

MARY BAKER EDDY'S EXAMPLE OF CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

The Principle Foundation

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"follow thou me" → inspired leadership

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This worksheet may help you document your concepts regarding a basic model of Christian leadership. While we cannot complete this work in one hour, hopefully you will document some key ideas — qualities of character and leadership exemplified by Mrs. Eddy — qualities that each of us can emulate in our work as shepherds of Christ's flock.

Section 1: Examples

Example 1) Mrs. Eddy at Tremont Temple (1885)

See Julia Bartlett, *We Knew Mary Baker Eddy*, Exp. Ed., Vol. 1, p. 78.

Make a few notes on the qualities of leadership you discern in this story.

Example 2) Building The Mother Church (1893)

See Joseph Armstrong, *The Mother Church*, for more details. Additional details may be found in Robert Peel's *Mary Baker Eddy: Years of Authority* (e.g., p. 68).

Make a few notes on the qualities of leadership you discern in this story.

GROUP ACTIVITY:

Discuss and document the qualities of Mrs. Eddy's leadership that stand out to you in these two examples (the Tremont Temple talk and building The Mother Church).

How do you see different qualities working together as an active model of Christian leadership?

Example 3) Mrs. Eddy's Hope for Her Leadership

I hope, dear reader, I am leading you into the understanding of your divine rights, your heaven-bestowed harmony, — that, as you read, you see there is no cause (outside of erring, mortal, material sense which is not power) able to make you sick or sinful; and I hope that you are conquering this false sense. (*Science and Health*, p. 253)

Finally, brethren, wait patiently on God; return blessing for cursing; be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good; be steadfast, abide and abound in faith, understanding, and good works; study the Bible and the textbook of our denomination; obey strictly the laws that be, and **follow your Leader only so far as she follows Christ.** (*Message for 1901*, p. 34)

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. Envy is the atmosphere of hell. According to Holy Writ, the first lie and leap into perdition began with "Believe in me." Competition in commerce, deceit in councils, dishonor in nations, dishonesty in trusts, begin with "Who shall be greatest?" I again repeat, **Follow your Leader, only so far as she follows Christ.** (*Message for 1902*, p. 3)

Third Degree: Understanding.

SPIRITUAL. Wisdom, purity, spiritual understanding, spiritual power, love, health, holiness.

In the third degree mortal mind disappears, and man as God's image appears. Science so reverses the evidence before the corporeal human senses, as to make this Scriptural testimony true in our hearts, "The last shall be first, and the first last," so that God and His idea may be to us what divinity really is and must of necessity be, — all-inclusive. (*Science and Health*, p. 116)

Jot down a few thoughts about this aspect of Mrs. Eddy's leadership.

Example 4) Editorial Policy & Visionary Leadership — Annie Knott at Pleasant View (1905)

See Annie Knott, *We Knew Mary Baker Eddy*, Exp. Ed., Vol. 1, p. 195.

Make a few notes about this aspect of Mrs. Eddy's leadership.

Example 5) Lesson in Student-Teacher Relationships (1899)

See Clara Shannon, *We Knew Mary Baker Eddy*, Vol. 2, p. 211.

AS A GROUP discuss and document the qualities of Mrs. Eddy's leadership that stand out to you in these two examples (the editorial meeting at Pleasant View and the invitation to Woodbury).

NOTES:**SECTION 2: A Possible Model of Mrs. Eddy's Christian Leadership**

Extract from a letter written by Mary Baker Eddy to the Christian Science Board of Directors:

(1st) I cannot be your Leader unless I have the power to guide you when you need this guidance. (2nd) . . . I will pray earnestly and watch for God to guide me in knowing that I am right in my decision. . . . I know that He will show me the way. . . and then I will follow it.[†]

This letter suggests another key aspect of Christian leadership — the “*consent of the governed*.” Mrs. Eddy says:

The Magna Charta of Christian Science . . . stands for the inalienable, universal rights of men. Essentially democratic, its government is administered by the common consent of the governed, wherein and whereby man governed by his creator is self-governed. (*Miscellany* p. 246)

In *Science and Health*, she also refers to an inalienable right of self-government:

God has endowed man with inalienable rights, among which are self-government, reason, and conscience. Man is properly self-governed only when he is guided rightly and governed by his Maker, divine Truth and Love. (p. 106)

[†] May 3, 1895 (#L00103). Mary Baker Eddy Collection, Mary Baker Eddy Library.

