

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE COMMITTEE ON INSTITUTIONAL WORK IN CALIFORNIA

Selected Chaplain and Corresponding Chaplain Fruitage Reports April – June 2024

Corresponding Chaplain: I continue to write to 13 men in 3 different states. Two new referrals came from a fellow who I have been writing to for a year. He has demonstrated a growing interest in Christian Science, has shared *Science and Health* and given a copy away, has shared the joy of the Bible Lessons with other fellows, and has asked that two of his incarcerated friends start receiving my letters and Bible Lessons. Letters I receive often state how the Bible Lessons have met a particular need as they are read and studied.

Chaplain: One fellow described a healing experience where he was doing janitorial work in the kitchen, and two guys started ribbing him, tempting him to react with anger. Instead, he quickly turned the situation around by saying, “God bless you,” and he used a sense of humor to help diffuse the situation. In the past, this man states that he would have reacted with anger and either kept brewing over the anger or reacting with angry words. This time he was able to pause and let God show him the way, by blessing the two guys and using humor.

Chaplain: Two Christian Science lectures were held at HDSP in Susanville on Friday, April 26. Nate Frederick’s lectures were rich in spiritual ideas on Christian Science, prayer, and healing, with stories of healing backed by deep metaphysical thoughts from the Bible and *Science and Health*.

One lecture was held at A-Yard with a small group, which led to very deep discussions. The topic of *good versus evil* was of interest and resulted in a lively conversation. All of these men participated in the discussions and readily took the *Science and Health* textbook and CS literature available. They stayed as long as they could to ask further questions and expressed the desire to sign up to join the regular CS services.

The afternoon lecture at HDSP B-Yard was well attended. Again, the lecture from Nate resulted in a lively time of questions, discussions, and an eagerness to pick up the *Science and Health* textbook and CS literature. The men stayed for a long time after the lecture in earnest discussion. Several more men spoke to the CS Chaplain about his visits on Tuesdays.

The lecture on April 27 at NNCC in Carson City had a large crowd of men in attendance, as the staff at NNCC did an excellent job of sharing the information and getting sign-ups. The lecture by Nate Frederick was spot-on and there were many questions and even testimonies from individuals who had experienced healing through prayer. There was a mad dash to the literature table where the men took all of the *Science and Health* textbooks, a few Bibles, and all of the CS literature; several had to sign up to receive the textbooks at a later date, as we had run out! Several men said they wanted to attend our weekly Thursday CS services and one fellow said

he had been praying for this kind of Bible service and that he is delighted to be able to attend the weekly CS sessions.

It is absolutely certain that there will be significant fruitage to share as the weeks and months progress, as the men at both facilities in Susanville and Carson City appeared deeply moved by the ideas of the CS lectures and many expressed the desire to attend the CS chaplain services. All of the *Science and Health* textbooks were passed out, so even more fruitage will be demonstrated as the men read through this wonderful book.

Chaplain: An incarcerated individual of 42 years sought me (Christian Science) out 9 months ago and requested CS prayer treatment. As he put it: “I am looking for the light.” He meant he was looking to a clear path to parole. Since treatment, he has separated himself from the (racial) Odinist practice and has devoted himself solely to a serious study of the Christian Science healing ministry. A visible transformation of inward character has occurred, and with that, application to a 4-year prison program that trains candidates to become youth counselors upon completion. This program will require his utmost stamina to pass. I feel he has what it takes — proving how a great wrong can transform to the highest right as a beatified conception. For honest seekers, that is the way of Christian Science.

Chaplain: A man who no longer drinks “pruno” (prison wine) told me he was making it for others as a way to trade for essential items, such as deodorant. We talked about how happy he has been since he stopped drinking pruno, and that he can support others’ freedom from drinking it. He decided he will find a more productive way to be able to trade, such as offering to do laundry. This positive change is being noticed—he was selected by the sergeant to be the representative for his dorm. A deputy who he knew from his previous housing saw him recently and was surprised he no longer drinks pruno. His response was, “I’m a changed man.” I gave this man an application for Embraced:Fully. Also, one of the men was excited to tell me how he has started saying “no” when offered drugs or cigarettes. The first time he refused it was hard, but it has gotten easier each subsequent time. He attributes his strength in saying “no” to his renewed focus on God.

