



CSO Resource Guide

What is a Christian Science Organization?

“ Millions of unprejudiced minds — simple seekers for Truth, weary wanderers, athirst in the desert — are waiting and watching for rest and drink. Give them a cup of cold water in Christ’s name, and never fear the consequences.”

Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures by Mary Baker Eddy, p.570



A Christian Science Organization, also known as a CSO or an “org”, is a community of graduate and undergraduate students, faculty, instructors, and alumni that comes together to bring healing to issues their campuses face. CSOs are a distinct expression of church. And, like all church activities (i.e. Sunday School, Reading Room, Sunday Services, Wednesday Meetings, etc.) CSOs share part in the collective mission to “heal and save the world from sin and death” which is stated at the beginning of The Manual of The Mother Church (19). It’s just that CSOs fulfill this mission on college and university campuses - and they do it in some really unique ways.

While it only takes one student or faculty member who is a member of The Mother Church to start a CSO, involvement is open to the entire campus community. Each CSO is unique, but they all share a desire to make more accessible the universal laws found in Christian Science.

The activities of the CSO counteract world beliefs that are constantly barraging us: that we’re limited by heredity, biology, chance, etc. CSOs also challenge the commonly held views that individuals are governed by fear, hatred, stress, lack. The healing system of Christian Science is needed now more than ever.

The purpose of the CSO is to introduce to the campus community an expansive, spiritual perspective on identity, purpose, and worth. It expands our mental view so that we can see the inherent limitations of material systems and the liberating freedom that comes with understanding more about spiritual reality.

This system of healing is needed now more than ever because nothing else on campus is taking a stand for the intact, untouched, spiritual identity of each person.



Those involved in CSOs have the opportunity to deepen their own understanding of how to apply Christian Science to their own lives and to share healing and healing ideas with others.

There are two different types of CSOs, forming and official. This classification is based on where they are in the process of getting started and recognized on their campus:

OFFICIAL CSOs

To get an even better understanding of the requirements of a CSO, you'll want to study the *Manual of The Mother Church's provision* for this activity in Article XXIII Sect. 8. These instructions are short and sweet and include two basic requirements:

- 1. The CSO must be formed and conducted by a student, professor, or faculty member who is a Mother Church member.*
- 2. The CSO needs to be officially recognized by the university or college.*

The first is pretty straightforward. The second is dependent upon the requirements of each university.

FORMING CSOs

A forming CSO is at least one student or faculty member who is committed to Christian Science, and wants to see the healing action of Life, Truth, and Love present in their campus life experience.

It's really easy to form a CSO! Head over to the Getting Started section for more details.

More information

What's the difference between a forming and an official CSO? Since forming CSOs are not yet recognized by the school, they have not yet fulfilled the requirements of the *Church Manual* and won't be listed in the Christian Science Directory. Forming CSOs are only listed on <http://www.christianscience.com/find-us/christian-science-on-campus> to help students and faculty members connect with this budding activity on their campus.

Support available

TMC Youth provides both logistical and financial support to any CSO that needs it! We connect with Christian Science high school and university students to let them know about CSOs and the opportunity to be a part of them. We work closely with those who would like to start a CSO on their campus and help them through each step of the process, as each university has unique requirements. And we provide financial support for outreach activities such as lectures.

That said, let's dig a little deeper into why CSOs are important and how we can benefit from them.

Why are CSOs Important?

“...where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. ”

Matthew 18:20



Every student is looking for ideas that will help them. Every campus has needs.

A CSO starts with your own experience in Christian Science and your desire to serve others, and then provides the opportunity to make a difference right where you are. It engages you in the spiritual thinking and living that is expansive and inclusive. The CSO, because it is valuing and embracing the universal laws of God, is the most radical agent of change on campus. You are at the cutting edge of what offers the ultimate comfort and healing to all humanity. Who wouldn't want to be a part of that?