Summary: Mrs. Eddy's Example of Christian Leadership

Discuss as a Group: *Can we summarize key aspects of Mrs. Eddy's Christian leadership?*

What key qualities or traits of character stand out to you?

ONE sentence that summarizes Mrs. Eddy's example of Christian leadership:

FOUR key qualities or traits of character that describe Mrs. Eddy's Christian leadership:

1.

2.

3.

4.

How do these relate to your own demonstration of Christian leadership?

SOME OF MRS. EDDY'S STATEMENTS RELATING TO CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

Moral courage is requisite to meet the wrong and to proclaim the right. (*Science and Health*, p. 327)

Success in life depends upon persistent effort, upon the improvement of moments more than upon any other one thing. (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 230)

In the battle of life, good is made more industrious and persistent because of the supposed activity of evil. The elbowing of the crowd plants our feet more firmly. In the mental collisions of mortals and the strain of intellectual wrestlings, moral tension is tested, and, if it yields not, grows stronger. (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 339)

Whoever would demonstrate the healing of Christian Science must abide strictly by its rules, heed every statement, and advance from the rudiments laid down. There is nothing difficult nor toilsome in this task, when the way is pointed out; but self-denial, sincerity, Christianity, and persistence alone win the prize, as they usually do in every department of life. (*Science and Health*, p. 462)

Christian Science is not an exception to the general rule, that there is no excellence without labor in a direct line. One cannot scatter his fire, and at the same time hit the mark. (*Science and Health*, p. 457)

There is no excellence without labor; and the time to work, is *now*. Only by persistent, unremitting, straightforward toil; by turning neither to the right nor to the left, seeking no other pursuit or pleasure than that which cometh from God, can you win and wear the crown of the faithful. (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 340)

We must "pray without ceasing." Such prayer is answered, in so far as we put our desires into practice. The Master's injunction is, that we pray in secret and let our lives attest our sincerity. (*Science and Health*, p. 15)

Be of good cheer; the warfare with one's self is grand; it gives one plenty of employment, and the divine Principle worketh with you, — and obedience crowns persistent effort with everlasting victory. (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 118)

The song of Christian Science is, "Work — work — work — watch and pray." The close observer reports three types of human nature — the right thinker and worker, the idler, and the intermediate.

The right thinker works; he gives little time to society manners or matters, and benefits society by his example and usefulness. He takes no time for amusement, ease, frivolity; he earns his money and gives it wisely to the world.

... The intermediate worker works at times. He says: "It is my duty to take some time for myself; however, I believe in working when it is convenient." Well, all that is good. But what of the fruits of your labors? And he answers: "I am not so successful as I could wish, but I work hard enough to be so." (*Message for 1900*, p. 2)

I suggest as a motto for every Christian Scientist, — a living and life-giving spiritual shield against the powers of darkness, —

"Great not like Caesar, stained with blood,

But only great as I am good."

The only genuine success possible for any Christian — and the only success I have ever achieved — has been accomplished on this solid basis. (*Message for 1902*, p. 14)

I have quite another purpose in life than to be thought great. (*Miscellany*, p. 306)

Let us serve instead of rule, knock instead of push at the door of human hearts, and allow to each and every one the same rights and privileges that we claim for ourselves. If ever I wear out from serving students, it shall be in the effort to help them to obey the Ten Commandments and imbibe the spirit of Christ's Beatitudes. (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 303)

The true understanding of Christian Science Mind-healing never originated in pride, rivalry, or the deification of self. The Discoverer of this Science could tell you of timidity, of self-distrust, of friendlessness, toil, agonies, and victories, under which she needed miraculous vision to sustain her, when taking the first footsteps in this Science.

