



## **Communicating the Message of the Comforter** **By Michael Pabst, CSB**

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Dear friends, I'm so happy to be here with you today and to share some ideas that I have found helpful.

### *High Ridge House Mission*

High Ridge House has a wonderful mission – to be a "haven of Soul," cherishing the babe of Christian healing and supporting everybody here in their spiritual growth. (I took that from your website.)

How can this facility fulfill the purpose to be a haven of Soul? This facility as a material structure is not able to do that. Just as little as a church edifice has the ability to rouse the dormant understanding (see *Science and Health*, p. 583:15.) Naturally, cherishing the presence of Soul and the babe of Christian healing is in us – within each one of the many people working and praying for High Ridge House – the nursing staff, the administrative staff, the patients and practitioners, the donors and supporters.

To the degree that each one of us lives that goal in daily life – cherishing the presence of Soul and the babe of Christian healing in us – to that degree will it be felt in High Ridge House by the occupants.

How can we be more effective with supporting High Ridge House in its mission and touch the dear people here more effectively with the healing mission of Christian Science?

I find the answer to that question is in one word: Communication. Effective communication is essential for mutual strengthening, for productivity, for unity. Effective communication is the reason why we know about Abraham, Moses and all the people of the Old Testament. Effective communication was at the heart of Jesus' remarkable healing ability. Effective communication enabled Paul to spread Christianity beyond the borders of Israel. *Science and Health* is a masterpiece in effective communication reaching the soul and heart of honest seekers. And effective



communication is at the core of successful healing work in our individual lives today.

How can we stretch out our hands to embrace others with our cherishing the presence of Soul and the babe of Christian healing in us unless there is effective communication?

### *Overview*

That's why we're going to look at the following three questions in the next hour:

First, how can we communicate more effectively? We'll look at the spiritual foundation of communication. We'll see what the Bible and Mary Baker Eddy have to teach us about it.

Secondly, what are we supposed to communicate? We're going to have a look at what we're communicating. And as you can guess from the title of this talk – it has to do with comfort. ☺ And we'll see how the Comforter brings healing.

Lastly, how can we overcome resistance to communicating the Comforter? We'll also see what thoughts tend to prevent effective communication and how we can overcome them.

#### *1. What is communication?*

What is communication actually? Two people talking to each other, right? Well, that's often the form it seems to take. But talking in itself is not necessarily communication. There is a Calvin & Hobbes cartoon that illustrates that point very nicely.

Calvin goes to his mom who is reading the paper in the living room and says "I'm hungry. Can I have a snack?" She answers "Sure. Help yourself." He goes away with a big grin and as he takes off with the cookie jar and a cookie stuck in his mouth she calls after him "You can have an apple or an orange from the fridge." He stops, puts the jar down, frowns and says to



himself “Even though we’re both talking English, we’re not speaking the same language.”

When people have only their own interests at heart communication suffers. The Bible has a potent story to teach that point.

### *Babel*

You all know the story in Genesis of the construction site that had ambitious plans. (Gen 11:3-9) But then people didn’t understand each other any more and communication broke down. And with the breakdown of communication came the breakdown of productivity “and they left off to build the city. “

What had happened? The Bible says that their language was “confounded.” We all know the saying that the US and UK are two countries divided by a common language. We all know business meetings or negotiations or trade talks that are unproductive notwithstanding people speaking the same language. Why is their language “confounded?”

It is a hypnotic influence that turns everybody’s attention inward, makes them focus only on themselves, on their own concerns. In Calvin’s case it was the simple desire to eat cookies. In the more complicated world of adults it’s for example fear or pride or selfishness that exert such a hypnotic influence that turns our hearts inward. And the result is misunderstandings or even the total breakdown of communication.

We might say, Babel is the language of self-centeredness.

What’s the remedy? Let’s look at another Bible story for the answer: Pentecost.

### *Pentecost*

This story is a wonderful example of effective communication, one that even superseded different human languages. It’s in the book of Acts (Acts 2:1-12). The disciples of Jesus and many people from different parts of the Middle East had come together and the disciples preached about Jesus.



