



***“If we would open their prison doors...we must first learn to bind up the broken-hearted.”
(Science & Health with Key to the Scriptures, 366: 30-31).***

The mission of this committee, as stated in its Bylaws, is: “...to share the healing and regenerating truths of Christian Science with inmates and/or patients in local, county, state, and federal penal, correctional, juvenile, mental health, veteran, and other institutions in the state of Missouri” (Article II.1).

Excerpts from Institutional Committee Weekly Fruitage Reports:

Walking with God

I was walking towards the building this morning, praying and turning my thoughts towards God, when I saw a man I recognized smiling at me. Behold, it was one of our regulars from the seventh floor who had just been released! His family was picking him up. He was so grateful to see me, and we hugged! He looked very nervous about being out and staying on the right path; I shared some truths with him, and he smiled and said he knew God was with him. He showed me his Bible and *Science and Health* in his bag and was very grateful he had them with him!! I urged him to find a Reading Room or branch church and find us and let us know how we can continue to help his spiritual growth.

Then at the conference one regular and three men new to Christian Science arrived. The regular shared how he has been transformed by what he has learned of Christian Science. He said that he spent his first few months at the jail attending all religious offerings and that Christian Science stood out to him because our volunteers were so loving and never said anything bad

about other groups or religions--but just focused on how to follow Jesus' teachings. We had a very dynamic conversation about Genesis and Revelation and how Jesus spoke in symbols and taught us how to read those symbols. The men were all very excited about the ideas shared by all, such a fantastic visit filled with hope and inspiration!

Standing Porter

We spent the time sharing ideas about how to combat the many suggestions that God is not present in her life. I had been led to put Psalm 23:1 up on the board, and as we talked, we were able to return several times to the idea that we cannot want--either willfully desire something or think good is lacking. The suggestion that we don't have what we need is really the suggestion that God is absent. The demand to "Stand porter at the door of thought" seemed to reach her, and she was so receptive to Truth (*Science and Health, p. 392*). We returned again and again to the necessity of guarding thought, refusing suggestions of the presence of evil or the lack of good, and replacing them with affirmations of God's

ever presence. Often when we turned to a passage in *Science and Health*, she would say, "I love that book."

Seeing with Spiritual Sense

What a spiritual group! One immediately gave gratitude for the many Christian Science chaplains who have shared about seeing and feeling God's presence, helping them in their spiritual walk. Another added that he was so happy to be seeing with spiritual sense instead of material sense. He exclaimed, "It is a whole new world." One of them, disappointed by his court hearing has been reading *Science and Health*. He was so inspired by the pages describing the trial at the end of the chapter, "Christian Science Practice" and reported feeling a deep sense of peace since then. I drew a simple diagram of the Court of Error and the Court of Spirit, and we talked about how the Christ stops unjust proceedings and lifts us to the Court of Spirit where God is the Judge, the Bible is our law book, and Christian Science defends us. They really liked this. Then we looked at how Jesus responded when he was faced with images of fallen man--the woman with the spirit of infirmity and Zaccheaus. They could clearly see that Jesus was seeing and beholding what God knows. We agreed that the story of Adam and Fallen Man is not our story and that we need to repent, or turn away from that story, and turn to what the Bible has to say about us being upright, whole and free. This led beautifully to understanding that the gates of paradise are not shut.

The Nothingness of Evil

I had a brief one-on-one time with our longest-attending participant, during which we addressed how to handle the sense of depression he was struggling with because

of the postponement of his court date. He came up with his own answer on p. 287: 17-21 of *Science and Health*, which he was able to turn right to! Then two others came in, and we had such an active and rich discussion that it would be impossible to touch on all the points we covered. It came to me to bring up the distinction between Jesus and Christ, which all of them greatly appreciated and were able to refer to Bible passages in support of. When I heard the word "devil" mentioned, I felt we needed to clear the air regarding the nature of evil, so I referred them to the chapter "Animal Magnetism Unmasked," and we read together the middle paragraph on page 103. As the nothingness of evil dawned on him for the first time, the youngest member of the group, with an expression of awe on his face, remarked, "This room should be full!" In other words, everyone would be so blessed to know this. It was a holy moment. We went on to look up and discuss the definitions of heaven and hell in the glossary, and I told them about the prayer that Christian Scientists pray daily for the kingdom of heaven to be established in us.

