

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF  
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE ORGANIZATION AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

In the fall of 1917, seven students of Christian Science at the University of Washington became aware of the privilege to "form and conduct a Christian Science organization" (Manual, Article 23, Section 8) in a university or college. This group was attending Wednesday evening services at Third Church of Christ, Scientist, Seattle, in the University district, and after some thought they decided that they would like to have their own meetings. Correspondence with The Mother Church informed them that organization should be worked out among the students themselves, and that the Constitution and By-Laws should be sent to The Board of Directors for approval.

Mr. A. R. Priest, former Dean of Men, acted as their advisor, but he is no longer affiliated with this Organization. The following charter members, all members of the Mother Church, held their first meeting October 21, 1917, at the home of Dean Priest, and elected officers as follows: Eleanor Hoppock, president and reader; Florence Pettit, vice president; Rosamond Parsons, recording secretary; Merle Childs, corresponding secretary; Ernest Oertel, treasurer, and Ruth Bragdon and Adele Reeves, "other members of the Executive Committee." Until 1923, the president filled the office of reader. Appointments for the following committees were made: Membership, Distribution, Library, Notice, Welcome, and Reception. A card was immediately placed in the Journal announcing the meetings of the group, which was called Christian Science Society of the University of Washington.

With organization under way, the new members eagerly sought to expand their scope of activity. The first meetings were held at the homes of the members every second and fourth Sunday of the month at 3 P.M. After the end of the first quarter, meetings were changed to alternate Sundays. In January, 1918, the membership appointed Miss Parsons and Mr. Oertel to confer with Comptroller Herbert T. Condon concerning a meeting place on the campus. Mr. Condon later became Dean of Men and has always defended our position with the school authorities. The secretary was requested to write to Henry Suzzalo, then the president of the University, for the purpose of obtaining permission to hold testimonial meetings week days on the campus. Unremitting metaphysical work had its results, for approval was gained from the president and meetings after January, 1918, convened in one of the music rooms in the basement of Meany Hall on alternate Thursdays from 7:15 to 8 P.M.

Among the early activities on record, was the immediate response to The Mother Church for contributions to the Camp Welfare Fund. All donations were voluntary and were attended with expressions of gratitude for thus helping in the world conflict. A short time later, contributions were also set aside for the Christian Science Benevolent Fund and the General Fund of The Mother Church. The Monitor Distribution Committee became active at this time, circulating the Monitor among professors and students on the campus, and presenting a subscription to the main library and to the law library. A lecture committee likewise began to function.

At the end of the first year, beginning October, 1917, and ending June, 1918, the small Society had indeed proved fruitful. New students were steadily attending and graduating students applied for Alumni membership. The initial funds of the Society amounted to \$50.00 (ten members donation \$5.00 each). The financial statement at the end of the year showed \$28.05 as a balance on hand.

In July, 1918, the Society held its first summer school meeting. Since that time, summer school meetings have been a regular part of the Organization's program, inspiring those in school, teachers as well as regular students, and members of the Organization not in school.

As progress continued, the Society took definite steps to inform the campus of its activities. In 1919, notices were filed in the University of Washington

Daily, the campus newspaper, inviting the University public to attend the meetings which were held every Thursday evening at 7:30 P.M. Notices were also placed on the bulletin boards of Denny and Commerce Halls. This step required considerable demonstration to prevent the notices from being torn off or mutilated. At the present time, information regarding the Organization's activities is printed only in the newspaper.

The first lecture of the Society was delivered by Dr. John M. Tutt, C.S.B., on February 25, 1920, in Room 310, Denny Hall. Opposition from various sources demanded constant metaphysical work, for many attempts were made to discourage and rob the members of this long-anticipated privilege. The need for scientific work for the lecture further pointed out that the members must be continually alert. Frequently they would come for their regular weekly meetings and find the door locked, but never once has there been a failure to hold a meeting in the entire history of the Organization, the members having demonstrated that divine Love protects them, and each time a way has been found.

In the latter part of 1920, the Society considered the establishment of two chapter houses similar to fraternity and sorority houses, but after corresponding with The Mother Church, the matter was dropped. At the present time, social functions are not a part of the Organization's official program. Meetings have always been held regardless of all-University social functions which might be scheduled on the same night.

Among details of procedure which differed from those now in effect was the requirement that applicants for membership must be members of The Mother Church and of a branch church. This requirement was in effect up to 1922. It is also interesting to note that the Executive Committee selected the subject for the readings of each week, and for a time, readings from the desk were taken from all of Mrs. Eddy's writings, in addition to Science and Health, and the Bible.