The people were listening to what the disciples had to say and were amazed that they all understood the message in their native languages. But that wasn't all. The message touched their hearts and souls to such a degree that they were really on fire and many became believers and were baptized.

What was it that touched them so much that it spoke to them in their own languages? The Bible says it was the Holy Ghost, the divine inspiration of Life, Truth, and Love, that had been revealed to the disciples and had changed their hearts. The Holy Ghost is a divine utterance that revealed and explained to the disciples the deep truths of being. It purified them of human and material misconceptions. Many people have turned to it over the centuries for guidance and healing. And the Holy Ghost is with us today.

Jesus baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire. He had profoundly touched the hearts of his disciples. And now they touched the hearts of their listeners.

We can see through the experience of Pentecost that communication doesn't necessarily need words. It's what's in our hearts that communicates. I remember a time when I was right out of Sunday School and I loved it so much that I begged my church to make me a Sunday School teacher so I could stay in Sunday School. They lovingly granted my wish but I got the feeling that I must have been the worst teacher those poor kids in my first class had ever had. I prepared every class of course but I felt that my teaching was dull and boring.

About 8 or 10 years later, I met some of those Sunday School students again and they came up to me and greeted me and I almost wanted to apologize for my early classes when they said "You were such a wonderful Sunday School teacher for us and we learned so much." I was wondering if they had been attending the same church but then they elaborated and said "What we took from our classes was your dedication to Christian Science, your love for God and man. That really stuck with us."



That was a very valuable lesson for me and showed me that our thoughts communicate more than our words. It illustrated to me the most important thing to become a better Sunday School teacher, to become a more effective communicator in general. Namely to pay attention to where my heart is. Because we are more transparent than we think. Our heart communicates.

Where was the heart of the disciples and their listeners during Pentecost? They were looking outward, were looking to the Holy Ghost and listening to the influx of that divine inspiration. They were united in their desire to look away from themselves and to look towards the message from God. Their spiritual sense was listening to the Holy Ghost. And the effect was tremendous. It overcame language barriers and brought illumination, a change of heart in the listeners and healing.

If Babel illustrates the language of self-centeredness, then Pentecost illustrates the language of the Holy Ghost.

Pentecost gives us a hint at the requisite of communication: listening to God. Communication in its core is the inspiration coming to us from God, divine Mind, the source of all ideas. We communicate most effectively with each other when we see each other as God's children, are aware of our mutual connection to God, and listen to the Holy Ghost – to what God has to tell us.

In the spring this year, I was asked by a church to give a lecture for them on a certain date. I agreed and marked my calendar. A few days later, I received a call from another church, requesting me to speak on that same date. The circumstances made it clear that it was right to accept this new engagement and I needed to speak with the first church to ask for a change of date.

Interestingly enough, I didn't feel the impulse to call them right away. 2 days later in the morning all of a sudden I felt impelled to call them. My contact person picked up the phone right away. I explained the reason for my call and there was a surprised silence on the other end of the phone. She asked me: "How did you know we're meeting right now to discuss the lecture?"



It turned out that the contact number that I had been given was the number of the church. Typically I wouldn't have been able to reach anybody. But the lecture committee was meeting right at that moment in the church. We were able to find another date for the lecture without a problem and were grateful for divine Mind orchestrating both events in such a harmonious way. And both lectures were very successful.

### *Mary Baker Eddy*

Mary Baker Eddy, a 19<sup>th</sup>-century Christian healer and founder of Christian Science, was certainly listening to the Holy Ghost. She was a very devout Christian and Bible scholar and had remarkable insights into spiritual reality. As a young adult, she knew that prayer healed but wasn't sure how. She also researched the mind-body connection but then she made a discovery that went far beyond the effects of the human mind on the body. She found that all real being is in God, in divine Mind. God is the law of our being and our health. There is no life in matter, life is in God only. She found that God's laws are ever-present, reliable, and restore health on a much more dependable foundation than any human material or mental method.

She describes her search in this way:

I knew the Principle of all harmonious Mind-action to be God, and that cures were produced in primitive Christian healing by holy, uplifting faith; but I must know the Science of this healing, and I won my way to absolute conclusions through divine revelation, reason, and demonstration. (*Science and Health*, p. 109:16-22)

A science is set apart from a philosophy by demonstrable laws. A science can be proved. It has a direct impact on our experience. The Science of Christian healing is the explanation of the deep truths that are at the root of all spiritual reality. These insights into our spiritual divine nature have a direct impact on our experience. They invariably restore harmony and health.



