



Oct 2015 (Jul, Aug, Sep 2015)

***“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:

Effective Prayer

One man reported that when he was in the same jail ten years ago he was in trouble a lot. He is learning to not react and to respect authority. He mentioned that he feels the guards are expecting him to do something wrong because of his past behavior; I pointed out that that label cannot be a part of his true identity. He said he has been holding on to his true nature for almost a year. After we read and discussed two sections of the lesson, we took the time to “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalms 46:10) through silent prayer and feeling the presence of God's love. The men told me they really appreciated this time as they were in a place where they felt safe and could trust those in the room when they closed their eyes. One regular said he has a difficult time with trust since he has seen behavior in the prison that keeps him always on his guard. He has learned to pray with his eyes open. We talked about different ways to pray and praise God. As I was silently praying what came to me was “His arms encircle me and mine and all.” I had brought a hymnal with me, so we ended with reading "Mother's Evening Prayer" by Mary Baker Eddy. When I entered the building I had been praying to witness peace, and I saw it expressed.

Understanding Baptism

We started off by diving into the lesson. We read from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* about how man's relationship to God is indestructible in Science. We started digging deep into what that meant. I then shared with them Mary Baker Eddy's motto that she had over her door “Do right. Fear Not.” This statement led into a very deep conversation about how to live this statement. . . . We then transitioned into talking about baptism and what that meant. One man said that it was about reforming your thought every minute. He said that in that conference that very minute, they were being baptized because transformation of thought was occurring.

The "Peace that Passeth All Understanding"

The gentleman asked if he will always be a worrier. We turned to the Bible for reassurance that God has not given a spirit of fear but of love and a sound mind. This led into getting a deeper sense of the peace of God - this peace that passeth all understanding (Philippians 4: 7), this peace that is the very presence of God. He then asked about how to move forward when there is not a sense of boldness to share or a feeling that one is not worthy. We looked at Saul's conversion. Much of the story was new to him but it resonated for how God's light is present to show us the right way, how we need to be willing to reach out to those who do not seem receptive; we can use our own hard experiences to help others.

Learning of the Christ

Half the men were new to Christian Science. After brief introductions, I shared my first healing in Christian Science, and they lit up like sparks. One shared how Jesus stated at the end of the Gospel of John, "greater works than these shall ye do." This group of men is the most inspired I have had because of their deep understanding; . . . the central point of our conversation was Christ Jesus and his gospel to reconcile man to God through demonstration of Life, Truth and Love. The men asked wonderful profound questions and through the Scriptures found answers for each other. The men were lighting up - as they understood more and more about Jesus' fulfilling of prophesy and how this impacts their own journey and salvation. We talked about the importance of following Christ in the Way and how to do this unreservedly. Some of their questions related to the Christ idea as having been with the early Patriarchs and how the Scriptures shows the awakening of mankind from matter to Spirit. One was overjoyed when he realized that mankind was the Adam race of men asleep to who God really is. He saw how Christ is the true man as in Genesis 1--in the image of God. Another asked about symbols in the Bible and how Jesus told us to see what others don't see--to see spiritually - and read the signs of the times of what is real and true. One asked if Jesus' mission was to destroy the concept that we come from Adam! As you can see, these men were digging deep! It is impossible to capture in words the light that was sparked in this gathering, but I am not exaggerating when I say that I felt as though we were all gathered on the shores of Galilee after the resurrection and learning of the Christ. It was as though the Scriptures were opened to all of us in that brief meeting. One man said that he had tried all other faiths, and left them after each release from jail. He says that Christian Science is changing him forever, and he will never be the same. He loves Christian Science, and it is the way for him--because we follow Christ and not men or nice preaching. This visit will stay with me for years to come.

Walking the Straight and Narrow

Two men are getting out of jail this week. One has been regularly coming for some time and walked in with his Bible and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. We were glad to hear after our service that the child support case fraudulently brought against him by his twin brother ended with him not being charged. (When I had first heard about this weeks ago, I told him to read the story of Jacob and Esau, which he was not familiar with.) He gets out tomorrow, so I gave him an exit packet. The other man has only been coming for a short time (a case of making restitution), but has been reading the textbook, and is so ready to walk the straight and narrow way for his family; he gets out on Thursday, so I gave him the exit packet also. He also mentioned how thankful he is that his boss is giving him a second chance to come back to his job. The twin who is leaving tomorrow said, everyone deserves a second chance. So grateful for the good that is going on.

