even refused to give her signatures, said that she was tired of making business decisions for the Directors, and they needed to do it on their own, so right at the end, she didn't even give her signature, even though the *Manual By-Law* required it *[Is this a suggestion that Mrs. Eddy did not follow the rules she set up in the Manual?]*, so I think that this really explains what went on there. There wasn't some sort of a secret design on her part for the Church to stop functioning when she died, but she was well aware that the Board of Directors would have the authority. *[William Rathvon's reminiscences of his conversation with Mrs. Eddy's lawyer and cousin, Henry M. Baker, present a slightly different connotation. Mr. Baker is recorded as saying, “It is a matter of common law in a case of this kind, where it is physically impossible to carry out specified conditions by the one named, that the next in authority assume that jurisdiction. And in this case the next in authority is the Board of Directors of The Mother Church. Any competent court in the land will uphold the Manual just as Mrs. Eddy intends it to function whether her signature is forthcoming or not” (Permanency of The Mother Church, p. 8; also quoted in Years of Authority, p. 347).*

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**Audience member:** Real quick here, I've heard that there's been changes to *Science and Health* since the 1910 version when Mrs. Eddy passed. Is that true? And if so, what changes have been made?

**Mike Davis:** Well, let me talk about that. Usually what's brought up in that regard is the fact that Mrs. Eddy's picture was in the 1910 edition as the frontispiece, and then in the 1911 edition, which is the same text that we use today, the picture was gone. But actually in October and November of 1910, Mrs. Eddy asked her publisher, Allison Stewart, to remove her picture from *Science and Health* and also from *Miscellaneous Writings* and have it never appear in any future editions of

those books. So, but this request was made so late in the year 1910 and she died on December 3, and so there wasn't time to take the picture out and make the change before 1911, when her final changes were instituted into the textbook. But there hasn't been any change to the text of the book since that time. Every word in the book is just as Mrs. Eddy wanted it, so... *[This answer is misleading in its incompleteness. He makes the point that the "text of the book" has not been changed, but he does not mention the changes (though relatively small) to the format introduced in the century edition (published in 1975) and then the more radical changes in the trade edition of Science and Health (published first in 1994). Some of those changes are still a part of each new edition that is published. While the index and the Publisher's Note have been removed from the trade edition, the line numbers and marginal headings have remained changed from the way Mrs. Eddy left them. Because technology did indeed allow for typeset in the margins in Mrs. Eddy's day (see Sheep Mailings #4 and #30), the statement "every word in the book is just as Mrs. Eddy wanted it" is assumptive and inaccurate because it is based on the untruth that printing technology did not allow for typeset in the margins in Mrs. Eddy's day.]*

**What can we do?**



## What can we do?

Reading the Boston “Church Alive” transcript compels the conclusion that the conditioning of the Christian Science Field, which has been in process for some decades, is now complete. Not only are weddings and funerals permissible in branch churches, but so is almost anything else the branches want to experiment with. Recently (as of this last weekend), the Directors provided a prime example of what they approve. John Q. Adams, a Christian Science teacher and lecturer, was married in First Church of Christ, Scientist, Tarrytown, New York. With this, can it now be said that the Roman Catholic sacrament of marriage has become accepted in the Church of Christ, Scientist, as it is in other denominations? What would Mrs. Eddy have thought about this? If she had thought it a good idea to have weddings in Christian Science churches, why did she not leave provision for it in the *Manual*?

If one takes a broad perspective of the excerpts from the “Church Alive” meeting in Boston, it is easy to see that the weddings and funerals are a red herring to deflect thought from the most egregious of all the suggestions – the announcement that Mrs. Eddy’s lawyers assured her that at her passing, “the power of her signature” would pass to the Christian Science Board of Directors. Although this concept – the Directors’ having the same power as Mary Baker Eddy – has been an issue throughout the years since her passing, it has not, to this writer’s knowledge, been presented so definitively or with such broad implications as it was in that meeting. The question is whether Mr. Davis’ remarks refer only to the Directors’ having the authority in cases of the estoppel clauses and their requirement for Mrs. Eddy’s signature or whether there are broader ramifications. Using the expression “the power of her signature” without stating limits to that power should be considered. To accept that terminology at this point as referring only to the estoppel clauses in the *Manual* (without any other stated limits) could open the door for future generations to accept a broader meaning – that is, that the Board has the power to change the *Manual*, as well as *Science and Health*. If that were to happen, Christian Science as Mrs. Eddy established it would no longer be recognizable.

It should be noted that presently any branch church that is willing to accept changes – the loosening of standards and experimentation with “innovations” and “freshness” – is commended by the Directors. But any branch that refuses the changes and strives to stay with Mrs. Eddy’s direction and example is criticized, mocked, persecuted by many in the Field, and threatened by the Directors. If anyone reading this mailing wishes to have verification of that fact, just inquire of the sheep mailing committee.