These laws and insights came to her through “divine revelation, reason, and demonstration.” God, Spirit, was the source of her insights into divine Science and she began to see that those very divine laws of health and being must have been the basis of Jesus’ remarkable healing work.

A science and its laws is independent of people, it’s also independent of time. That means the laws of Christian healing have existed forever. Jesus did his works on the basis of those laws. And he taught his disciples the same laws. Jesus proved them. His disciples proved them. And Mary Baker Eddy began to prove them. She found her own poor health of many years’ standing totally restored and she began to heal others with these new insights – often in cases where a medical approach wasn’t possible anymore.

She found that it’s not the human mind that heals. It can influence what it experiences but it cannot produce health. Health is a quality of God. Turning to God, the divine Mind, for healing is the most potent thing we can do in any situation.

Here is an example of how her listening to God embraced her listeners in such an uplifting atmosphere that it brought healing. This account is from one of her biographies: *Christian Healer*.

It was not at all uncommon for healings to result from Mrs. Eddy's public speaking. A young woman from Germany, Bertha Reinke, who had come to America to study medicine and also hoped to find a cure for her own physical problems, came to hear Mrs. Eddy speak; she came out of curiosity, because it was unheard of in her country for a woman to preach. She had never heard of Christian Science and had not known of its focus on healing before she attended the service:

Human energy and will power alone had enabled me to come to this lecture and while I was waiting for the "Lady Preacher" to appear, it seemed as if I could not endure my mental and physical condition much longer.

Then something wonderful happened. Escorted by a gentleman the "Lady Preacher" appeared on the stage. For a few moments she gazed silently over the audience. I felt an



atmosphere such as I had not known before. She spoke with a gentle, low but very clear voice. As I was not accustomed to hear an address in English, and as I sat so far from the stage, the words themselves were not understood. But as I listened I experienced an inexpressible feeling of relief, and the pains and misery, with which I had gone to this lecture hall, had fallen away from me.

Not knowing to whom I had been listening, I asked an usher for the name of the "Lady Preacher." In utter astonishment he looked at me and answered, "Why, that was Mrs. Eddy!"—Mrs. Eddy?! I had never heard the name before—I left the hall free and well. (*Christian Healer*, p. 128)

That woman wasn't even able to hear Mary Baker Eddy's words! Yet Mrs. Eddy's thought was so transparent for the message of the Holy Ghost, divine Science, that this woman felt embraced in divine Love and she was healed.

Mary Baker Eddy researched and recorded her insights into the laws of Life, Truth, and Love and gave her discovery the name Christian Science. She published her insights in this book: *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. For anybody who doesn't have a copy of this book – it's available after this talk in the foyer. It's not only a remarkable book on divine communication, it's an interesting book in itself in how it communicates its message to the reader, how it speaks to the heart and soul of the reader. It really practices what it preaches.

Now we can see the significance of Pentecost from a new perspective: the disciples and the people from those many places were listening to the Holy Ghost, the divine laws of being or divine Science; they were listening to the disciples about how Jesus Christ had come to live the laws among them and what the power of God's love meant to people's lives. Mary Baker Eddy put it this way:

The magnitude of Jesus' work, his material disappearance before their eyes and his reappearance, all enabled the disciples to understand what Jesus had said. Heretofore they had only believed;



now they understood. The advent of this understanding is what is meant by the descent of the Holy Ghost, — that influx of divine Science which so illuminated the Pentecostal Day and is now repeating its ancient history. (*Science and Health*, p. 43:3)

## 2. *The Comforter*

Jesus was the Christ, he had come as our Savior. And before he left, he promised that he would not leave us comfortless (John 14:18). He promised that the teachings of the Holy Ghost would come to us with a special quality: with the quality of a Comforter.