Mary Baker Eddy had a clear vision of the importance of Christian Science in academia and the role of CSOs. You can check out the By-law for CSOs in the *Manual of The Mother Church*, found in Article XXIII Sect. 8. Also, she comments:

“If the Bible and Science and Health had the place in schools of learning that physiology occupies, they would revolutionize and reform the world, through the power of Christ. It is true that it requires more study to understand and demonstrate what these works teach, than to learn theology, physiology, or physics; because they teach divine Science, with fixed Principle, given rule, and unmistakable proof.” (No and Yes, p. 11)

We like how Phil Smith of Texas A&M puts it, too:

“My view, my prayer, about all this is rooted in the Manual Bylaw and what it means for members of The Mother Church who are in academic communities. I start with the question: Why did Mary Baker Eddy make a provision for her church specifically in universities and colleges? Why are they so important?

Mrs. Eddy has very positive things to say about academics and the role of education, particularly higher education, in spiritually challenging human assumptions.

Mrs. Eddy was very serious about everything she did. I think she intended for Orgs to be more than just youth groups for young Christian Scientists or places to find refuge in trying social or academic times. Orgs may serve that role, but I think she was playing a much deeper game in that Bylaw.

There are many statements by Mrs. Eddy about academics and academic disciplines that should challenge research faculty to understand their work in ever deeper spiritual terms. This applies to students, too. With respect to their courses, what are students learning about the spiritual identity of their subjects by challenging materialistic assumptions? ”

Phil Smith, Faculty, Texas A&M

In a nutshell, these ideas should have a place in institutions of higher learning because of the good they extend to all humanity.

So how are CSOs revolutionizing and reforming thought on their campuses today? To answer this, we asked some current and

former CSO members to share their thoughts. Here are their responses:

“CSOs are an organization unlike any other on college campuses. The CSO is an all-in-one spiritual service and healing organization. It’s the ultimate one-stop shopping experience, and it serves the whole community.

Inevitably, CSO work blesses the Christian Scientists on campus, too. For me, it’s been an opportunity to reach out beyond myself and include the whole community in my prayers. In answering hard questions from others, I’ve become more confident in what I’ve learned in Christian Science. It’s prepared me for serving in my branch church—preparing readings for meetings, organizing lectures, responding to false information about Christian Science, and most importantly, metaphysically supporting the healing impact of Christian Science on the community.”

Inge Schmidt, C.S., Yale University Alum, USA

“I can’t over-emphasize the importance of what’s happening in the university classrooms regarding their teaching of Christian Science. Look at it this way: think of all the things happening on university classrooms around the world. Ideas are shared, textbooks studied, and knowledge gained. People are taught how to think about and analyze the world.

In many classrooms, students are taught that Christian Science is a cult that undermines true Christianity. Or that Christian Science is a mind-game that promises to make you comfortable and wealthy. Or that it isn’t Christian at all. These incorrect teachings about Christian Science are taking place on almost every campus

at least in the United States. Check out the religion textbooks on your campus, and you'll see this is no exaggeration. Put yourself in those students' shoes—you may well carry very negative concepts of Christian Science—until maybe you bumped into a real Christian Scientist on campus, or you went to a class where a lecturer explained it correctly. ”

Shirley Paulson, C.S., Principia College Alum, USA

If you've felt the call to do something on your campus, but aren't entirely sure where to start, The Mother Church's CSO support team is here for you! This resource guide has been prepared with your needs and questions in mind, but if you don't find exactly what you're looking for in the other sections, don't hesitate to shoot us an email at **CSOsupport@csps.com**.

Getting Started

“In obedience to the divine nature, man’s individuality reflects the divine law and order of being. How shall we reach our true selves? Through Love. The Principle of Christian Science is Love, and its idea represents Love. This divine Principle and idea are demonstrated, in healing, to be God and the real man.”

