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A Christian Science Lecture entitled

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE-STYLE?

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Every decision we make tends to form our life-style.

Some decisions may seem very unimportant. Others extremely important. But each one plays a part.

Maybe you've decided what your life-style should be. Or you're trying to choose between two or three life-styles. But 5
whatever your goal, it's the moment-by-moment decisions that determine what your life pattern will be. If these decisions are incompatible with the goal you've envisioned, what results? Your life reflects the decisions and not the goal.

Decisions Establish Identity

For instance if your goal is to be "one of the gang," to 10
have a good time, you'll make decisions in line with this life-style. You'll spend more money for entertainment. Be more

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concerned about clothes, even jeans with the right patches.

Select friends who are popular and also interested in having a good time. That makes you "one of the gang."

Or you see yourself as a social reformer. Here again you'll make decisions to maximize your involvement or effectiveness along these lines. 5

Or if you've chosen the "good student" life style. To get high grades, you decide to study rather than go to a movie, play cards, have a blast at someone's house. If your daily decisions don't coincide with the life-style of a good student, 10 you find yourself being only a fair one.

So a person's life-style is an outward expression of his moment-by-moment decisions.

Decisions Follow from Values

Really, though, it goes much deeper. Why do you want to be a good student? To get into grad school? Make your 11

happy? Impress others? Because you thirst for knowledge? Or want to prepare yourself to contribute to society? Your decision will be based on your values -- whatever you consider worthwhile.

Notice here that while you express one life-style -- that is, a student working for high grades -- your motives or values may vary. Outward appearance alone doesn't reveal a person's identity. You have to consider the values that are motivating him.

With the reformer, various values may determine his life-style. He may know society's problems and genuinely want to solve them. But that's not always the case. One activist told me privately he was involved because he wasn't making it academically. It was an alternative to studying. He valued the purpose of his group, but this wasn't the only reason behind his action.

Although many people involved in social action are totally

sincere, others act out of frustration or bitterness or because it's exciting or from some other selfish motive.

Decisions Form Values

So our choice of a life-style reflects our values. But the choice of a life-style very often forms our values as well. A girl I know decided to get married during her junior year in college. She was unhappy at her sorority house, and her motive in getting married was to escape this unhappiness and loneliness. I talked to her eight or nine years later. She had three children, she wasn't happy with her husband, and she was having trouble with her in-laws.

Her life-style and values had certainly undergone a radical change. Earlier she'd valued marriage as an escape from loneliness -- a pretty selfish or narrow standpoint. Now she saw it as a commitment that involved many responsibilities. This decision to change life-styles (to get married) gave her a

different perspective, and her values relating to marriage changed.

As I've been describing it, isn't it apparent that we usually look at life -- our identity, our values -- from a material perspective? Don't we generally react to material circumstances, perceiving only the environment the five physical senses show us?

Non-Material Values Described

Suppose, though, we don't want to base our decisions on material externals. What other basis can we make decisions from? Remember, we indicated several reasons why you might work for high grades. One was to please your parents. If the motive is just to keep them from getting angry and cutting off financial support, this would be reacting to material externals.

But if you want high grades to please your parents because you genuinely love them or appreciate what they've done for you, then you're responding to something within yourself, independent of what they might do. This is an inner value system. It doesn't shift every time the mental climate around you changes.

We see many instances of this non-fluctuating value system. We talked 5
about studying hard because you thirst for knowledge. What keeps you from being discouraged if you run into dead ends on a research project? Isn't it persistence within yourself? Also faith that you'll find the answer? What makes you work hard for a social or political cause? Maybe it's unpopular. You get nothing out of it. But you believe in it, you feel an essential rightness about 10
what you're doing. That's what keeps you at it.

Doesn't all this point to values within yourself which exist independent of favorable or unfavorable material circumstances?

These attitudes have several things in common. First, they're entirely 15
mental. You'll never find unselfishness or persistence or conviction in a piece of matter. Second, these values are all perceived through a non-material

faculty. Call it intuition, revelation, insight. But the main point is, it's a mental, not a material, faculty.