Listening for Hope

When I began to introduce Christian Science, one woman was excited to say that she had attended Fujiko Signs' lecture last spring and how much she appreciated Fujiko's tender healing message. I told them that I was also there to share ideas about spiritual healing, and I asked them to share inspiration they had found in the Bible. There were some very sweet moments as they related triumphs and some regrets. Some women were struggling with the sense of eternal damnation, but all were so encouraged by the assurance that they could never be

separated from God's love for each one of them and that they could listen for His voice of hope and peace and dominion seen in the first chapter of Genesis. One woman spoke of the frustration she feels, seeing so much gloom and unfairness in the world and justice system. But we considered together the importance of keeping thought listening to what's good and true and has *authority* in one's life. One was truly beaming with joy as she heard me talk about Jesus being able to see evil/error/temptation for what it is-- NOTHING--when he said "get thee behind me Satan"--a place where someone in a real fight would never place an enemy. However, Jesus, knowing God's all-power, could do this with authority.

Finding Purpose and Direction

One of our regulars came in with a big smile. He said he was so happy for all that God was doing in his life to give him a sense of purpose and direction. He said his study of *Science and Health*, in particular, has been so helpful in taking practical steps for his upcoming release. He expressed a desire to find one of our local churches after his release and wants to attend as soon as he can find a ride there. We looked at the exit packet together to show him the list of churches. The other two men (also regulars) came in and we began our conversation by answering the question, who was Christ in comparison to Jesus? The men had lots to share from their own study of the Bible. We read John 14 together and identified who Christ is and what he does, based on Jesus' explanation to the disciples. The men had wonderful questions and insights. The men were very grateful for the ideas shared by all and eagerly took literature.

Turning to the Bible for Answers

Each of the women shared what her idea of God includes, mentioning Life, Love, and the idea of infinite. We then explored the seven synonyms. Two shared experiences of how they turned to God this week and found their answer and evidence of God meeting their need exactly. Another shared her struggle with desiring to know God more deeply and then the distraction of thoughts that turn her away from God. One woman, probably the most regular, shared that she always opens her Bible for answers. Earlier in the week she opened to the story that met her need exactly. She is absolutely certain that she can rely on God to provide the answer to meet her every need and will find it in the Bible. We discussed the importance of daily prayer for ourselves and closed our meeting with reading the Lord's Prayer with its spiritual interpretation from *Science and Health*.

Freedom from Anger

Since both men have attended for some time, I asked them what questions they'd like to look into. One asked why we even see evil at all if it's unreal. We likened it to a mirage, a dream, or a hypnotic state of thought which Mary Baker Eddy calls animal magnetism and spoke of the chapter in *Science and Health* that debunks it. We discussed the importance of drawing that firmament line in consciousness between the real and unreal and of focusing much more on affirming the reality of God's allness than on denying the seeming reality of evil. The man who has been with us for over a year told the other man how much anger he'd been carrying around when he first came to the jail and how Christian Science had completely changed his attitude. We touched on numerous topics, including loving our neighbor, moving

beyond a merely personal sense of goodness, and finding joy in helping others.

Distraught Thinking Overcome

Two regulars came in, and we read Hymn 58: "...eager ears, expectant, joyful, ready for thy right commands." There was an immediate desire to share all the growth one had experienced in turning from "material history" to "spiritual development." He related how his family is seeing the changes in him, and he's also seeing leavening in his family relations, he is and so very grateful for the sense of groundedness and peace he feels as a result of his study of the Bible Lessons. He said he doesn't get distraught thinking about the future anymore and shared a specific healing he had in conference session a few weeks ago with the support of one of our volunteers. We talked about the benefit of identifying situations that needed lifting and healing but impersonalizing them and seeing them only as an opportunity to prove God's authority and might.

"Where Two or Three Are Gathered Together in My Name" (Matthew 18: 20) Gathering #1

At the beginning of this meeting with a long-time attendee who was at a new institution, we were ushered to a small room. The on-staff chaplain said she had to sit outside the door during our meeting. Then after ten minutes she came in and said the rules required that she sit in on the meeting. At first our friend was bothered and said this violated her rights. I was praying acknowledging divine Love's leading and governing all. The chaplain sat in, and we met for another three-quarters of an hour talking in-depth about the Bible Lesson. We addressed how to clear thought of the past.

The ideas of baptism, redemption, regeneration and everlasting Love in the Bible Lesson were exactly what we needed.