Mis. 104:22



Starting a CSO begins with your love of Christian Science and the healing benefits it has brought to your own life. It's an opportunity to deepen your practice while finding the natural relevance of these ideas on campus and sharing them. It may feel like a big undertaking, but your trust in divine Love enables all the practical steps to unfold.

“As an active portion of one stupendous whole, goodness identifies man with universal good. Thus may each member of this church rise above the oft-repeated inquiry, What am I? to the scientific response: I am able to impart truth, health, and happiness, and this is my rock of salvation and my reason for existing.” (My. 165:16)

Interested in getting starting a CSO on your campus?

The first step is to let us know where you're going to school through our Connecting College Campaign, ChristianScience.com/c3 and we'll follow up quickly about next steps.

How do I get others involved?

An easy place to start is by identifying and connecting with other Christian Scientists on campus. Not sure if they exist or how to find them? We can help! We have an ongoing project to find and connect Christian Scientists on campuses around the world. At the same time, be open to seekers who are interested in what you're providing and perhaps want to get involved as well.

Just remember, don't get hung up on the numbers. There have been many dynamic CSOs that consist of a single member. The

power of the ideas and the love you have for your campus will make an impact, not the number of people involved. So, let Love guide your prayers and actions for this activity, and let the rest unfold.

Spirit, God, gathers unformed thoughts into their proper channels, and unfolds these thoughts, even as He opens the petals of a holy purpose in order that the purpose may appear.

Science and Health 506:18

What's next? Take a look at the CSO Activities section and see what inspires you.

One activity — and a great way to make your presence known — is to host an information table in a central location on campus. Often universities have an activities fair at the beginning of the year when all of the clubs on campus can have a table introducing their activity. Generally, you can request permission to have an information table at any time of year. We recommend having a sign-up sheet for anyone who wants more information. The main purpose of this activity isn't to find other Christian Scientists, though you may, but to connect with fellow seekers.

How to get established?

First, check in with the student activities office to see what they require and, while you're at it, you should also reach out to the campus chaplain. These people are resources provided by the school to help.

Now what?

Keep praying! Your CSO work is motivated by your love for others.

Trust God's power in this activity and be open to your own role in it. CSOs have a unifying, healing presence, built on the basis that we are all children of God. And, it's important to pass the blessings forward because everyone deserves to know they can feel happy, fulfilled, and satisfied. Take a stand for the idea that God is speaking to and guiding each person on your campus.

We are all students in this journey, so don't feel like being involved in the CSO means you have to be an expert. This is just another opportunity to find ways to put into practice what you're learning at every twist and turn in life. Let your understanding of your oneness with God guide and support each step in the process.

And remember that TMC Youth provides a network of support to each CSO. Since every school is different and each CSO unique, we work to support each one in accomplishing its specific goals. We'll keep you informed about the work other CSOs are doing and what they've found to be successful on their campuses. If you'd like, we'll help you set goals and keep in touch as you get this idea off the ground. You'll also have the support of the Regional Reps who are useful peer contacts who will share updates about all regional upcoming events. We're all in this inspiring work together.

Ready to take the next step?

Start by looking forward to the spiritual growth that will come from your inspired, effective, and uplifting CSO activities.

Outreach Activities

“...go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

Mark 16:15



CSO activities are as diverse as the people in them. The CSO can and should respond to the needs of the campus. There are numerous ways to go about this. Here are a few of the most common approaches to reaching out:

Tabling

Information tables are a great way to build awareness about the CSO's presence on campus and find people who want to learn more about these ideas. We recommend fall club fairs, but you can always host information tables in conjunction with other events such as Women's History Month or health fairs. Make sure you get permission from your school, and consider offering copies of Science and Health, the periodicals, or the Christian Science Monitor. The CSO support team can help you get resources, email us at CSOsupport@csp.com.

Connecting with the campus community

Much of a CSO's work consists of personal interactions and conversations with friends, classmates, and colleagues. There are also ways for the CSO to become more involved in other campus activities as a way to have a more public presence on campus. This could include joining an interfaith forum or participating in a community service project.