"A Cup of Water in Christ's Name"

Each month at Hall Street prison the women express their heartfelt gratitude for the opportunity to share healing, uplifting ideas, and always ask if we can come more frequently. Two of the ten women had attended before, and one came with her copy of *Science and Health*. The women were so receptive as we discussed God's great love for each one of us and talked about the healing truths in the Bible. They could relate to Mary Baker Eddy's struggles and were grateful to hear of her experiences and revelation. Many nods of acceptance and understanding made it apparent that this made sense to them and was a "cup of cold water in Christ's name" ! We looked at the definition of God in the glossary; they really appreciated thinking about the synonyms and how it validated what they knew of God's strength and unconditional love giving them a better understanding of their spiritual identity. They agreed to work from that standpoint and see what was true and not be tricked or tempted to feel separate from God. I related a healing I had this summer where I found my freedom after spiritually challenging the suggestion of flu symptoms. Two women reported having healings when they refused to believe a doctor's predictions for them and instead turned to God's great love. They eagerly took copies of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* and were anxious to read both it and the many copies of the *Sentinel*.

Lecture Sponsored by First Church of Christ, Scientist, St. Louis 27 July 2015

Jon Benson, CS, presented his lecture "Step out of Your Story into Freedom and Healing" at the Clayton Justice Center: Our long-standing regular attendee came in with two others who have not attended. The young man who sat closest to Jon said that he had had issues with drugs in the past, and he was really intent on Jon's talk. The young man who sat closest to me interrupted Jon a few times with protests about what Jon was saying. Jon handled it graciously each time, and, at one point, steered his talk into a testimony of a physical healing he had had after having drifted away from Bible study, etc. Jon related that he was experiencing intense pain in one of his eyes and went to the college infirmary and the doctors told him he had an infection and was going blind in the eye; there wasn't much he could do except relieve the pain with medicine. As a result, Jon turned to God for the first time in a few years, deeply studying the Bible and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* and was completely healed in three days. The same young man interrupted once or twice again, about the veracity of what Jon was discussing--Christian Science, the textbook, etc.--but we both noted that in spite of some of his comments about the book, he left with one in his hand. From Jon's perspective, he could see this young man, even though he wasn't looking directly at him anymore, was listening and taking it all in. The other young man and our regular attendee were grateful for the talk, and this young man walked out with a copy of the textbook also.

Reading *Science & Health with Key to the Scriptures*

Three of the gentlemen who came to the service have been attending regularly for the last several weeks; at the beginning while we were still waiting for other pods to arrive, they talked about reading the textbook and gave gratitude for the practical answers that it is giving them. One said that he is about a third of the way through *Science and Health* and that it is answering many of his questions about the Bible. After the service another reported that he decided to turn to the textbook this week every time thoughts of resentment toward a twin brother came to mind. He said he was treating those thoughts as errors that he could simply correct and move past just like in a math problem.

Leading a "Peaceable Life"

The gentleman who attended the conference brought up the issue of power relationships in the prison--especially with those in authority. We looked at the injunction in II

Timothy that "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."(2:1-4). We talked about understanding the "one supreme, infinite God" as the only authority and that all men stand equal before God (see the second tenet on p. 497 of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*). When we looked at the healing of the nobleman in the lesson--a man in authority, the gentleman said that what stood out to him was that the nobleman kept asking Jesus to be a servant and follow him to his house whereas Jesus was asking the nobleman to look up to the authority of God and that when the nobleman obeyed, the healing came. He added that even though in his own life he had often been labeled as a kid who had issues with authority figures, he had always intuitively known from going to church with his god-mother that God was supreme and infinite and that that was what true authority was all about. He added that he was thankful that wisdom and faith were helping him to cast off a lot of the "mental swaddling clothes" (he loved that term) that he had had in the past when it came to authority issues.

Practice, Practice, Practice

One man entered shaking his head in dismay. I asked him where his smile was, adding that "we are here to claim God's glory." He started to make some negative comments about the Correction Officer in regards to making it difficult to attend the conference. I challenged him to catch the temptation to "be a tool for division." He smiled and sat down. Since one of the four who had come was new to Christian Science, I took the opportunity to introduce God as Principle, directing, sustaining and governing all. We spoke of prayers as lining ourselves up with what is true, and I pointed out that God loves and is directing the Correction Officer, identified early. We talked about the importance of the Golden Rule and loving our neighbor as we love ourselves. I asked them if they have appreciated and felt benefit from our volunteers only seeing/identifying their true nature. They said most certainly, and saw where this question was headed--in having the grace and compassion to do the same for the Correction Officer. I told the fellow who complained that I wasn't intending to pick on him; he remarked "these reminders, to put what I am learning into practice, are just what I need!"