For those who see the danger involved in making the changes and are asking “What can we do?” perhaps it is best to first say what we cannot do. It will do no good to despair, nor to weep, nor to deplore the situation and discuss with our fellow warriors how terrible it is. The only hope is to help our fellow Christian Scientists see the danger and bolster their courage to stand up and say no in their branch churches. If we don’t say no to weddings and funerals, to emphasizing personality in the periodicals and theatricality in the church services, how will we ever say no to a “modernization” of *Science and Health*?

## **Attachments**

- 1) **May 21, 2010, Sheep Alert**
- 2) **“Christian Science and the Marriage Ceremony” from *The Christian Science Journal*, February 1976**
- 3) **The Dragon’s Flood**

## Sheep Alert!

### Subject: Weddings in Christian Science churches

**“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” (S&H 583:12).**

Students loyal to the teachings of Mary Baker Eddy have been surprised to find that the aggressive suggestion of having weddings in Christian Science churches is being promoted by individual members of branch churches, with no apparent objection from the Christian Science Board of Directors.

For more than 120 years the Christian Science Church has been devoted to maintaining Mrs. Eddy’s design for church as she has succinctly defined it in the “Glossary” of *Science and Health* (see above). To determine whether weddings can be rightfully held in a Christian Science church, one has to (1) reason his way through that definition by Mary Baker Eddy; (2) consider it with her instructions throughout *Science and Health*; and (3) evaluate the historical background.

1. A wedding in a Christian Science church would not elevate the race in regard to marriage. It would not rouse the dormant understanding from the material belief about marriage to the apprehension of the spiritual idea of marriage, and so it would not demonstrate divine Science in healing. It would rather pull thought down to the mortal level of marriage. It would materialize worship and so hinder man’s spiritual growth (see *S&H* 4:32).

Mrs. Eddy’s definition of church in the “Glossary” is a major means of lifting our thought to see our identity and everyone else’s as spiritual, not material, as immortal, not mortal. In that definition, there is no room for weddings, funerals, or memorial services, all of which affirm that man is a mortal. If we were to indulge in those practices in church, we would be depriving ourselves of the opportunity church gives us to demonstrate our immortality.

2. In the chapter “Marriage,” Mrs. Eddy quotes Jesus as saying, “The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage” (*S&H* 69:26). Isn’t the Christian Science Church designed to lift consciousness to the understanding of what it means to be worthy to “obtain that world” where resurrection from the belief of life in matter is demonstrated? Mrs. Eddy also says that “Christian Scientists must live under the constant pressure of the apostolic command to come out from the material world and be separate” (*S&H* 451:2). It is not clear how a wedding in a Christian Science church would constitute coming out from and being separate from the material world.

Although Mrs. Eddy’s definitive statement in the “Deed of Trust” in the *Manual* applies primarily to The Mother Church, it would have to include branch churches when considered conceptually with the definition of church and would therefore rule out weddings or funerals in Christian Science churches. The deed reads: “Said Board of Directors shall not...allow said church building or any part thereof to be used for any other purpose than for the ordinary and usual uses of a church” (p. 131, #4). Mrs. Eddy’s definition of church in the textbook would be the only basis upon which a Christian Scientist judges the “ordinary and usual uses of a church.”

3. An understanding of Mrs. Eddy's background in the Congregational church provides valuable insight on what Mrs. Eddy might have considered to be "ordinary and usual uses of a church." As descendants of the Puritan settlers of New England, devout Congregationalists of Mrs. Eddy's time would not have had weddings in church buildings. Mrs. Eddy herself was wedded to her first husband, George Glover, in her parents' home by the local pastor. The Puritans had rejected any ritual that smacked of Roman Catholicism, including the non-Biblical view that marriage is a "sacrament." One writer explains:

"Puritans did not...regard marriage as a sacrament since they could find no scriptural precedent for a marriage service being performed by Christ or by any of the apostles...In addition to [an] intellectual reaction against rituals that could not be found in scripture [such as marriages and funerals], Puritans had an emotional reaction against ritual. A genuine fear and horror of what was seen as the idolatry of Catholicism led to a rejection of individual symbols that were actually far older than Christianity itself. Rituals were not only regarded as useless superstition but as tools of evil, leading the unwary into erroneous beliefs" (see "Matters of Life and Death" by Peggy M. Baker, Director and Librarian, Pilgrim Society and Pilgrim Hall Museum, [www.pilgrimhall.org](http://www.pilgrimhall.org)).

Would it be logical to believe that Mrs. Eddy would have countenanced any practice that hearkened back to "the idolatry of Catholicism" and contradicted her strong directive: "Be it remembered, that all types employed in the service of Christian Science should represent the most spiritual forms of thought and worship that can be made visible" (*Mis.* 91:17)?