Inspirational Meetings

Some inspirational meetings resemble testimony meetings while

others are less structured, consisting of informal discussions and idea-sharing. Some CSOs have chosen a discussion topic each week and invited friends from other faith backgrounds to come and share how they've been praying about that issue, too. There is no specific rule about the structure or format of these meetings, so let inspiration dictate what's needed. In order to remain accessible to the entire university community, we recommend having them on campus, in a public location. However they're structured, think about how they can be welcoming to fellow students and professors who might choose to attend.



Other CSO Activities from the past few years:

- Work together with other CSOs and branch churches to sponsor a lecture series to each people about the effects of Christian Science healing. Stream the talks on the internet so that anyone can tune in.



- Write a blog on the school's website to answer common misconceptions about Christian Science or get active in the school's Interfaith initiative.
- Share Science and Health at the clubs fair

- Invite a lecturer to join a panel discussion on “The Power of Thought to Heal”
- Have testimony meetings on campus and invite everyone to join
- Hosting an interfaith discussion based on a general topic such as “How do you pray?” or “How can we address depression?”
- Writing articles on Christian Science for the school newspaper
- Being interviewed about what life is like for a Christian Scientist
- Holding a film screening of a movie with a spiritual focus
- Providing the university library with subscriptions to The Christian Science Monitor and other periodicals from the Christian Science Publishing Society
- Organizing a podcast listening party or playing the Radical Acts game
- Making full use of this *Manual* Bylaw and bringing a Christian Science lecturer to speak on campus!
- Make your own readings and give time at the end for gratitude and testimonies. Connect with other CSOs near you and invite them to join this meeting online.
- Connect with a local church/reading room to see what events they are already hosting and invite those interested in attending.

Lectures

“In love and healing ministry, show forth the Truth that makes men free.”

Christian Science Hymnal, Hymn 13



Mary Baker Eddy thought Christian Science lectures had a natural place on college campuses because of the open dialogue of ideas found there. Lectures provide a clear explanation of what Christian Science is and how these universal laws can be applied by anyone to any situation.

The CSO support team can help you with the process of selecting a lecture and the format that works best for your event. But your CSO can also reach out to the lecturers themselves to discuss your event and determine the best fit for what you would like to accomplish. View the complete list of lecturers at ChristianScience.com/lecturers

The purpose of lectures is to address “a true and just reply to public topics condemning Christian Science, and to bear testimony to the facts pertaining to the life of the Pastor Emeritus.” (Manual 93-96). How does this continue to be fresh and relevant to university campuses today?



One way to think about “topics condemning Christian Science” is that it’s just correcting any claim that runs counter to what we learn in Christian Science. Such as, “God is irrelevant in today’s technological

world” or “Prayer is ineffective and unreliable.” So the purpose of these lectures should be to introduce and explain Christian Science

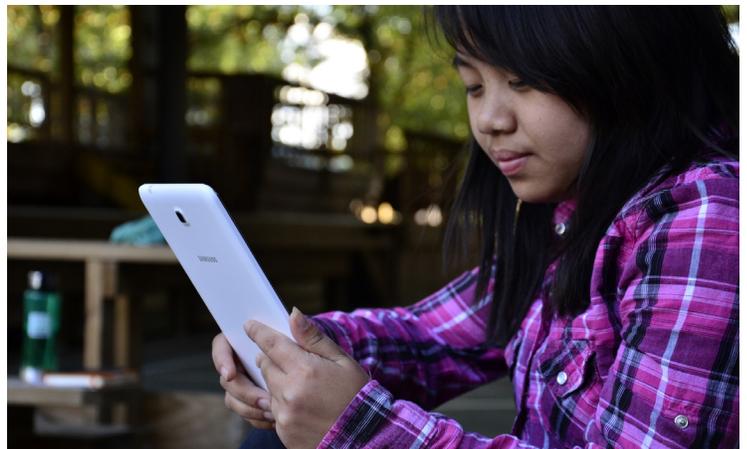
and its system of healing.