Third, because justice, appreciation, and so forth are mental, they're available to everyone, everywhere, at all times.

No material object produces these qualities. No material object can control or destroy them.

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Creative Mind the Source

Here a concept of one creative Mind relates to these non-material or spiritual values. If these values -- unselfishness, persistence, and so on -- are mental and therefore available to everyone, doesn't this indicate that a human person didn't invent or create these qualities? They're values that transcend a particular person or time or place. They must be derived from a universal Mind or Spirit.

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When we accept these values, our identity becomes less related to material things. We see our source as this creative Mind, the producer of every positive non-material quality.

A non-material approach isn't new. It's been projected by some of the great thinkers in history -- Plato, Descartes, Berkeley. But in each instance, the non-material reasoning was carried only up to a certain point.

Christ Jesus' Values

One man went farther, though. A rock opera calls him a superstar. Christ Jesus. He deserves this title because he refused to limit in any way the power of this perfect creative Mind. All of his values he drew from this Mind, this Spirit, which is known as Love. They were not only mental; they were spiritually mental. He said: "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."¹ In other words, he responded only to this higher source, not to

some negative value that didn't flow from the intelligent Mind

And isn't
or Love. ¹ This ~~is~~ why we refer to him as Christ Jesus. ² *Because* ^{He}

identified himself with the Christ -- the ideal manifestation
of this perfect Mind. [?]

As an example of how Jesus patterned his life after this ⁵
non-material spiritual value system, one day ten men with
leprosy called out for him to help them. Now suppose you
happened to come to a leper colony and ten men called out to
you for help. How would you respond? If you were reasoning
materially, you'd probably recall that there's no material ¹⁰
cure for leprosy. You might be extremely sympathetic, but at
the same time you could feel pretty helpless.

Jesus didn't feel helpless, though. He told these men to
go and show themselves to the priests, who legally determined
if a person had leprosy. What happened? The Bible says ¹⁵
that "as they went, they were cleansed."² How did this

healing take place? Jesus identified these men not from their material appearance as lepers and outcasts, but he identified them with the nature of the perfect Mind or Love which we call God.

If this leprosy had been a material condition existing 5
 apart from the men's thought, could it have disappeared without any material treatment? But if it did disappear by simply replacing a material value system with a spiritually mental value system, doesn't this imply that our experience is really our thought objectified and we're not as locked in to material 10
 externals as we may think we are? What does this open up for us?

It means that the justice and satisfaction and happiness and appreciation -- all that's worthwhile and fulfilling in your life -- is as close to you as your thought. To experience 15
 them you only need to change your pattern of thought from a material base to a non-material base, a spiritual base.

Race Problem Solved

Here's an example of what I mean. A man I know, a black man, was working with a large organization on a multimillion-dollar building project. Among other things, he served as consultant on race relations, the project being near a black neighborhood.

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He soon noticed that, with hundreds of workers on this project, there wasn't a single black employee. Now this isn't so unusual because many unions, especially the building trades, have resisted admitting blacks.

This man had been striving to pattern his life along non-material lines. The unions' decision to exclude blacks went against this pattern. They were deciding on a material basis -- skin color.

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He determined to do something. So he called a leader of the black community to see what action they could take to get some black workers employed. He discovered the leader was meeting in New York with his national organization to plan an attack against this procedure of excluding black workers from the building trades; and, as a matter of fact, the direct object of the attack would

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be my friend's organization.

At this point, he could have said: "Well, it's too late." But he wasn't operating on a material pattern. He was confident that the non-material values that flow from creative Mind had an irresistible power to resolve this situation to the benefit of everyone.

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He contacted the man in New York and flew down to meet him. The man said: "We've already talked with the unions. The only thing these people understand is violence!"

Well, my friend finally convinced this leader they should approach the unions again together. When they met in the union office a couple days later, their proposal was turned down cold. The black leader was furious. He said: "I knew this would happen! This is the way it always goes!"