Chaplain: One incarcerated woman who attends our CS services was having the longtime, stable wing of her dorm vacated and no one knew when or where they were being moved. This is stressful for those who are incarcerated—to have no input or choices. So we prayed and talked about Jesus’ promise, “In my Father’s house are many mansions . . . I go to prepare a place for you.” We also talked about living and moving in Spirit, God, and that all relationship is caused and governed by Love. A week before this, another large and intimidating incarcerated woman had asked her to assist her with a task somewhat related to her job to assist mentally challenged incarcerated individuals, but it was a task which was both considered dangerous and unhealthy. We prayed through this as well and talked about the qualities of a Christian Science nurse and how there is a law of God which would lead her with wisdom and safety in how to respond. She was never alone. Part of the challenge is that no caring supervisors seemed to be available before this event was to take place, but we mentally supported that God’s care and government were always available and are reflected by man. When she arrived back at her dorm after the service, unexpectedly the staff supervisor of the mentally challenged individuals was in her day-

room. They were able to discuss the task, and the CS attendee decided to go ahead with the assistance and pray through it. The task went without a hitch and the CS attendee expressed such gratitude to God that she went ahead and gave the loving assistance. During the next week all her roommates were jockeying for room assignments with much speculation, but this woman refused to do that, simply trusting that God was preparing a place for her, and that she lived in the kingdom of God. There was a room she thought could be a good one, but because she required a bottom bunk, the woman in that space would not be gone by the time she needed to move. However, another woman in the room offered to move to a top bunk temporarily until the woman in the bottom bunk left. It just so happened that the staff person who needed to approve the move was the same staff person the CS attendee had interacted with about the unpleasant task, and her willingness to provide that assistance had impressed this staff person and she readily approved the move. The CS attendee expressed such gratitude for God's care and trustworthiness and that we don't have to "make things happen," but only to love and trust God. She said it was the best room she had ever had, very quiet with considerate roommates. We rejoiced together!

Chaplain: I got the idea of "Vivid Vision" by a recently paroled individual I had been working with as a CS Chaplain for several years. He had written out his "Vivid Vision" as a pre-release exercise. The way I use the idea is to first state one's devotion. One's devotion is between them and God. My stated devotion by example is the Christian Science healing practice. That devotion in essence is universal in its adaptations and bestowals. Secondly, one states their devotional goal, that is to say, something specifically achievable. My stated goal by example is to serve as a Christian Science Institutional Chaplain. And then within this model, one states the 7 prioritized steps they would need to arrive at their stated goal. For example, to become a CS Chaplain one needs to be class taught in Christian Science. Secondly, they would need to be sponsored by a CS Branch Church, etc. So I tried this with the men I work with at the prison chapel. I related this to the statement in Science and Health (p. 259): "...lifted their lives higher than their poor thought-models would allow." This gives direction to the men. Something to strive for. Within this context we apply the spiritual passages of the CS Bible Lessons and speak directly to those applications at our next service time, much like a CS testimonial meeting.

Corresponding Chaplain: An incarcerated man with whom I've been corresponding for about five years was recently released (after 11 years) because, after an appeal, the charges against him were dropped. He was a "returned citizen" for a brief period, but had another charge pending, so is now back in jail, trying to make bail. He is continuing to share Christian Science with other incarcerated men, however, just as he did in prison, and has a small group who regularly read the Bible Lessons with him. He received the Bible and Science & Health our Committee shipped to him and is very grateful to have his books again. He remains steadfast to being a loyal student of Christian Science and is such an inspiration!

Chaplain: Events at this prison continue to encourage and surprise me. Our Community Resource Manager created and hosted the first-ever-in-California "Fair Event" in the yard, featuring over 100 volunteer attendees from organizations that assist incarcerated individuals in re-entry into civilian populations. I was delighted to assist our church's next-door neighbor, Paving the Way Foundation, an organization providing job training in construction, carpentry,

and forklift certification. As a chaplain, I was happy to have a Christian Science poster on one end of the table, and wore my chaplain badge. It was estimated that over 600 men in A yard (the medium security yard) attended this fair during the 6 hours that it operated. I was visited by some of our regular church service attendees and talked with some new people interested in spirituality. Note: If an individual attends a church service of another denomination, they are not allowed to attend our service. However, we are allowed to mail articles to them. Several signed up for this and wished they could attend our service also. The men must choose one denomination for their church services. I was happy to mail out spiritually encouraging articles to the men who signed up with me at the fair and I continue to mail out the weekly Bible lessons to our attendees who do not yet have regular subscriptions. I had an interesting exchange with an incarcerated man at the fair who, when someone asked, "How are you?" answered, "Terrible." He answered this with a smile. I had the opportunity to have a conversation with him a bit later and told him of God's love for him. We discussed God's grace, and the love of Christ Jesus for everyone, and Jesus' example of love expressed. I told him of our church service and invited him to come to learn of God's love for him and all the people there at the facility: those incarcerated, volunteers, and staff members. I had fliers available for the men to take with them, so even if they did not stay to chat with me, they have the information for our services. I look forward to our next church service to see who might attend! This was a wonderful experience, and with all that the knowledge of Christ Jesus and the love of God bring to these individuals, I pray daily for the uplifting of each individual at this facility.