There are many formats these lectures can take. Here are a few:

In-person lectures: In-person lectures consist of a lecturer coming to the campus to give the lecture. Most last about an hour, with time for questions and answers at the end. Besides the standard lecture format, there are other types including:

Classroom lectures: As the name indicates, these lectures are given to specific classes as a part of the curriculum. Some example of classes where such lectures have been held include:

- Women's studies
- American Religion
- Anthropology
- Medical Ethics
- Alternative Therapies



Panel lectures: Some CSOs organize panel discussion and invite Christian Science lecturers to speak on them along with professors or religious leaders. The lecturer will need to be allowed to speak for at least 10 minutes before the question and answer session for the event to be considered a lecture. Some examples include:

- A Buddhist lama and Christian Science lecturer discussed challenges to the reality of the material world
- A Jewish rabbi, Muslim imam, and a Christian Science lecturer

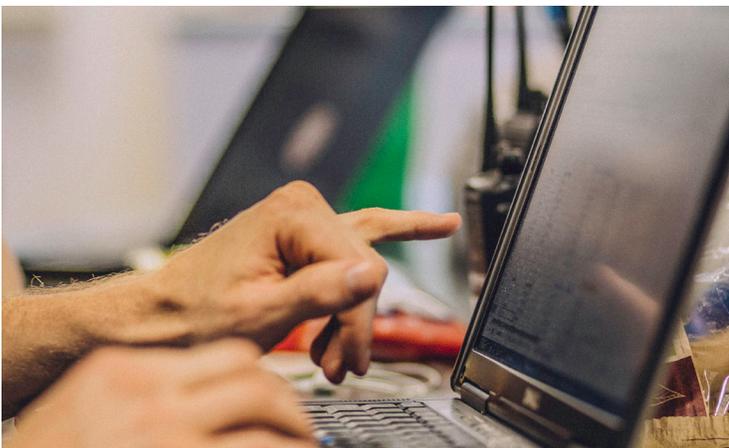
shared their views on women and religion

- A Sufi healer, Methodist minister, Jewish rabbi, and a Christian Science lecturer discussed their approaches to prayer and healing.
- A chaplain, faculty members, and Christian Science lecturer discuss how to find spiritual solutions to stress.

If you're considering an online lecture, the three models that have worked best are:

In-person lecture. Live broadcast of an in-person lecture.

Webinar. This is an online-only format. It's important that your main audience still be the campus community.



Blended format. Everyone watches a pre-recorded lecture together, followed by a live Q&A session with the lecturer.

How to plan a lecture

Organizing a lecture starts with a desire to present spiritual solutions to campus, community, and global issues—followed by a plan.

1. Pray. Most important of all.... consistent, expectant prayer—before, during, and after the lecture! Prayerfully support the fact that this event will bless and uplift others.

2. Assess the campus needs. Are there specific issues or hot topics your campus is grappling with? Think about the best way for a lecture to connect with the campus community and help elevate thought.

3. Timing is important. Consider campus events that are coming up and how a lecture could tie in with them. Lectures have been given at wellness fairs, women's history month events, and even during exam periods. Taking into consideration class schedules and campus events, determine which day and time would be the most convenient for the people you expect to attend.

4. Choose and contact a lecturer. A lecturer will be happy to work with you on making decisions as to timing, location, format, and title. View the complete list of lecturers at ChristianScience.com/lecturers.

5. Finances. Come up with a budget. Your lecturer can tell you his or her lecture fees and give you an estimate for travel expenses. Determine what other costs you will incur: advertising, room rental, periodicals, books, etc. Assess your resources (CSO funds, university funding, CSO alumni, branch church funds, etc.) Determine how much your CSO can contribute or raise for the lecture. Contact TMC Youth for [financial assistance information](#) if additional funds are needed or if your CSO does not have access to other funding sources.