The ways of Christianity have not changed. Meekness, selflessness, and love are the paths of His testimony and the footsteps of His flock. (*Rudimental Divine Science*, p. 17)

Each of Christ's little ones reflects the infinite One, and therefore is the seer's declaration true, that "one on God's side is a majority." (*Pulpit and Press*, p. 4)

Science has inaugurated the irrepressible conflict between sense and Soul. Mortal thought wars with this sense as one that beateth the air, but Science outmasters it, and ends the warfare. This proves daily that "one on God's side is a majority." (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 102)

I hope, dear reader, I am leading you into the understanding of your divine rights, your heaven-bestowed harmony, — that, as you read, you see there is no cause (outside of erring, mortal, material sense which is not power) able to make you sick or sinful; and I hope that you are conquering this false sense. (*Science and Health*, p. 253)

Finally, brethren, wait patiently on God; return blessing for cursing; be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good; be steadfast, abide and abound in faith, understanding, and good works; study the Bible and the textbook of our denomination; obey strictly the laws that be, and follow your Leader only so far as she follows Christ. (*Message for 1901*, p. 34)

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. . . . Competition in commerce, deceit in councils, dishonor in nations, dishonesty in trusts, begin with "Who shall be greatest?" I again repeat, Follow your Leader, only so far as she follows Christ. (*Message for 1902*, p. 3)

The true leader of a true cause is the unacknowledged servant of mankind. Stationary in the background, this individual is doing the work that nobody else can or will do. (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 266)

The best spiritual type of Christly method for uplifting human thought and imparting divine Truth, is stationary power, stillness, and strength; and when this spiritual ideal is made our own, it becomes the model for human action. (*Retrospection*, p. 93)

Man is properly self-governed only when he is guided rightly and governed by his Maker, divine Truth and Love. (*Science and Health*, p. 106)

Alertness to Duty. SECT. 6. It shall be the duty of every member of this Church to defend himself daily against aggressive mental suggestion, and not be made to forget nor to neglect his duty to God, to his Leader, and to mankind. By his works he shall be judged, — and justified or condemned. (*Manual*, p. 42)

Editorial

Words of Counsel

THE following heretofore unpublished letter from our revered Leader to the Christian Science Board of Directors, is herewith shared with the whole field because of its wise counsel to all Christian Scientists.

Pleasant View, Concord, N. H., Feb. 27, 1908.
Christian Science Board of Directors.

Beloved Students:—I am not a lawyer, and do not sufficiently comprehend the legal trend of the copy you enclosed to me to suggest any changes therein. Upon one point, however, I feel competent to advise, namely: Never abandon the by-laws nor the denominational government of The Mother Church. If I am not personally with you, the Word of God and my instructions in the by-laws have led you hitherto and will remain to guide you safely on, and the teachings of St. Paul are as useful today as when they were first written.

The present and future prosperity of the cause of Christian Science is largely due to the by-laws and government of "The First Church of Christ, Scientist," in Boston. None but myself can know, as I know, the importance of the combined sentiment of this church remaining steadfast in supporting its present by-laws. Each of these many by-laws has met and mastered or forestalled some contingency, some imminent peril, and will continue to do so. Its by-laws have preserved the sweet unity of this large church, that has perhaps the most members and combined influence of any other church in our country. Many times a single by-law has cost me long nights of prayer and struggle, but it has won the victory over some sin and saved the walls of Zion from being torn down by disloyal students. We have proven that "in unity there is strength."

With love as ever,

MARY BAKER G. EDDY.



At the end of this typed letter, Mrs. Eddy added in her own writing:
"N.B. I request that you put this letter upon our church records."

The above is from the August 22, 1914, Christian Science Sentinel, p. 1010.

A reproduction of the original may be found in the pamphlet The Permanency of The Mother Church.