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My friend told him to keep his cool and, after they left, kept assuring him it would work out.

Some people would say my friend was being passive and therefore was achieving nothing. No. He was being very active but in a non-material way.

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Often we equate non-material and passive, but these are not synonymous terms -- at least not in the way my friend was proceeding.

Many people wanted a more violent approach. They felt this was the only thing that would work. But what are you really after in a situation like this? Isn't it to change the pattern of values? Violence doesn't assure 5
changing of values. In fact, in this case, violent acts would be based upon the very value system you're trying to eliminate.

The only way you change the pattern is to tie in with non-material spiritual values. My friend was doing this through the whole experience. He was basing all his thoughts and steps on his deep conviction that an intelligent 10
Mind produces all that exists, that creation is orderly and is characterized by enough love and justice for everyone. He had faith that by continuing to act on this conviction, he would break the material pattern of injustice that had formed.

They made still another appointment with the union office, and this 15
time the union's attitude changed. They were ready to negotiate, and the

negotiations resulted in a willingness to hire blacks. As they left the office, the black leader was almost dazed. He said to my friend, "You know, I'm not a religious man. But something happened in there, and I can't explain it."

What had happened there in the union office? Had my friend, who was a Christian Scientist, hypnotized the union leader so he changed his mind? No. 5

My friend just trusted these spiritual values of justice and intelligence and love so strongly and realized them so fully that they dominated the situation. And since these qualities proceed from the one Mind that has conceived us all, the union people were equally aware of them.

You might think: "That sounds impossible, or at least not very practical." 10

That's what the black leader thought. But it worked, and it will work wherever it's sincerely and rightly applied.

The building project started employing black workers. My friend's organization set up and financed a training program to prepare more black workers to qualify for union membership. The program has been successful. 15

Christian Science Explains Spiritual Pattern

This man faced a problem of race relations and solved it after he had already established a spiritual pattern for his life. But about a year ago, I was faced pretty directly with the question of how to pursue this non-material life-style. I was enrolled in a university class on Contemporary Political Persuasion. We were studying political ideologies, and I presented a paper called "An Ideology of Order." I spoke to the class about the concept of creation as consisting of ideas produced by an intelligent Mind and therefore expressing order and love rather than creation consisting of material factors largely devoid of one intelligent governing Principle.

After class, a girl came up to me and asked, "Where did you get those ideas?" I told her I had read about them.

She said, "What books can I read to learn about them?" I hadn't used the terms God or spiritual in my paper because

I figured with the concept most of the other students had of these terms, they'd be turned off. I couldn't avoid her question about where I'd gotten these ideas, so I said, "Would you believe -- the Bible?"

She said, "Oh, I couldn't read that." So I wound up 5
giving her two books; one was the Christian Science textbook, Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, by Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science. This book contains the basic explanation of metaphysics, the Science of the Christ as practiced by Jesus, and shows how anyone can 10
develop a life-style not determined by material externals.

The whole book challenges material concepts of life and freedom, with their limitation and injustice. As it puts it:
✓ "Spiritual causation is the one question to be considered, for more than all others spiritual causation relates to human 15
progress."³

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The other book I sent her was a book by Robert Peel called
"Christian Science: Its Encounter with American Culture."

Here Mr. Peel describes the transcendentalist movement of the
middle and late 1800's, the mental atmosphere in which Mrs.

Eddy discovered and presented Christian Science.

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He shows how Christian Science meets the pragmatic test
in a way the transcendentalist philosophy did not.

Well, the girl I gave the books to, read them during
Christmas vacation, although she admitted that when she first
saw what they were, she was surprised, to say the least. This 10
spiritually-based life-style appealed to her. She found she
could identify with these spiritual qualities and translate
them into human actions to help others and herself more
effectively. She said to me: "You know, I find for the first
time in a long time, I really like myself."

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This isn't an isolated case. Hundreds of thousands of

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people have found that Christian Science gives them practical guidelines to find the really worthwhile values and to discover a life-style that is deeply satisfying and productive. This, of course, is what happened to Mrs. Eddy.