6. Activity/book table. You can make arrangements for a table in a

public area on campus to distribute information about the lecture and Christian Science. It's a great way for the CSO members and the lecturer to work together to connect with the campus community and promote the lecture.

7. Lecture preparation meeting. Determine a date and time for a metaphysical meeting with the lecturer and CSO members. These meetings are important because they are an opportunity for the CSO and lecturer to discuss how to prayerfully support the event. If possible, try to schedule an in-person prep meeting, though these can also be held over the phone.

8. Advertising. Facebook events, the campus calendar, school newspaper, student radio station, and flyers are just a few effective methods of getting people to a lecture, but the best way to advertise is through personal invitations.

9. Sign-up sheet. You'll want to have a way to collect contact information from those wanting to know more about Christian Science at your event.

10. Share the fruitage. Contribute an article to the *Christian Science Sentinel* and share an update on the CSO Global Facebook Page.



Support for CSOs

“Love impels good works.”

Mis. 358:1



If you're interested in making Christian Science an active part of your college life experience, then forming a new CSO or joining one that is already established is a great way to go! Since this is a part of Mary Baker Eddy's vision for her church, The Mother Church wants to give you the support you need.



Take a fresh look at the [By-Law for CSOs](#) from the *Church Manual* in Article XXIII Sect. 8, and you'll be impressed by how short and simple it is. These few words say a lot about the confidence she placed in the members of her Church. CSOs aren't branch

churches or Sunday Schools, but a separate activity of the overall church structure. Mrs. Eddy trusted the ability of CSO members to work out, through prayer, the most effective ways to "[form and conduct](#)" CSOs on their campuses.

How does the CSO support team help?

Spiritual Resources:

- **The CSO support team** is just a click away. Send us an email at CSOsupport@csp.com with an update, and we'll be sure to respond quickly as well as share a few examples of CSO-related healings and success stories.

CSO Gatherings:

- **Regional meetings** are organized at the grassroots level. Many of these gatherings include both a public lecture for the campus as

well as private discussions for the participants to talk about issues on their campuses. They are usually open to any Christian Science college student or professor, and even those newly interested in Christian Science.

- **College Summits** are events that TMC Youth sponsors every other year to build connections and community through lectures, group discussions, great music, and ample time to hang out with like-minded people, including Christian Science lecturers and practitioners. It is also an opportunity to learn how to apply Christian Science in all aspects of our lives. They are open to any university student, professor, recent graduate, or high school junior or senior.



Networking Support:

- The **Connecting Colleges Campaign (C3)** is our effort at creating a database of Christian Scientists on campuses around the world, to make it easier for people to find and connect with each other. However, for this to work, we need you to register!
- **CSO Global Facebook group** is another way to connect with Christian Scientists on campuses all over the world.

Financial and Logistical Support

- Support for CSO activities and lectures on campus is also



provided by the CSO support team. This includes grant money to buy needed supplies at your local Reading Room or to pay for lectures and travel expenses. Many CSOs also get support from their universities, local

churches, and alumni. This can come in the form of financial support, idea sharing, and logistical support.

If you need more support, you are welcome to contact us directly. We're happy to provide information, share ideas and suggestions. Feel free to contact us at: **CSOsupport@csp.com (617) 450-3700.**



How to Grow Your CSO

“The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest”

Luke 10:2





We shouldn't be looking at the number of Christian Scientists on campus or the size of a CSO as our metric for success. Rather, we should look to the size of our love for this Science in our hearts. It's all about

healing, and the CSO makes these ideas accessible to everyone on campus so that they, too, can experience the same benefits you do.

