

# CHRISTIAN SCIENCE COMMITTEE ON INSTITUTIONAL WORK IN CALIFORNIA

## **Selected Chaplain and Corresponding Chaplain Fruitage Reports October - December 2024**

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***Corresponding Chaplain:*** An incarcerated individual with whom I corresponded for over 4 years was recently released on bail. Embraced Fully, an Angel Team, and a Christian Science mentor have been very helpful to him. Since his release, he has gotten a driver's license, a car, an apartment, a job, and most importantly, membership in the San Juan Capistrano Church. The members welcomed him with open arms. While incarcerated, he shared Christian Science with countless others, and now he finally is able to attend church and give testimonies. He is so grateful. As he often wrote, and still says, "God is good, all the time!"

***Chaplain:*** One incarcerated man that I've visited at the jail for three years reported to me in early December that he'd had two healings that were significant to him. He injured his shoulder during a workout and was very uncomfortable. Seeking a healing message, when he returned to his cell he opened his Bible to the New Testament. He began to read of Jesus' healings in Matthew, then Mark, and on through Luke and John. He was so inspired that by the end of doing that, he was completely healed. He said once he started reading the Gospels he couldn't stop. Another time, he tweaked something in his back. He said his thought went immediately to the ideas he'd worked with before, and within a very short time he was healed. He said it was almost immediate—he didn't even have to pray. We talked about how wonderful it is that God knows our need before we ask him. He is a very dedicated student of Christian Science and the Bible and helps many of the men in his pod find peace and healing.

I had a meaningful visit with a new individual at the jail who very much wants to be free of alcohol and drug addiction. He's hoping to get into a program upon his release soon but is concerned that when he gets out he'll get back in to his old habits with the same people and end up back in jail with no hope of breaking this cycle. Praying to know how to share something that might be of help to him, I had him hold up the palm of his hand and pretend there was a compass in it, a spiritual compass. A spiritual compass always points to God and that compass can't be lost or broken; we always have it. Because it points to God, it points to good choices, to individuals who are true friends and helpers to everything good. As we talked, he kept "getting out" his spiritual compass and telling me it was pointing to God. I love that this simple idea seemed to resonate with him.

***Chaplain:*** My second visit to the jail just before Christmas was attended by many regulars, one of whom repeatedly says the Christian Science textbook has been an amazing help to him. We had a Bible lesson focused on Christ Jesus' message that we are the perfect, beloved children of God, knowing ourselves and others through the lens of divine Love. The men presented the many challenges of life as potential obstacles and we then focused on how the practice of Christian Science applied, and the nature of prayer as a transformative act of seeing.

The men are gaining happy confidence in their ability to focus on the present spiritual wholeness of themselves and all others.

**Chaplain:** A man whom I've met with for many weeks greeted me during an interview by telling me of his decision to be happy, regardless of the outward circumstances. We discussed how our "home" (consciousness) is built on the rock, and can't be swayed by rain, wind, or flood (external circumstances). A great example of this was when Paul simply shook off the serpent that had fastened on his hand when he put a load of wood on the fire, and another time said, "None of these things move me" (Act 20:24). One week the Bible Lesson included the parable of the men called to work in a field. A takeaway from the parable is that we all get the same "full" reward, regardless of when we start our Christ-directed journey. This was encouraging to a man who has just recently started studying the Bible. Another week I shared inspiration that came from my daily Bible reading (Ill John 1:11): Those who are doers of evil aren't evil, they just haven't yet seen God!

**Chaplain:** I made my usual 2 monthly visits to the prison – each an all-day affair. I was encouraged to find that one service sign-up list had grown from 2 to 8 since my last visit. For new sign-ups I always allow for time to introduce ourselves and state what brought us to the chapel table and what we hope to receive from our time together. For myself, I speak on behalf of the Christian Science healing practice, therein to the essence as described in our mission statement: To reestablish primitive Christianity and the lost element of Christ healing. I do also speak to the availability of prayer treatments upon request, one-on-one, and in that offer, I stress the confidentiality of the relationship. — One new sign-up revealed that he was deeply involved with the Mexican Cartel, but that he is here because he is simply tired of it all. You can tell—it was in his eyes—he was looking for that cup of water that is spiritual sustenance, the revealing of unconditional Love, that is the Principle, the Soul of Christ healing. I spoke to the Divine Seed that is within us all, as Jesus spoke to omnipresence of God (LOVE) within us, and added, before even we were born. And from this seed we are free born. A great smile formed on his face. I would say, the face of free born innocence, like that of an infant new born. Often I equate the face of God with the face of an infant. — This is what is so amazing in our chaplain encounters, the receptivity of the Word, and the witnessing of how a great wrong can transform into the highest right in the twinkling of an eye.

