



THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST

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The Church of Christ, Scientist (also known as the Christian Science Church), is a Christian denomination, centered on the Bible and the teachings of Christ Jesus. The Golden Rule — love for family, neighbor, community and the world — is at the core of its values, and is what Christian Scientists strive to live daily, just as many people of other faiths do. At the heart of Christian Science worship is prayer, which is not an intercessory plea but rather a yielding to the spiritual nature of reality and God's goodness.

The Christian Science Church, founded in 1879, was "...designed to commemorate the word and works of our Master [Christ Jesus], which should reinstate primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing" (*Manual of The Mother Church*). The phrase "primitive Christianity" reflects the denomination's biblical orientation, but does not mean either a literal approach to Scripture or a rejection of scientific inquiry. Instead, it is in reference to the healing acts accomplished by the Apostles of Christ Jesus in the New Testament. The practice of spiritual healing is a conscientious choice for Christian Scientists, not a dogma imposed by church rules. It is a heartfelt practice rooted in love and "common humanity" (as the church's founder Mary Baker Eddy put it more than a century ago). Although healing — morally, physically, and spiritually — is a significant part of the practice of Christian Science, it is also a religious study and Christian way of life. Christian Science healing is sometimes misunderstood, but for a Christian Scientist, healing is regarded as the natural outcome of drawing closer to a loving and wholly good God.

Sunday worship services and Wednesday testimony meetings are based on readings from the Holy Bible, along with passages from the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy. Everyone is welcome at these services. The church has no ordained clergy; worship services are conducted by lay Readers — men and women elected from the membership.

The founder of the Church, New Englander Mary Baker Eddy (1821–1910), was a devout Christian and student of the Bible. She yearned to find deeper answers to the question of human suffering. When she experienced a critical injury in 1866, she turned wholeheartedly to God. As she read accounts of Jesus' healings, a clear sense of God, Spirit, brought about her complete healing. Because of her lifelong love of the Bible, she had already seen the practicality of its teachings, but this experience propelled her to want to understand exactly how her recovery had happened. She searched for and found the underlying laws of God in the Old and New Testament Scriptures, including the teachings and example of Christ Jesus. For her, genuine Christian healing was not supernatural, a matter of praying for miracles, or even having enough faith, like one might have in a placebo. She saw God — not the human mind — as the healing power. And, while she saw Christ's message as one of love and hope, she also emphasized humanity's need to face and overcome evil and sin.

Eddy outlined this theology over many years in the book that became the church's textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. Published in 1875, this book contains the basic theological and ethical statement of Christian Science. The Church has no creeds, confessions, dogmatics, or other "official" Bible commentaries. Christian Scientists study this book for the spiritual light it shines on the Bible, but do not consider it more important than the Bible. Together, the Bible and *Science and Health* are considered the dual pastor of the Christian Science church, "ministering" not only to Christian Scientists but others around the world as they face challenges and go about their daily lives.

Today, there are branch congregations throughout the United States and in over 60 countries. The Mother Church, located in Boston's Back Bay neighborhood, is the home of the worldwide Christian Science Church. The Church sits at the heart of the 13.5-acre Christian Science Plaza, which is the largest privately owned, publicly accessible open space in Boston.

To speak with a local representative of the Church, call + 1 617 450-3322 or email media@christianscience.com.