There are tons of ways to connect with your campus! Some that have been successful include:

- personal invitations
- social media
- information tables
- campus email blasts/newspaper advertisements
- flyers/posters
- chalking/billboards
- press releases
- participation in interfaith groups

The Roles of Professors and Alumni

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

I Corinthians 12



CSOs are not only meant for students. In the Manual, Mrs. Eddy invited instructors and faculty members to participate as well. She also allowed for alumni to get involved, as long they had the unanimous approval of the CSO members.

Professors and faculty members

Some people simply think of professors and faculty members as only advisors, but the Manual doesn't confine them to this role. Mrs. Eddy didn't distinguish between the involvement of students and professors. In many CSOs, students and professors share equal roles.

There are many benefits to faculty participation in CSOs. Professors often have a better understanding of university policies and how to gain permission for activities. They are able to network with their colleagues, some of whom may be interested in having a Christian Science lecturer speak to their class or be willing to inform their students about a relevant campus lecture.



Faculty members can bring continuity, stability, and sustainability to the CSO, as they tend to be at the university for a longer period of time than most students.

Some universities, on the other hand, require an organization to have a faculty advisor. In cases where there is not a professor who

is a Christian Scientist, many CSOs have found a faculty member who is supportive of their efforts to act as an advisor for them.

Alumni Support

Mrs. Eddy allowed alumni to join the CSO, which means that she saw their involvement as important and beneficial. She did, however, stipulate in the Manual that they could join only by being voted in



unanimously by the members of the CSO to ensure that those who “form and conduct” the CSO are currently a part of the campus community.

Alumni can be a huge support to their CSOs. Many alumni feel close ties to

their alma mater and former CSO. Think about how you can keep them apprised of what you are doing, as they can be tapped into for prayerful support of your CSO’s projects or, in some cases, for financial support of your activities.

Additionally, alumni can help build and maintain institutional memory by sharing what the CSO has done in the past, what lessons have been learned and what has and hasn’t worked. This is important because campus populations are so transitory, whereas the alumni will be around for a longer time-frame. If you would like connect with Christian Science alumni from your university, TMC Youth would be very glad to help. Contact us at: CSOsupport@csp.com (617) 450-3700.

Historical Perspective



CSOs started with a student named Wilfred Cole at Harvard University in 1904. Up until that time, the Christian Science students on that campus had organized an annual gathering in which they would invite a notable person from the Christian Science movement to give a keynote speech. Eventually, the university denied them permission to hold these meetings on campus, because they weren't an officially recognized group.

However, Cole saw the need to share Christian Science on university campuses. He felt that the structure and stability of an official organization was needed to do so. He wrote, "My experience of college life and subsequently in the Harvard Graduate School (1900-3) gradually convinced me of the need for more Christian Science to counterbalance the materiality of education." (Burton Webster, History: Christian Science Organization at Harvard University, Archives of The Mother Church, Courtesy of The Mary Baker Eddy Collection.)





So Cole sent a letter to Mary Baker Eddy asking for a provision for an official Christian Science campus organization. He ended his letter by indicating that if he did not hear back from her, he would assume that she had rejected his proposal. He never received a response, so he let the idea go for the time being. But his desire to share Christian Science stayed with him.

A year later, he was compelled to write Mrs. Eddy again. By this point, he had begun law school and become First Reader at the Cambridge branch church. This time Mrs. Eddy responded to his letter and requested that he draft a bylaw for the organization. He did so and sent it back to her. She simplified it, added it to the Manual, and that's how CSOs were born.

At first, the Harvard CSO's meetings were restricted to Christian Scientists and special invitees. But this soon changed as they began to embrace the entire campus community. While the activities of this first CSO changed over time, the constant motive of the members was to give Christian Science its rightful place on campus and to enable others to learn about it.

We know there is a lot of information in this document. Please don't feel overwhelmed; working in a CSO is really very easy! Just remember this guide is meant to give you ideas. If you're just starting out, you can keep things simple. Listen for God's direction as you take each step, and don't to forget to have fun and enjoy the process!