He said: “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; (John 14:16,17)

And Mary Baker Eddy elaborates on this beautiful prophecy and says:

This Comforter I understand to be Divine Science. (*Science and Health*, p. 55:28)

The quality of comfort is of particular importance for the healing mission of High Ridge House. Ask yourselves: Does every communication in this house have the quality of comfort? Every greeting in the hallway, every encounter between patients, nurses, administrative staff, practitioners – does it have a comforting quality?

What does comfort mean? Comfort is a word that comes from the French and when you separate it into two words you have “con” – “fort” — “with strength”. According to *Webster’s Dictionary*, “comfort” has two meanings:

1. Strength and relief received under affliction;
2. Positive enjoyment, of a quiet, permanent nature, together with the sources thereof; as, the comfort of love; surrounded with comforts;

We can see that the first meaning of comfort – strength and relief received under affliction – goes beyond a soothing word that expresses our sympathy. It strengthens the soul, removes burdens, and brings relief and



healing to mind and body. In order for our communication to be comforting it needs to reach the heart not just the mind, the soul not just the intellect.

### *Human vs. Divine Comfort*

We need to be clear about the comfort that comes from the Holy Ghost vs. the comfort that has its roots in the human desire to be nice and helpful. The human desire to bring comfort is meant well but it accepts the material problems as realities and tries to bring material relief through material means. We do want to be loving and kind. In fact – we have to be, it's our Christian duty. And it's a natural expression of our love for each other. But the comfort of the Holy Ghost looks beyond the hypnotic claim of life in matter and lifts thought into the understanding of life as entirely spiritual, supported by God, and supplied with perfect harmony and health.

You are probably familiar with the account of Jesus healing the man by the pool of Bethesda (John 5:2-9). The man had been waiting for a stirring of the water in the pool based on the superstition that an angel would equip the water by the stirring with healing properties. He had never made it down into the pool fast enough because he wasn't able to walk quickly.

If Jesus had been moved by a human sentiment to bring comfort, he would have said to the man something like "Just wait, next time I'm going to carry you and help you to be the fastest guy." Instead he brought the comfort of the Holy Ghost – the saving quality of the Christ – to this man and roused him to claim his dominion and freedom. He said to him in essence "Get up! You have everything you need to claim your freedom and health." And the man was restored.

The Christ sees our perfect and whole son-/daughtership of God that can never be anything but the perfect expression of health and harmony. Our task in healing is to bear witness to that divine fact. We bear witness with our spiritual sense. With a joyful heart, with the spirit of God that "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1. Cor 2:10)

The human mind is so quick to learn the right words and has a fitting response to every problem. But I'm sure that we all know from our own experiences that statements of spiritual facts may be true intellectually, but



they often feel cold and theoretical and don't really feed the soul and don't satisfy the need for comfort. That's because the human mind is not the Comforter, it's not the Savior. Paul says that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." (1. Cor 3:6)

Isn't the spirit the source of all true communication? How do we reach the patient with the spirit? We have already looked at examples showing that the communication of the spirit has less to do with what we say and more with what we feel in our heart. What is our heart focused on? Is it listening to the Holy Ghost? Do we have a clear sense of the allness of God's supremacy, His infinite goodness? Do we see everybody around us as the spiritual reflection of this infinite Love? Are we "on fire" with gratitude for God's goodness? Then our communication cannot help but comfort because it's impelled by love.

A woman called me one morning and told me she had her period and was in bed with a migraine headache and had called in sick. She asked me for help in Christian Science. We talked about divine Mind governing all the functions of the body harmoniously and her divine dominion over this generally accepted but false opinion about women suffering during that time of the month. We talked about the fact that she has divine authority to challenge those mortal assumptions and claim her freedom and health. I said to her something like "Nothing can stop you from being well and getting out of bed. God's law is on your side, in fact there is no other law."

I could tell that she was a little taken aback because it had never occurred to her to expect a quick healing and freedom. She said she needed to think about our conversation for a bit.

After we hung up I affirmed mentally what divine Science had to say about this woman – that she IS free and well and only under the jurisdiction of God – and felt a great sense of peace. I got a call from her around noontime. She told me that she had had to think about the ideas for another 15 minutes or so and then she had said "Yes! I CAN get up. And nothing can stand in my way." She did get up and all the physical problems faded away very quickly. She got dressed and went to work. That's where she called me from. The Comforter had brought divine comfort – freedom and healing.



