

Through the Lens of The Christian Science Monitor “Then & Now”

The Christian Science Reading Room, Tenth Church LA, presents a photographic exhibition featuring the historic work of Gordon Converse, Christian Science Monitor cover stories and films on the life of Gordon N. Converse.



Gordon Converse Photographs & Monitor Cover Stories



This photographic exhibition looks at the news through the lens of **The Christian Science Monitor**. Focusing on the **“then and now,”** it shows a new twist on an old tale, impelling one to ponder whether or not progress has been made in the ensuing years. **“One seeing is worth a thousand tellings.”** The goal of a Monitor story is to compliment this adage by providing readers with an in depth look at the influences behind a given issue. Through this telling, the Monitor endeavors to inspire people to ask the right questions and make more informed assessments.

As the Monitor’s founder and first editor, Mary Baker Eddy’s mission for the paper was **“To injure no man, but to bless all mankind.”** Monitor journalism - both written and photographic - is still based upon this principle.

Gordon N. Converse, a pioneer in the use of 35mm cameras and natural light, brought his stunning photojournalism to The Christian Science Monitor as their chief photographer for over 40 years. Along with his photographs, a film about his career called **“One Seeing”** is playing at the exhibition.

“As I travel from the Andes to the Himalayas or down into Africa’s Rift Valley, I am constantly in search of positive statements about man - that he can find hope, freedom, happiness, and dignity wherever he might be.”

“If I have succeeded as a photographer, it’s because I have gone to work with an open heart.”

Gordon Converse

The Stories Behind the Pictures



“Bolivian Women with Baby” La Paz, Bolivia 1967

The women in this photograph were reluctant to have their picture taken so Converse focused the camera and his attention on their baby. They soon forgot the camera and enjoyed sharing their sweet bundle. It is easy to see their care for the little one.

Cover: Playing the Aid Game

Cover Story: Playing the Aid Game.

College bound high school seniors make herculean efforts to get into good schools but for most that’s only half of what will be required to launch the next step of their academic career. Finding a program that will sync up with the best financial aid package is key. The five high school seniors featured in this story received meaningful support from their parents, whether they were able to contribute a lot or a little financially.



“Family Camping” California 1966

Between the end of WWII and the mid 1950’s attendance at American parks increased exponentially, from less than 1 million to 62 million visitors annually. The 1960’s saw the greatest expansion of national parks in the U.S. since Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Redwood National Park, where the tallest trees in the world are preserved, was created during this time.

Cover: Powering Down

Cover Story: Americans plan ‘chill’ vacations.

With the parallel roll out of the information age alongside constant advances in the tech world, people are more tethered to their jobs and personal commitments than ever before. As a result, more and more vacationers plan to do absolutely *nothing* in their time off.



“Lyndon Baines Johnson”

This photo of Lyndon Baines Johnson, 36th President of the United States - huddled with advisors and colleagues in an intensely focused meeting - illustrates that for many years politics was the exclusive domain of men.

Cover: Merkel’s Moment

Cover Story: The mind of Angela Merkel.

The Merkel story looks at “The Engineer of Europe” to see “How the German chancellor - a cautious, understated former physicist - has become the most powerful woman in the world.”



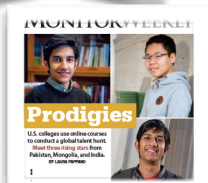
“Shepherd” Kashmir, India 1978

This young man may well have been a member of the nomadic Bakarwal tribe whose members have tended goats and sheep in the northern part of the Himalayan Mountain Range for centuries.

Cover: Prodigies

Cover Story: Finding Tomorrow’s Prodigies

With the expansion of Internet use around the globe American colleges are attracting young talent from more economically and culturally diverse backgrounds through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). The three students featured in this story are from Mongolia, Pakistan and India.



The Stories Behind the Pictures



“School Boy” Hong Kong, China 1965

The boy in this Converse photograph is working hard in school with the tools he has been given - a book, pencil and paper. His determination is obvious by the expression on his face.



Cover: Touch Screen Generation

Cover Story: Toddlers on touch screen: Parenting the ‘app generation’.

“The first generation to use digital technology almost from birth are now toddlers. Parenting the ‘app generation’ involves handling new developmental challenges; experts say there are ways to strike a healthy balance when kids use touch screens.”



“Norman Rockwell” Stockbridge, MA

As the cover illustrator of The Saturday Evening Post for more than forty years, Norman Rockwell was the storyteller who brought into focus current themes of American life.



Cover: America’s Storyteller

Cover Story: Oscars 2013 and Spielberg: The storyteller is part of our cultural DNA.

“Steven Spielberg has not only shaped our fantasies, he’s influenced a generation’s perspective on our culture and history.”



“Silversmith” Baghdad, Iraq 1965

For centuries, crafts people practiced their skills and honed their craft. This photograph shows a silversmith making his living the way his father and his father’s father before him probably did.



Cover: Rise of the Makers

Cover Story: The ‘Maker movement’ creates D.I.Y. revolution.

“The ‘maker movement’ is heralded as a new industrial revolution - combining the spirit of the old shop class with modern tech in community ‘Do It Yourself’ spaces.” Rise of the makers is about Do-It-Yourselfers and community fabrication labs that are cropping up all over the world. Individuals living in proximity to the labs have a variety of ways to become associated with the facilities which provide tools and experienced mentors.

The Stories Behind the Pictures



“Water Tanks” Kuwait 1974

Humankind seems to have a strong need to harness nature and change the landscape to fit its needs. This Converse photograph focuses on innovative water tanks built in the desert near Kuwait in the early 70s.



Cover: Setting Rivers Free

Cover Story: Setting rivers free: As dams are torn down, nature is quickly recovering.

Sometimes, attempts to use innovation to harness nature have unintended consequences. “With the removal of many dams, conservationists are seeing the return of the natural bounty that fed Native Americans and astonished European settlers.” While hundreds of them are being removed because they’re aging and becoming dangerous, people are realizing how much damage dams have done to the habitat surrounding rivers and streams.



Cover: Race to the Poles

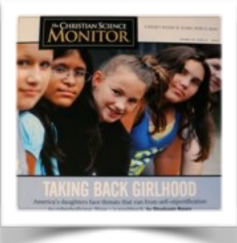
Cover Story: Antarctica and the Arctic: A polar primer for the new great game.

Antarctica and the Arctic are the focus of global hunger for untapped resources - and global warming has helped drive the polar rush. “Race to the Poles is about the surge of different countries to explore the North and South poles - sometimes with the intent of exploiting the resources involved - such as mineral deposits and fishing.” It’s a bit like building the dams all over again. As a side note, “Race to the Poles” mentions that the surface of the moon is better mapped than the Arctic ocean and the area around the North Pole.



“Running to the Light” Needham, MA 1959

One of Gordon Converse’s most famous photos shows his daughter running playfully towards the light, depicting youth, innocence and joy.



Cover: Taking Back Girlhood

Cover Story: Little girls or little women? The Disney princess effect.

Taking Back Girlhood is an important discussion about the themes that are marketed to five year old girls including padded bras and thong underwear. “In today’s highly sexualized environment - where five year olds wear padded bras - some see the toddlers-and-tiaras Disney princess craze leading to the pre-teen pursuit of ‘hot’ looks. Do little girls become little women too soon?”



Cover: Let the Children Play

Cover Story: The games kids no longer play.

“Experts say the more creatively children play, the less lucrative it is for the toy makers. They advocate returning to the games kids no longer play.” The article draws out the importance of the right kind of play for children and illustrates why educators now see make-believe free time and imagination as more than just childish fun.

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