Adherence to Mrs. Eddy's instruction by the Christian Science Board of Directors is what kept the Church on the straight and narrow way of Truth for over a century. Just three years short of the century mark in the history of our Church, the Board of Directors published in *The Christian Science Journal* a statement, "Christian Science and the Marriage Ceremony" (February 1976, p. 112), which clearly and concisely answers the question "Why...are weddings not held in Christian Science church edifices?"

In proportion as the Directors and students worldwide do not know the writings of Mary Baker Eddy, confusion sets in as to the rightness or wrongness of such things as weddings in branch churches. Her revelation – the Comforter Jesus promised – shows precisely where "wrong and right and judgement lie" (John 16:8, *The New English Bible*). Familiarity with her words and the understanding gained from cherishing them led the administrators of the Christian Science Church to keep the Church pure by saying a definitive "no" for at least a hundred years to weddings, funerals, and memorial services in Christian Science churches. It is only in the last decade – a decade during which the full-text *Quarterly* and "My Bible Lesson" have supplanted earnest, individual study of the Bible and *Science and Health* – that the misjudgment of having weddings in Christian Science churches has occurred.

Those arguing for weddings and funerals in branch churches are either unaware of Mrs. Eddy's teaching on the subject of church or simply do not care what she says. Their argument that she does not say specifically that there should not be weddings shows that their spiritual sense and their ability to reason have been erased or at the very least have gone dormant. In that sense, their minds have been taken over. Our Leader says, "Divine logic and revelation coincide" (*S&H* 93:10). Practicing divine logic, based on the whole of Mrs. Eddy's writings, seems to have largely disappeared from our movement, and human opinion, based on personal sense, has taken its place.



### **'Christian Science and the Marriage Ceremony'**

It may be only natural for some students of Christian Science, when planning to be married, to wonder why there is no provision for wedding ceremonies to be held in their own branch church where they have, perhaps, many of their closest friends.

The Mother Church receives inquiries on this subject from individuals and branches and in response shares with inquirers the statement, "Christian Science and the Marriage Ceremony," prepared by The Christian Science Board of Directors. It explains why our churches are reserved for the purpose of public worship and not for weddings, funerals, and other occasions of a private or personal nature.

Although the clerk of each branch should have a copy of the statement on file, we are printing the statement in full in this column because of general interest in this subject and its relation to the Christian Science approach to church services. It reads:

Christ Jesus began his public career by attending a wedding feast. The Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy, writes in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (p. 65), "May Christ, Truth, be present at every bridal altar to turn the water into wine and to give to human life an inspiration by which man's spiritual and eternal existence may be discerned."

Why, then, are weddings not held in Christian Science church edifices?

There is evidence that Mrs. Eddy gave profound thought to every aspect of marriage, including the way in which it is solemnized. She knew that, in general, the traditional churches regard marriage as a divinely ordained institution and the wedding service as a religious rite. This is in line with the commonly held view that God has created a material earth, a human race, and a system of procreation which are part of His divine plan and purpose.

Mrs. Eddy's view is set forth in *Science and Health* (p. 56), where she writes, "Marriage is the legal and moral provision for generation among human kind." This statement, like others in the same chapter, presents marriage as a human rather than a divine institution. The subject is viewed within the framework of moral law and legal obligation, not of religious sanction. In all her writings Mrs. Eddy emphasizes the strong moral foundation of the marriage relationship, and always she shows a tender concern for the spiritual strengthening of the marriage vows and family affections, but she nowhere confounds the human with the divine or temporal necessity with eternal law.

Thus her particular concern with marriage ceremonies was that they be in accordance with the laws of the land. She gives the title, "A Legal Ceremony"—not A Religious Ceremony—to Article IX, Section 1, of the *Manual of The Mother Church*, which reads: "If a Christian Scientist is to be married, the ceremony shall

# Church in Action

be performed by a clergyman who is legally authorized.

In the early days of Christian Science, there was a tendency to ask clergymen who had become Christian Scientists to officiate at weddings. A question arose as to their authority to do so, since they were no longer acting as clergymen of the denomination in which they had been ordained. The By-Law quoted above put an end to this practice. The emphasis of the By-Law is on legal authority rather than on the need for a clergyman to perform the ceremony. Although it assumes that Christian Scientists will normally turn to a clergyman for this service, it does not rule out their having a civil marriage in those countries and those situations in which this seems necessary or preferable to a religious ceremony.

Even when a clergyman consents to include readings from *Science and Health* or a Christian Science hymn in the marriage service, this does not make it a Christian Science service. If a justice of the peace or other civil officer who is a Christian Scientist marries a couple, he is acting in his official legal capacity and not as a Christian Scientist. Our churches are intended for the purpose of public worship (see Deed of Trust, *Church Manual*, p. 131, items 3 and 5), not for weddings, funerals, or other occasions of a private or personal kind.