Understanding the Daily Prayer

I handed out the copies of the “Daily Prayer” by Mary Baker Eddy, which launched an active discussion to which all contributed. When we were talking about the word “established” (as opposed to occasional moments of inspiration), I used the expression “stand firm.” One man said that a reverend who had visited them yesterday had used the exact same expression, and they all agreed it was evidence of the government of the one Mind. They were able to answer for themselves what being ruled by divine Truth, Life and Love would be like. Truth: Seeing oneself and others as God created us in Genesis 1. Life: Seeing what Jesus proved in his resurrection. Love: Loving all, even those who are most difficult to love. (These are their answers, not mine. Don't they show spiritual vision? I told them that God had already provided them with spiritual vision, as he had done for all His children.) When it came to ruling out all sin, I asked them who they thought was to do the ruling out. In this case I had to help them see that it's not something WE do--that it's impossible to do as a human being and that when we attempt to we end up as mere perfectionists as the Pharisees did, with a long list of rules and human ego edging God out. They were very forthright about the inner and outer battles they fight as a result of being incarcerated, and we spoke of the need to avoid attempts to correct someone else's behavior until one is truly able to do so with Christly love.

Loving the Unlovable

We had a very active discussion about loving others who may not seem to be lovable (Matthew 5:43-48). This led into a discussion of Jesus eating with the sinners and healing the woman who washed his feet. They said they felt a renewed dedication to love everyone the way Jesus did. The inmate who was setting up the room was locked in with us for ten minutes. He heard our conversation about trusting God to show us our completeness, and he said he was so glad that he was there and had gotten what he needed for his day. Right after he said that, he was buzzed out to work. One gentleman said other men in the pod had told him not to come to Christian Science services, but then God had woke him up early that morning and he found himself at the Christian Science conference. He said he felt the spirit of God right there in the conference as we spoke, and later he took a copy of the textbook with him.

Inmates Request Weekly Services

Two regulars came to the service and were so happy to be there. One said he felt their floor deserved to have four services per month (as much as the sixth floor). He intends to ask the Volunteer Coordinator to see about a service EVERY week. They miss the service on alternate Sundays as they feel how much it lifts them up. I was told by one of his pod-mates that one of the regular attendees of our services and conferences can be recognized by the good ideas he shares with the men in the pod. The man mentioning this is a Muslim, but he really likes what this fellow shares with him. . . . After the service, they were interested in the authenticated healings in the periodicals, and one wanted an exact address for the Jointly maintained Reading Room as it was near his home, and he had never noticed it, but he wants to visit it as soon as he gets out." (Clayton Justice Center officials granted the request for weekly services on the seventh floor, which are now being held, with 4-6 men usually attending.)



Excerpts From a Letter Written by a Grateful Inmate

“I attended many services and one of them was Christian Science. I am strong in the faith given to me, but I lacked understanding. I’ve met several Christian Science volunteers and they all have been very helpful in explaining how Jesus healed and got me to realize the error in my way of thinking.... All of [them] are great speakers, readers and listeners. They show outstanding patience when criticized by believers of a different religion and they all have shown unbelievable kindness and compassion for the men and women they visit at the jail.... To the Christian Science volunteers I sincerely ask you all to consider extending your outreach services statewide into all the prisons in Missouri for the benefit of all men and women.... You speak of Peace, Love, patience, growth, wisdom, knowledge and understanding. You practice and show all the attributes of God and you’ve been a blessing to me....”



Christian Science 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- 6th fl: Sunday, *Church service* 1- 2:30 pm (and preceding Sat of 3rd Sunday)
Thursday, *Group Conference* 9 - 10:30 am

Weekly- 7th fl: Sunday, *Church service* 1- 2:30 pm (1st/3rd) & 3 - 4:30 pm (2nd/4th
Sundays) Conference Tuesdays 9 -10:30 am

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

~Youth Development Work-

Missouri Hills Home for Girls

Hogan St. Medium Security for Boys

~Missouri Dept of Health Psychiatric Center - weekly visits

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



How can I help? 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.

Individual members

- *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

**Brentwood
Clarkson Valley
Creve Coeur
First Church, St. Louis
Eight Church, St. Louis
Kirkwood
Lafayette Square, Society
St. Charles
Town & Country
Valley Park**

**Andy Mehring
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Bonnie Wade
Andy Matthys-Pearce
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