



***“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:

Unconditional Love

We had a heartfelt discussion about forgiveness and the unconditional love that God has for each of us. At the start of the conference, he said, "God is punishing me," and I corrected that idea immediately, explaining that being in jail is an opportunity for him to grow and that God only has good for him. He cried bitterly telling me about his concerns of being placed with those who have committed terrible crimes and boast about them. He has never been incarcerated and plans to never return to jail. I talked with him about forgiving himself for the mistake he made and the people who put him in his position. I shared some of my own experiences with mistakes and making the needed adjustments. I also asked him if he was familiar with Daniel and the lion's den. As he recited the story, we talked about what the lions represented and the lions he was facing. I shared two of the verses from the poem 'Feed My Sheep' and assured him that the Shepherd would wash him clean. This man left feeling better, calm and ready to bring more of the concept of a loving God into his experience. He thanked me and told me how thankful he was that he had a one-on-one conference. I reminded him how blessed I felt based on what God led me to share with him. It reminded me of healings I had not thought of in years. And it made me so grateful that we can witness the immediate effect of unconditional love for our fellow man.

Gratitude for Progress

Before we had completed the service on Truth, one gentleman, who has brought a number of people to our services in the past, burst out with his delight in the Bible Lesson, especially the leaven of Truth! He declared forthrightly how much he had learned through the leaven acting in his own experience, bringing the meaning of so much of the Bible out so that as we read, he felt he could see more and more on a daily basis of how he was to see it and use it in his daily life. He said he has had many healings. He told us he was going to Bonne Terre shortly and would be there about a year during which time, as he was evaluated, they would be working with the Mission Gate people who were finding job possibilities for his return to St Louis and temporary living quarters while they made sure he had really changed his life around and could navigate in a productive way rather than returning to the life he had lived before. Then he would take up his job once more (as a master chef trained at Cordon Bleu School) and return to his family. He is very excited about this progress, and he attributes it to reading *Science and Health* and studying the weekly Lesson Sermon.

Taking Jesus Seriously

One of our recent regulars arrived first and was eager to share his insights with two newcomers. He explained that Christian Science takes Jesus "seriously" and has a book that helps makes Jesus' promise--"the works that I do shall ye do also"--possible. Both newcomers took copies of the textbook at his suggestion and asked a number of questions after the service. One said that he has been going to different church services for years and that what he heard in our service made much more sense to him than anything that he has encountered elsewhere. He took several *Sentinels* and asked about where churches are in the area. Another recent regular is being released on Monday. We gave him an exit packet; he said he is ready to start fresh and wants to attend church, so we figured out which branch might be the closest for him. All came up to give thanks for the service.

Born Again

Many at the service were newcomers. They really liked the Daniel story and found lots of good principles in it for living a better life. They all said that there was such "stupid stuff" going on all the time in the jail that private time to pray was almost impossible. I told them about the fellow from sixth floor and how he used Christian Science despite the ugliness going on often around him; he ended up having his sentence halved due to his change of nature from the angry man to the quiet leader, and they felt that represented the idea of being "born again" that Jesus was trying to teach Nicodemus. I asked them if that could only happen to certain good people, but they heartily disagreed. One man said God didn't just create some of us but ALL of us in His image. Another fellow noted that he was in the same situation as our sixth floor fellow, looking at either a death sentence or life without parole. The fellows agreed that if one man in jail could be born again in his thinking and actions, so could all. Another fellow doubted that he could manage to change his own ways, but he remembered the three Hebrew boys' furnace experience, AND he remembered that the king saw FOUR men in that furnace. All thought the

fourth was the Christ, and I pointed out how many hundred years BEFORE Jesus was born that the king saw the Christ in the furnace. They were flummoxed momentarily, but later when the Lesson got into the eternal nature of all life, they remembered that and realized that was why Mary Baker Eddy concluded that Life was really infinite! The story of the Samaritan woman at the well with Jesus, chosen as a Scriptural selection at the beginning of the Lesson Sermon, made more sense to them as a result. While the service was punctuated with more questions than usual, this allowed them see why we call it the Christ SCIENCE, which they allowed made much sense, though the part about man being spiritual rather than material was challenging for them. They all agreed that if it was in the Bible, they believed it, and they felt they got a more logical picture of what the Bible says about eternal life than they had before.

Finally, before we finished, a man who had initially seemed sullen, read the last Bible citation, so everyone had read by the end! They all said they enjoyed hearing a Christian Science service, and by the close of the service, they took it very seriously and vowed to return. They were certainly enthusiastic that there was hope for them in having their thoughts and lives reborn. They loved the peace of mind, hope, harmony and joy they found in the readings.