Corresponding Chaplain: "It is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works." (Psalms 73:28) It is such a delight to write to these dear ones, and to share God's glory! Since I served as a chaplain in a local jail, in addition to writing to two incarcerated men, I met a man who was released in December. Witnessing the spiritual growth that he has exhibited is glorious! He is attending church services, both Sundays and Wednesdays, worked both with and for the grounds committee to remove the weeds in our church yard, and attends the Friday Bible studies. The men at church are taking him under wing and have included him in their "Men's Church Clean Up." He misses being included in his family, who actually live in the same town, but all he knows is we are his family now!

Chaplain: One man was feeling concerned about his case. We talked about what God knows of him, which is that he is always an innocent child of God. I carry copies of CS Sentinel articles with me in my bag, and felt led to share with him "Our Alibi" and "It Never Happened!" He and I have wonderful conversations about passages from the Bible Lesson that stand out to us.

Chaplain: I went 5 times to the Juvenile Hall unit this month. The first three weeks I had one attendee. I asked God why only one person appeared interested in learning about Him. God's answer came in the words of Jesus, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." I realized I didn't need to be concerned about how many were attending, but could be grateful to be serving God in whatever way He desired. The first week the individual and I made a list of topics he wanted to talk about. That week he wanted to start with "loyalty." The next two weeks we covered the "Garden of Eden" and "forgiveness." Other topics on the list included "lust" and "envy." Since these are two of the seven deadly sins, I was inspired to start a 7-week course which will cover both the sin and the corresponding heavenly

virtue. The topic chosen for the first week was “lust/chastity”; 5 youth participated. We read and discussed the Bible stories of Joseph and Mrs. Potiphar (Gen 39:1-20), David and Bathsheba (2 Sam 11:1-27), Samson and Delilah (Judges 16:4-30), and Jesus’ comments on adultery (Matt 5:27-28). For the second week, the group picked “envy/kindness”; six youth and 2 counselors participated. Bible stories read and discussed were Joseph being sold into slavery (Gen 37:1-36), Cain and Abel (Gen 4:1-16), and the Prodigal Son – especially the older son (Luke 15:1-32). What do these stories mean to us? Like Abel, we give God our “first fruits” – pray in the morning, and stay with our prayers throughout the day, rather than realizing at bedtime we haven’t prayed, and then saying something quick to check the item off our to-do list. Like the older brother to the Prodigal parable, we don’t need to envy someone else’s supply since God is infinite and supplies good to all of creation. “All that I have is thine.” There isn’t a limited “pie” that gets divided up such that some get more than others, but an infinite supply for everyone. For the “kindness” aspect, we covered Jesus’ healing of the woman bent over for 18 years (Luke 13:10-13) and his instructions to love our enemies (Matt 5:43-48). WHY would we do that (love our enemies)??? To be the “children of your Father which is in heaven.” Oh, THAT’S why! For our next week, they selected the topic “wrath/patience.”

Corresponding Chaplain: A man incarcerated in jail has discovered that we can still connect in real time, even though I live too far away to visit him in person, by calling me at a set time each week in the Santa Barbara Reading Room. We’ve been having fruitful conversations which have built on the letters and materials I’ve been sending him, and the man has been using the ideas to bring greater harmony and peace to his incarceration. Recently he reported healing a discordant relationship between two other men, as well as an unresolved family issue.

Chaplain: I have been enjoying my work at the prison. The thought that each one is a son of God seems a new concept to many. We have discussed the various traits that we associate with the words “father” and “mother.” Mrs. Eddy’s concept of God as Father and Mother has been received with some surprise by a few men. One week we examined the many attributes of God that they can connect to that will assist them in their daily lives. Coming up will be a Spanish Christian Science Bible study group in B yard. The individual interested in this meeting learned yesterday that Christian Science is not Scientology. This is a common misconception. I expect a full classroom in the chapel for this new endeavor, and look forward to the opportunity to study the Bible with Mrs. Eddy’s insights and references. Following the leadings of Christ Jesus, we can never go wrong! It is a joy and privilege to do this work.