



The CHRISTIAN SCIENCE JOURNAL

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

By The Christian Science Board of Directors

From the April 1959 issue of *The Christian Science Journal*

Perhaps nothing is more important to the progress of the student of Christian Science than church membership. It opens up an entirely new field of activity, and when the student makes the most of the opportunities afforded, great spiritual growth follows.

Church membership involves far more than attending church services, but this does not mean that one should unduly delay making application for membership. The individual who has been an earnest student of Christian Science for one year or longer may well give prayerful thought to taking this important step. An earnest student daily studies the Bible and "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" by Mary Baker Eddy, usually with the aid of the Lesson-Sermon, contained in the *Christian Science Quarterly*. He also reads the authorized Christian Science periodicals, regularly attends the church services, and relies absolutely on God for healing.

Why is church membership so important to the student's spiritual progress? Primarily because joining church is an active expression of gratitude for benefits received from his study of Christian Science. In Christian Science, one does not join the church to be saved, nor is his motive to gain something for himself. The student has learned from his study of the writings of our beloved Leader, Mrs. Eddy, that man is in reality saved already and has all good by reflection. Furthermore, the student has witnessed the practical proof of this truth in his daily life. Therefore, he seeks church membership in order that he may give tangible expression to his heartfelt gratitude by having an active part in bringing the teachings of Christian Science to those who are receptive and who so greatly need the healing and comfort of the Christ, Truth. Thus, in joining church the student is animated by the Christ-spirit and in return receives the blessing promised by the Master ([Luke 6:38](#)), "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom."

Because church membership is so important to his spiritual progress, the student needs to be alert to nullify mortal mind's arguments of resistance to progress which would claim to result in apathy or indifference. The Christian Science practitioner may also play a helpful part in destroying these errors by pointing out the value of church membership to those who are prepared to take this step. The alert church member may be able to aid a friend who needs awakening or encouraging in order to go forward in this way. The Christian Scientist does not stand idly by when he sees an earnest student being deprived of the blessing of church membership for which he is obviously ready.

The question sometimes arises whether one should first join the branch church he has been attending or join The Mother Church. Both steps may well be taken at the same time, for if one is qualified to be a member of a branch church, he should be equally ready to be a member of The Mother Church, and vice versa. In joining a branch church or society, one identifies himself

with and supports the Cause of Christian Science in his own community. In joining The Mother Church, he identifies himself with and supports the world-wide activity of the Christian Science movement. The Christian Scientist finds it important to make the complete demonstration of church membership.

The Mother Church represents our Leader's tender provision for the protection of her revelation, the dissemination of her teachings, and the spiritual advancement of her followers. Thus The Mother Church is not localized; it is not just "a Boston church." Its membership is worldwide, a priceless heritage uniting Christian Scientists in love and brotherhood, a heritage made possible to everyone through Mrs. Eddy's foresight and demonstration.

Wherever a branch of The Mother Church is functioning, there The Mother Church itself is extending its blessing. Wherever love and loyalty glow in the heart of a member, even though he may appear isolated or alone, there The Mother Church is radiating its warmth. Indeed, The Mother Church is a beacon that guides, protects, and strengthens every Christian Scientist who, by availing himself of membership, may rightfully call it his own.

The various departments and institutions of The Mother Church extend their activities to the branches, however remote they may be, and every Christian Scientist who is grateful for his periodicals, his Bible Lessons, his lectures, his Sunday services and weekday testimony meetings and his Reading Room, should remember that without The Mother Church none of them could continue. In fact, without The Mother Church there would be no branches. In joining and supporting The Mother Church, the student is having an important part in making these agencies available to all mankind.

(Science and Health, [p. 450](#)), "The Christian Scientist has enlisted to lessen evil, disease, and death; and he will overcome them by understanding their nothingness and the allness of God, or good."

Obviously, church membership is an important part of the Christian Scientist's enlistment.

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