In the school year, 1920-1921, two lectures were given by the Society, one by Bliss Knapp, November 23, 1920, at 4 P.M. in Bagley Hall, and the other by Professor Hermann S. Hering, March 3, 1921, at 12 noon in 233 Philosophy Hall. Mr. Knapp's lecture was paid for by the Trustees under the Will of Mary Baker Eddy, while Professor Hering's lecture was paid for by funds contributed to the Society. During this year, the Society also maintained an Accommodations Committee to help students find rooms and work. In 1921, a building fund was established for the purpose of eventually acquiring a building for the meetings. This plan was dropped for a time, however, and was not again resumed until 1928.

The Society demonstrated progress during the next few years. In November, 1923, meetings were held Tuesday evenings at 7:30 but this was changed back to Thursday evening in May, 1924. The lecture by Judge Frederick C. Hill was given at Third Church instead of on the campus. In 1924, meetings were held in the Music Hall for a short time because of repair work taking place in Meany Hall, then, in 1925, due to increased attendance, the meeting place was moved to a larger room, 310 Home Economics Hall. The membership record of this year showed that the Society had grown from ten to thirty active members, with one faculty member, Miss Helen Rhodes.

Although membership had increased considerably, there was a lack of Mother Church members to fill all offices and it was sometimes necessary to unite the offices of president and reader, recording secretary and corresponding secretary, until new members became available through special elections. The Organization has always been grateful, however, that when the time for election came, there were enough Mother Church members to carry on, so that there has never been a lapse of activity.

Since 1927, subjects for readings from the desk have been selected by the reader, rather than by the Executive Committee. A Peace and Harmony Committee was formed in 1928, consisting of four or five members, to work metaphysically on problems of the Society along the lines of growth, gratitude, and harmony.

Beginning in February of 1928, meetings were temporarily held in the Sunday School rooms of Third Church, owing to rules prohibiting religious meetings on the campus. During fall quarter of 1928, however, the weekly meetings were again permitted on the campus. Professor Hermann S. Hering, who delivered the lecture for this year, gave the members the first round table discussion with a lecturer. A complete set of Mrs. Eddy's works in morocco leather and a Bible were presented to the University of Washington library and a subscription to the Monitor was presented to the Reference department. In 1929, the name Christian Science Society of the University of Washington was changed to Christian Science Organization at the University of Washington, after approval had been gained from The Mother Church. At this time, the demonstration was made to purchase a piano for use at the meetings.

In the fall of 1930, University authorities definitely refused to permit any religious organizations to meet in campus buildings, and the Organization, with Y.W.C.A., was ordered to move off the campus. After a few meetings had been held in the Sunday School room of Third Church, the meeting place was changed to Eagleson Hall, the Y.M.C.A. building, across the street from the campus, and meetings were held Thursday evenings from 7:30 to 8:15 o'clock. The name of the Peace and Harmony Committee was changed to the Metaphysical Committee. In 1931, in addition to the regular work, special distribution work of Christian Science literature was carried on in cooperation with the Joint Literature Distribution Committee of Churches and Societies of Seattle.

The year 1932-1933 proved to be a period of alteration as well as of important accomplishments. An article was added to the Constitution stating that "Only members of the Mother Church shall elect officers of this Organization amend the By-Laws, or vote on other questions of policy." A provision for two readers was also made at this time to alternately conduct the meetings. Contributions of two weekly meetings were sent to the Publishing House Fund, and in 1933, a Radio fund was established to assist First Church of Christ, Scientist, Seattle, in the broadcasts of Sunday evening services. The Organization also secured Articles of Incorporation, thus conforming to the state law of Washington that all organizations must be incorporated in order to hold property and build thereon. This step completed, it was pointed out that metaphysical work on the part of each member would result in acquiring a building of our own. The Building Committee meets regularly, and the Organization has a fair-sized building fund that has been gradually increasing.

Throughout the entire history of the Organization, the manifestation of gratitude has been most apparent. Alumni members, in particular, have frequently expressed their appreciation in letters and contributions. Those in school testify that discordant conditions in school life are quickly reversed by the help they receive from the meetings.

The Organization is grateful indeed for Mrs. Eddy's loving provision for the college student, for the unselfish work of Professor Hering in helping to establish the first organizations, and for his encouraging interest in the progress of this Organization.

Historical Committee

Harriett Woodward - Chairman  
Mary Meloy  
Marshall Dutton  
Rose Kipper

February 15, 1934