Gathering #2

The attendant brought me to the meeting area, and we found out that the charge nurse required someone to sit in on our meeting this week. After the first visit, for several weeks, we have had private conferences. Over the course of the meeting three different individuals sat with us. The first one left after a short time, and another attendant came in. We welcomed her to listen, and she actually pulled her chair up to the table and joined in our discussion about the Bible Lesson. The caregiver shared her own personal experience and love for her daily prayer that she knows enables her to do her work safely and full of love. She shared how she walks her rounds praising God. Then she left and another attendant, a man, came in and we welcomed him as well. He was smiling as he listened to us read the Bible Lesson. I shared a testimony of protection a family experienced during a forest fire. He then shared his own experience with prayer, and how he recognizes the importance of putting God first. He left the room briefly, and the two of us agreed that this was very special to be able to share Christian Science in this way to the three caregivers.

A Witness for Christ

One man, who is leaving in a couple of weeks, expressed so much gratitude for our conference times. He has always brought his Bible, and because he works in the kitchen, he often cannot make it to our services. He prays daily and studies his Bible daily and has found such strength in keeping himself in the armor of God, listening for angel

thoughts, especially with the Michael-like quality of strength to fight when needed (see *Science and Health*, p. 566). He shared a number of incidents where he had to remain calm and prayed to know his fellow inmates would feel the presence of God as Spirit within them. This has defused hot situations. He is known as a witness for Christ, and others ask him about his relationship with God. He says he has learned to turn away from distractions and focus on good. He plans to help his children develop a relationship with God. As we read part of the Bible Lesson together, he often says, "Amen," and "that is just what I needed to hear."

"Big with Blessings"

As I drove in, I was thinking about how the knowledge of God brings blessings and promise. The women who came to the conference were so appreciative and receptive. We spent time talking about God, finding ways to listen to God's Word. They shared the progress they've made through their struggles, which helped them realize they want something deeper, and they loved hearing the opening line of *Science and Health*: "To those leaning on the sustaining infinite, to-day is big with blessings" (p. vii). They talked about how hard it is to be in jail and asked about ways they could resist the wrong and not feel hopeless. We turned to the Lord's Prayer with the spiritual interpretation in *Science and Health*, which they really loved. We considered tangible ways they can work to find peace and healing and to recognize God as Principle and Mind, the wisdom governing and directing them with perfect justice. They said they were looking forward to studying the chapter on prayer. One admitted recently picking up a copy of *Science and*

Health in the common area; she said she didn't know why she took it off the shelf and that honestly, it went under her mattress. Now after the session, she said she feels inspired to read it.

Christ Spirit Expressed

A newcomer who said she hasn't felt connected to other religious teachings because "they take things so literally" along with a regular attendee were at the conference. The newcomer loved looking at the Tenets, especially the first one. She nodded in agreement with different passages that we read, stating that the ideas were really what she had just been praying for that day. She had me repeat twice that Christian Science was founded by a woman; she thought that was amazing, and she listened with interest about all the obstacles Mary Baker Eddy overcame. She loved the definition of "God" and "Church" as found in the glossary of *Science and Health* and was thrilled to have her own copy of the textbook. When our regular related inspirations she had had and her gratitude for these sessions, the newcomer told her how much she appreciated her depth and insightfulness. It was such a tender moment and our regular was truly touched and said how much she appreciated the comment. The Christ spirit was certainly being expressed and honored in our time together. Our regular was the last to leave, and as I wished her a happy week and holiday, we exchanged hugs. She said that she was so grateful to get the hug since what she's missed the most is her mother's hug. We talked about how she can feel that comfort and love right where she is since it is God's love that we reflect, and it's constant and impartial. I encouraged her to look for it and cherish it in others.

Church Membership

Two men came in, one a newcomer and the other a man who has requested a church membership application. I invited him to tell the other man what had attracted him to Christian Science. He said it was the way Mary Baker Eddy's book teaches us how to think as Jesus thought. I'd begun sharing some historical background with the newcomer when two more newcomers arrived! After some further introduction, we began reading the Bible Lesson aloud together, discussing it as we went. We ended up reading nearly to the end of the first section, taking time to pause for clarification on such topics as *grace*, the two accounts of creation in Genesis, the definition of *God*, and the distinction between Jesus and Christ. Much of our discussion was on what Jesus was able to accomplish by so completely letting go of a human sense of ego that he was able to demonstrate his full "at-one-ment" with God. All expressed interest in reading the rest of the Bible Lesson on their own, and two of the newcomers left with copies of *Science and Health*. (I noticed one of them turning down the corner of the page so he could go back to the definition of God.)