A study of the Bible and Mrs. Eddy's writings brings to the student a deeper insight into the relations of human institutions to spiritual facts, and the Christian Scientist who is contemplating marriage works out

the details of the wedding day through his understanding of these teachings. It is of special significance that the Christian Scientist has the opportunity to bring to his marriage the joy, inspiration, and deep spiritual commitment which characterize his religion. Only the demonstration of such qualities can bring to his life with another unity, strength, and true happiness.

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS



## Church dedication: an important milestone

Church dedication is a happy occasion for any branch church or society. It announces that the edifice is totally free of debt. And when this day arrives, church members don't keep it a secret. Most memberships invite their communities—via their local newspapers—to join with them in celebrating this important milestone of growth and progress by coming to the Sunday dedicatory service. The following churches and societies report dedications:

EUCLID, OHIO  
(First Church) June 15, 1975

PALATKA, FLORIDA  
(Society) September 7, 1975

CROSSETT, ARKANSAS  
(Society) September 14, 1975

ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA  
(Second Church) September 28, 1975

MODESTO, CALIFORNIA  
(First Church) September 28, 1975

# The Dragon's Flood

- Publishing *Science and Health* (Century Ed.) with format changes to line numbers/marginal headings (1971)
- Ceasing publication of “Mrs. Eddy’s Place” – the six points – published since 1943 (1979)
- Establishing regional representatives - *Science and Health*, lecture, Reading Room (1979)
- Establishing The Monitor Channel on television (at a financial loss of over \$400 million) (1988)
- Reformatting the *Monitor* to tabloid size (1988)
- Publishing *World Monitor* magazine (1988)
- Discouraging the teaching of Mrs. Eddy’s place in Bible prophecy (Board letter to teachers) (1991)
- Publishing the controversial Knapp book – while denying its theology – to receive a bequest (1991)
- Disciplining loyal teachers who disagree with decisions of the CSBD (1991)
- Publishing full-text *Quarterly* (discourages use & knowledge of the Bible and *Science and Health*) (1991)
- Publishing trade edition of *Science and Health* (changes: index added; marginal headings moved) (1994)
- Participating in Harvard Medical School conferences (1995-2001)
- Publishing controversial German translation of *S&H* to replace the original, more accurate one (1997)
- Ceasing publication of the *We Knew Mary Baker Eddy* books (1998)
- Restructuring Board of Lectureship – from lectures to workshops, book talks, Internet chat rooms (1998)
- Reformatting *Sentinel* (1998) and *Journal* (2002) to include photos depicting personalities
- Changing Reading Rooms into bookstores, eliminating study areas (1999-2002)
- Authorizing controversial Gillian Gill biography of MBE (degrades MBE and Christian Science) (1999)
- Authorizing Nenneman biography of MBE (implies drinking is not inconsistent with CS) (1999)
- Establishing spirituality.com (advertising it as “on-line companion to *Science and Health*”) (2000)
- Ceasing to provide leather books in the old format (marginal headings in text and no index) (2001)
- Establishing MBE Library – making public Mrs. Eddy’s private communications (see *Man.* 67:6) (2002)
- Refocusing work of Committee on Publication (2002)
- Changing the Sunday School focus to include puppets, clay, and spirituality.com (2002)
- Refocusing of college organizations (from readings/testimonies to social gatherings/chat sessions) (2002)
- Holding Annual Meeting in Germany (2003)
- Encouraging the removal of requirements for church membership (2003)
- Holding services in The Mother Church in coordination with other denominations and organizations (2004)
- Publishing *Heralds* in countries where the particular language is spoken (2004)
- Removing from membership in the church, loyal teachers who disagree with decisions of the CSBD (2005)
- Establishing TMCYouth (2005)
- Changing the number of sections in the Lesson-Sermon (2006)
- Introducing “myBibleLesson.com” (2006)
- Introducing Bible translations other than the King James Version for services at The Mother Church (2007)
- Publishing Lesson-Sermons in the *Quarterlys* with Bible translations other than the King James Version used for the Golden Text and Responsive Reading (2008)

***Most of these decisions involve changing what our Leader established. It is helpful to be reminded of Mrs. Eddy’s words on the subject of change: “I am not fond of new things unless they are more spiritual than the old...” (see “From the Directors,” Christian Science Sentinel, July 2, 1938).***

***Mrs. Eddy says in Message for 1902: “It does not follow that power must mature into oppression; indeed, right is the only real potency; and the only true ambition is to serve God and to help the race” (3:26). At the end of the paragraph she issues this most important instruction, “I again repeat, Follow your Leader, only so far as she follows Christ.”***