And she may have felt this need for the pragmatic or 5
practical more than most people because of the difficult problems she faced: early widowhood, chronic invalidism, poverty, and the discrimination against women so strong in her day. She had always felt a closeness to God, and as she came to know Him as Mind and as Love, she realized that whatever emanated 10
from Him must be entirely intelligent and loving. As she realized this, she found answers to her problems. She also recognized this was the identical teaching which Jesus had exemplified and shown to be true through his many healings and restored lives.

She taught others how to derive their values from God; 15
she healed the most desperate cases of disease through spiritual

means alone; and she established a world-wide movement which has improved millions of lives, making her possibly the most influential woman in all of human history. Mrs. Eddy made it possible for anyone who wants, to follow a spiritual life-style.

A Marriage Restored

Take the experience of the girl I mentioned earlier who 5
married in her junior year. She faced problems of disillusionment with her marriage, the demand of raising three children, and continuing friction with her in-laws and husband. She was frustrated, irritable, just plain unhappy.

Her life-style seemed pretty well set. Not much chance 10
for change. Hadn't she allowed a material pattern to build up in her life? Earlier, when she felt lonely and unhappy at the sorority house, wasn't she letting herself be controlled by material values? Of course if the other girls were unfriendly, if she found nothing in common with them, you could say she had 15

every reason to be unhappy and lonely -- that she actually was pressured into getting married because she wanted to exchange an unsatisfying life-style for a different life-style that would solve the problem. She thought that with marriage she'd have someone who loved her and would make her happy.

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Why didn't it work out that way? Because if you look outside yourself and depend upon material externals, you're going to be disappointed. That was her experience. At the sorority house, she allowed her environment to shape her feelings. Why did she think she wouldn't run into adverse environments when she was married? Since she'd allowed this to become her pattern of life, the pattern would repeat itself until she exerted enough effort to change it.

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That point finally came. She'd been learning how these non-material values are the real constituents of our being, that they express the universal Mind and universal Love which

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are our Source. So in her extremity, she decided to turn completely away from material appearances and adopt a radically different life-style.

She told me what helped her most was to think of her marriage as a channel for expressing Godlike qualities. This switched 5 her identity or selfview right around from being controlled by what others think and do to a position of self-determination. She realized she included within herself the qualities of happiness, appreciation, purpose, fulfillment. She saw she could use the events of her life as a vehicle for manifesting these 10 qualities. What she was really doing then was tying in more closely to her source. She was tying in to God, to Spirit, the basis of all real substance. She found the true purpose of her being -- to align herself with this source and express the qualities she derived from it. 15

As a matter of fact, she could have adopted this pattern

much earlier. Her sorority experience could have been completely different. She could have seen even then that she included these qualities of happiness and appreciation and helpfulness. So instead of feeling out of it, she could have used her contacts positively, helping the situation around her. This would have prepared her to become a better marriage partner and feel the strength of her complete identity. 5

She wrote me that when she finally saw the possibilities of this radically different life-style, it was like a light turned on and she felt changed that night. She added, though, that the very next evening, her temper just went wild again. 10

She needed to see that intellectual inspiration alone wasn't enough. She had to translate it into actions.

She's done this, and now she can sincerely, as she put it, "really feel gratitude to my husband for so many things, and as a result I've been receiving so much more, but not expecting it to come from him." 15

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She changed her perspective from seeing herself as a wife, dependent upon her husband, to the non-material perspective of appreciating him but deriving her happiness from the creative Spirit, from God, and so being able to express and share this happiness with her husband and with all those around her.

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Conclusion

Doesn't this really describe the non-material pattern we can apply to all our activities -- studies, job, sports, human relations. We see our values as derived from the unchanging substance of all, from God, Spirit. Then we use our daily events to express these values. This gives us a non-material, productive, satisfying life-style.

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1. John 5:30.
2. Luke 17:14.
3. Science and Health, p. 170.

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