Membership Conference #1

This was a one-on-one conference after the service with the man who wants to apply for membership in The Mother Church. I gave him the *Manual* we had on the shelf as well as an application and a copy of the September Journal, which includes a report of this year's Annual Meeting. We went over some of the foundational teachings of Christian Science, all of which seemed very clear to him. Then we spoke of the three daily duties in the *Manual*, and he simply loved the Daily Prayer. He plans to read the

Manual before our one-on-one conference and bring in any questions he has. Having recently completed the GED exam, he expects to be able to devote more time to studying Science.

Membership Conference #2

We discussed the commitment of members to pray for church and also how to respond if he were not admitted the first time he applied. We discussed several *Manual* by-laws and took special note of the chapter in *Science and Health*: "Animal Magnetism Unmasked"--why it's there and how it came to be there. Toward the end of our time together, he testified to a healing that had taken place through his study of *Science and Health*. For a long time he'd had a problem breathing. At one point he'd even had a collapsed lung, for which he was hospitalized. Even after the operation, he really wasn't able to breathe freely enough to engage in strenuous sports. He said that since he began studying Christian Science he can run at his top speed without any difficulty whatever. What a joy to hear this!

Membership Conference #3

He came prepared with questions he'd written out--thoughtful questions on such subjects as man being God's likeness and the spiritual substance of things as well as living beings. Then we spoke about the Tenets, and I pointed him to the platform for recommended, in-depth study. We also spoke of the moral standards expected of a church member--standards he has embraced for himself. He filled out his application, which was mailed downtown Sunday so as to reach Boston by Wednesday.

Christmas Blessings

Our new Mother Church member and our Hebrew student burst into the room with great joy! They enjoyed the whole service, helping me by reading the Bible passages. They really loved listening to the Julia Wade CD *Wonderful* and identifying many of the passages from the Bible Lesson in it. During the Bible Lesson Sermon, they smiled and nodded as we read passages that they had loved during the week. As we finished, we

got into a discussion of the derivation of the word "Comforter." Our student of Hebrew observed that it means *advocate*, but we found that according to Bible scholar Cobbe Crisler, it means even more specifically: "defense attorney." Our student of Hebrew then shared that the word *devil* translates to "prosecuting attorney" from the Hebrew! That caused them to think more deeply about the "accuser" being cast out as we find out we are *not guilty*.

Christian Joint Institutional Committee of Missouri

Institutions Served

St. Louis City Medium Security Institution (MSI) 7600 Hall Street, Saint Louis, MO

Men: Weekly - Monday, *Church service* 3:30 pm

Women: Monthly - 2nd Thursday, *Group Conference* 9-10:30 am

St. Louis County Justice Center (Clayton Justice Center) 100 S Central Ave, Clayton, MO

Men: Weekly - Sunday, *Church service* 1-2:30 pm; Tuesday & Thursday, *Group Conference* 9-11am

Women: Weekly - Tuesdays *Group Conference* 7-8:30 pm

Youth Development Work-

Missouri Hills Home for Girls

Hogan St. Medium Security for Boys

Missouri Department of Health Psychiatric Center -weekly visits

- We work with approximately 1,500 attendees a year, with 10 volunteers needed weekly. Come join us!

We encourage you to participate in this rewarding and far-reaching work that blesses all!

Branch Churches:

- Please consider appointing a CSJIC Rep from your branch church if you have not already done so.
- Budget a monthly contribution to CSJIC to help cover costs of distributing copies of *Science and Health*, the Bible, Christian Science Periodicals, and the weekly *MyBibleLesson* study guide. • Consider hosting a Christian Science lecture in a jail. • Donate new paperback *Science and Healths*, or *Quarterlies* or *Words Only Hymnals* • Collect newer used periodicals for distribution - preferably less than 1 month old.

Individuals:

- Purchase *Science & Healths* to donate to our CSJIC • Prayerfully support our work, and check out our website: www.ChristianScienceMissouri.com • Not sure that you are ready to volunteer in the jail? Come support the work through special projects • Talk to your branch church representative and consider serving as a volunteer! (Once a month helps fill our current commitments and we are opening doors to work with additional Institutions.)

Contact your local Branch Church Representative or CSJICMO@gmail.com

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