"The Sovereign Power to Think and Act Rightly"

Two of our regulars came. One has a court date on Friday and wanted to talk through how to do things right. He felt in the past he had spent a lot of time "serving the devil." I shared the passage from *Pulpit and Press* 3:7-9 about the "sovereign power to think and act rightly." We focused on the idea of the Kingdom of Heaven and what reigns in thought. We read the story of Elisha from the first two sections of the Bible Lesson and noted Elijah's absolute trust in God's care no matter what the situation looked like. They shared clear insights about how material streams dry up, but God can always be counted on. When we read a citation in the chapter on "Prayer," one of the gentlemen shared that the first few pages of the chapter on "Prayer" are his favorite part of the textbook.

Effective Prayer

Five men came in from three of the pods, one carrying his Bible and *Science and Health* under his arm. He came in eager to testify to the power of prayer. Last Sunday he had come and shared with the volunteers that a family member was in a coma and was not expected to recover. He said that he had asked those there that Sunday to pray with him for her. He said he knew that God was in charge and would take care of her. His sister later woke up and is now happily at home. He wants her to read *Science and Health* herself. We rejoiced with him. He was also the man who shared with us that others in his pod are eager to read *The Christian Science Monitor*. He plans to share this week's Bible Lesson with someone who has challenged him about attending Christian Science services. They all commented that they appreciated the service.

The Power of Faith

A lively bunch of thirteen attended this conference. The first question asked was, "What is Christian Science?" I shared the Tenets, the textbook, as well as some background about Mary Baker Eddy. One individual who has attended conferences before shared some of the things she remembered about Mrs. Eddy and her work. I wrote on the board the Golden Text: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" to use as a launching point of our discussion. All of them talked about ways in which they are seekers of the understanding of God's power, grace and love with them. I asked them to share what they thought of when they hear the word "God." The answers were beautiful--revealing the deep faith and hope they have found in knowing God. One woman dropped to her knees and praised His name! We were able to share together two sections of the Bible Lesson, including the account of the woman at the well and the healing of the

centurion's servant, and we discussed the power of faith, the irresistibility of Christ, Truth, and the power of divine Love, including and blessing all. We closed by sharing gratitude and then said the Lord's Prayer together.

Everyone Blessed

The one attendee was a regular, so we dove right into the Bible Lesson, digging deep into many of the passages. We worked on how to live the passages we were discussing and how to pray about things that occur in the pods. He stated that he was really working on declaring the truth about things out loud as well as really working with individual passages. He really loves the Sermon on the Mount and likes the idea of reading it every week and practicing it. He discussed how our conferences have really helped him, changing his perspective on things and teaching him how to dig deeper into knowing God. He said he had read the Bible before, but the *Science and Health* has given him so many new perspectives on things. He is really seeing how he can take what he is learning and apply it. We did discuss a bit about his case. He was saying how he felt the prosecutor and judge were mountains he needed to move. I said that instead of seeing them as mountains to move, that he could see that they too are children of God and that they too are being blessed. When we see everything unfolding in God's timing, we know that we are not the only ones being blessed, but that everyone is. He pondered those thoughts and really felt that they could be helpful. The conversation was consistent, uplifting, and full of discovery. He did mention that he is sometimes given a hard time by the men for coming to the Christian Science conferences, but what is interesting is that they made sure he knows when the conferences are announced. He also said that he thinks the guards see the good that comes from his attending our conferences.

Lecture at the Clayton Justice Center
by Helosia Gelber Rivas CSB
Sponsored by First Church of Christ, Scientist,
Town and Country

The two men who attended are very new to Christian Science. For one man this was his second time with us. The other man has visited a couple of times before. They were so engaged with the lecturer as she asked them to read from *Science and Health* and to answer a few questions along the way. Before beginning her lecture, she answered questions that one of the men had about nursing and Christian Science. This was a tender encounter of such love; the message on respect benefited us all. As I listened in this intimate setting I felt the presence of the healing Christ. A key point made was that all of us commune with God all the time. At one point she spoke of our purity and compared it to honey that cannot be contaminated. She spoke of each of us as God's sweet spiritual ideas. I watched as the one fellow broke into a big grin and said, "I love that." So did I. One man took copies of the *Christian Science Monitor* that he wanted to share with his cellmate. They expressed sincere thanks for the message that was shared with them. I felt each of us was truly blessed by this experience and that it can continue to bless this community.