### 3. *How do we deal with opposition?*

We have already touched on elements that introduce a hypnotic diversion for effective communication. Think of the story of Babel. What was the diversion there that stopped people from listening and turned them inward? Self-will, pride. Fear is another one. Those are adversarial mental influences that want to turn us inward and disrupt true communication.

Peter uses in the Bible the very term “adversary” to describe that seeming force that wants to distract and obstruct (1. Pet 5:8). And Mary Baker Eddy devoted a whole chapter in her book *Science and Health* to defining Biblical terms from the perspective of divine Science. Here is what she has to say about “adversary:”

An adversary is one who opposes, denies, disputes, not one who constructs and sustains reality and Truth. Jesus said of the devil, “He was a murderer from the beginning, . . . he is a liar and the father of it.” This view of Satan is confirmed by the name often conferred upon him in Scripture, the “adversary.” (*Science and Health*, p. 580:28)

I find it helpful and instructive to look at the three verbs she uses to describe the seeming action of the adversary: oppose, deny, and dispute.

Opposition is passive resistance. That means to me an unwillingness to cooperate or to listen for example. A thought that says “You can pray all you want, evil is still as real as God.”

Denial is to me a more active form of resistance. It’s contradicting our communication. For example a thought that says “This problems has been with you for years. It’s not going to go away because you obviously don’t have enough understanding.”

And disputing is maybe the most subtle form of resistance because it starts with “Yes, but ...” We encounter the third kind when we are tempted to argue with conflicting human opinions. And we get drawn into a long and unproductive debate. It’s distracting and really ultimately a waste of time. Jesus never argued with the adversary. And neither should we. Instead we



should be listening to what the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, has to say about this situation.

That is sometimes easier said than done. How do we cope with the various forms of the adversary? As we said earlier, the human mind is not a factor in the healing work of Christian Science. It's a divine influence that saves, redeems, and heals. It's the Christ, God's ever-present and all-powerful message of Love to man. How does the Christ bring the message of comfort and salvation to our thought today? Here is an example.

*How does the Comforter heal?*

A woman called me and explained that she thought she was suffering from symptoms of colon cancer, and she was quite afraid. She was also pained by her relationship to a family member, who had been bullying and criticizing her for several decades. She had never found a way to defend herself, but had simply been swallowing and ignoring her frustration and anger all this time. She clearly felt burdened and needed comfort.

Together we pondered Jesus' comment on whom he saw as true family members. He said that they are the ones who "shall do the will of God" (Mark 3:35). Soon, this woman gained a new sense of brotherhood and freedom from family domination. She felt impelled to call her relative. She told him how she had always felt pushed around by him – something she had never been able to say before. Although he didn't respond as she'd hoped, she wasn't bothered in the least by his reaction. For the first time, she felt a wonderful sense of freedom from any sense of burden. She had seen her relationship to God, Spirit, in a new light, and this insight transformed her. Within about a week, all the physical symptoms she'd been experiencing left her, and the healing has been permanent. She also continues to care deeply about her relative.

*Your importance here in High Ridge House*

How can these ideas help you in your desire to further the mission of High Ridge House? We have seen that communication flows from God to man.



HIGH RIDGE HOUSE  
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That God communicates His love through the Holy Ghost, divine Science, and that this message comforts and heals.

Each one of you is dedicated to be a better “comfort communicator” every day. And you share your love for God and man in wonderful ways through your dedication. Your lives show what’s in your hearts. Whatever you have experienced in your lives of the power of the Comforter shines through your thoughts and actions. We can really only communicate what we have experienced ourselves. Paul points that out. He says:

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. (2. Cor 1:3,4)

That’s why you are here. Because of what you have experienced with the Comforter. That’s why every one of you is needed. Everything that you have experienced and are experiencing every day of the power of the Comforter strengthens your faith, your love, your gratitude. And that strength communicates to the people you embrace in thought every day.

Your sense of being comforted is an open window through which the power of the Holy Ghost reaches people’s hearts and souls and brings comfort and healing. God bless you.

Thank you.

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