New Church Member

This was a prearranged one-on-one conference with our new Mother Church member, who is full of joy and enthusiasm for what he's leaning in Christian Science. He's really staying with the thought that God is All-in-all. He was thrilled to find the same idea in the Bible as well as in *Science and Health* because it helps him when sharing with others who ask him about Christian Science. He wanted to know if we had Bible discussion groups or mentors, thinking of when he expects to be released--about a year from now. He was delighted to hear about class instruction and learn how to search for a teacher. I shared my February *Journal* with him (even though I hadn't finished reading it!) because of the outstanding article on unmasking the lie of evil. He expressed so much gratitude for the kind of love we've been giving him because he can feel that it's really the reflection of God's love, which means everything to him.

Sweet and Uncontaminated

The two men who came to the conference were eager to share. The one man brought both his Bible and *Science and Health* along with a pencil so he could take notes. I had the poster from the lecture on Sunday "You Deserve Respect" on my cart. One man spotted it right away, and as I was showing them the poster and sharing some of the ideas that Helosia Gelber Rivas had shared, he started to cry, saying that God had answered his prayers. He explained that he had kept his cool with a man that very morning, who had treated him in anything but a respectful way. He had kept his cool even though he wanted to slap the man and would have done it except he knew that was not what God wanted him to do, which his study of the scriptures along with our textbook has taught him. As we turned to the Bible Lesson and read the verses in the Responsive Reading, he was overcome again with tears of gratitude. We had a good session focusing on just how much we all are loved by God as his perfect children--sweet and not able to be contaminated or spoiled in any way.

Discovering the Textbook

After the service, one newcomer said he had attended because he had found a copy of *Science and Health* in his pod library. He said he had felt as though the book was calling his name when he saw it on the shelf and that when he started reading it, it was hard to put down, especially the first and last chapters: "Prayer" and "Fruitage." When he learned that the *Sentinels* on the table included current testimonies of healing, he took as many copies as he could (about eight or nine). He is leaving the jail soon and eager to share the textbook and *Sentinels* with his wife and family.

Practical Ideas

After the service, one of the men mentioned several times that he can't comprehend why more people don't respond to Christian Science, as it gives him a much better sense of his sonship with God and is so clearly about the Christ. He also said that he has been using what he's learning from the Bible through our services to help him stand firm when dealing with a difficult man in his pod. He also asked to take two extra copies of this Bible Lesson to share with men in his pod.

Lessons in Listening

Six men arrived for the conference; one had attended before. He had brought his copy of *Science and Health* and contributed affirmatively while I gave some introductory explanations to the others. In fact, at one point he said, "I love Christian Science." The others all listened respectfully and several appeared very much interested in what was said, particularly about their ability to express God, good, wherever they are and the need to let go of the human ego in order to let God into your life. One of them asked how to hear what He's telling us, and all agreed on the importance of shutting out the clatter and letting Him take over and wake us up from the mortal dream. I introduced them to the seven synonyms and gave them suggestions on how to work with them. I told them this week's Bible Lesson was the first of six devoted to those synonyms, and I noticed that all of them took their copy with them. After the others had left, the one who'd expressed his love for Christian Science stayed behind. He wanted me to read a letter he'd written to the authorities in hopes of being treated justly. I told him I didn't think it was my job to get involved in the human details but that I'd be glad to pray for him. Before he left, we paused for a few moments to affirm his eternal connection with divine Principle, Love.

A Higher Sense of Life and Love

Three women attended last night's conference. One has come quite regularly, and she had encouraged one of the other visitors to come and find out what Christian Science is all about. All three women were grateful to know of God as Love, and as the conversation unfolded, we shared the Bible stories of Nicodemus and being born again, as well as the Prodigal Son. All three women talked about their desire to live a life free of feelings of guilt, and we talked about how these desires spring from God's angels calling us to a higher sense of life and love. Like the prodigal, when we turn to God, he runs to meet us and restore us. The two newcomers took copies of the Bible Lesson, and one took copies of the Bible and *Science and Health*. The other said she had seen copies of *Science and Health* in the pod and would use those. All three women mentioned how much they appreciated the loving atmosphere of the Christian Science conferences.

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

| | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Brentwood | Andy Mehring | amehring@gmail.com |
| Clarkson Valley | Melody King | melodiarey@gmail.com |
| Creve Coeur | Lois Marquardt | loismarquardt@sbcglobal.net |
| First Church, St. Louis | Bonnie Wade | bonnie.wade@gmail.com |
| Eight Church, St. Louis | Andy Matthys-Pearce | andymp7@gmail.com |
| Kirkwood | Susie Getzschman | getzschs@gmail.com |
| Lafayette Square Society | Andrew Frager | andrew.frager@gmail.com |
| St. Charles | Bettie Hinthorne | hinthornes8@att.net |
| Town & Country | Pamela Greiner-Moulton | pamelamoulton@gmail.com |
| Valley Park | Lynn Tarnow | ljht88@sbcglobal.net |