**Chaplain:** A large group of men came out, filling the room, and we looked at the origin of Christian Science—the practical, provable, coherent, experiential understanding of God and man that Christ Jesus shared with all he encountered. That he restated the 10 commandments as two, and that by following his example, living by those two commandments, we are freed of confusion from the temptations we encounter. We together took steps to follow God's first commandments, and as that is essentially a transformative prayer, the men began to talk about how they understood that the temptations to violence or theft or drug induced euphoria were like mirages, that they look like pathways to desirable good, but always disappoint, and that their desire to live as expressions of Love was always present. One man pointed to the textbook and said he had a blue one and it was really helpful to him. He asked me about a local church and said he was planning on going there when he was released.

We talked about the nature of Divine forgiveness, which renders us free each moment from sin, and one of the men talked about how he had learned to forgive, just letting go instantly of feelings of provocation, acknowledging that starting a fight was in the end useless. Later, as I left the pod, a deputy thanked me for coming, and I commented that it was self-evident that we are all able to reflect the love and peace of God. He replied saying that he encourages the men all the time to avoid useless conflict, and I in turn thanked and congratulated him, telling him I noticed a man using his same words to describe his reasoning in rejecting temptations to conflict. He beamed, and said that his purpose was to help the men find a better way to live.

***Corresponding Chaplain:*** I am now writing to just one incarcerated individual in prison and visiting another one each week in the county jail. The woman in jail, who has not seen her newborn yet, thought she would be posting bail, but that has not happened yet. I reminded her and the individual in prison that each has all their needs met: their wash, grocery shopping, cooking, dishes, all their needs are cared for. Their job is to do as a monk would, and use this time to get closer to God.

Among other thoughts, I shared with them a copy of Kim Crooks Korinek article from the June 2022 issue of The Christian Science Journal, entitled, “A healing lesson on ‘what never happened.’” In it Korinek refers to a 1941 testimony:

“When we reached the home of the practitioner, he [my husband] wanted to tell her how [the copperhead moccasin snakebite] occurred. She told him not to talk about it, because it had never really happened. She said, ‘If a ray of sunlight were pouring through the window onto the floor, and dozens of serpents were striking it, they could never harm the ray of light, and man is as incorporeal as a ray of light.’ We did not discuss it further, and it was as if it never happened” (Fannie W. LaRoy, Sentinel, August 16, 1941).

With just a short time to speak to the young woman in jail, the vision of “a ray of sunlight on the floor can’t be struck by a dozen serpents” was a good visual to hold onto. A couple weeks ago she was bullied and struck by two other women. She struggled with “not being a snitch,” and understood and found the idea of “it never happened” so comforting.

Here’s an update about the man whom I was previously visiting in the jail who was released in December 2023. He is working hard at establishing himself, with the help of food stamps and the kindness of a friend who is allowing him to sleep at his house. Our church is hiring him to blow leaves from our garden, driveway, and sidewalks each week. Last week he attended church, and his mother attended too, for the first time. She told me that for the first time in 30 years all of her children and grandchildren came to her house for Thanksgiving dinner! She said, “It’s all because of this,” and pointed to the Christian Science Bible Lesson that I had just given to him, sitting on the table. She said, “I’ve been looking all my life for a church, and I think I found it.” Our God is good!

***Chaplain:*** One man was reading some Christian Science literature when he needed to get up quickly. On doing so, he banged his hand against the bottom rim of the table very hard. He immediately sat down again and declared, “I’m reading the truth here!” He kept his thought on

what he was reading, and the pain left. (When I saw him later that day, there was still a faint red mark to indicate where he had struck his hand, but he moved his hand freely, and joyously declared, "It doesn't hurt at all!")

One individual continues, even after 8 years in jail, to be a light and an example to others of the blessings of Christian Science, and how knowing himself (and all in the Pod) as God's good son is felt and acknowledged. He encouraged some of the men to make a list each day of 5 good things they did for someone else during the day. He encouraged them to "Do it! Don't wait for someone to be nice to you. Be a blessing!" It was a challenge for some of the men at the start, but after doing it for a couple days, they happily shared their good deeds with each other at the end of the day, and it resulted in a more peaceful atmosphere in the Pod.

Another man new to the teachings of Christian Science is continuing to see himself as God made him: good. This past month he asked for a better sense of patience; innocence; loving himself; dispelling confusion; and not being burdened by past mistakes. He responded to the story of how barnacles are removed from wooden ships by anchoring in fresh water. (See transcript of audio chat with Rob Gilbert, "Healing the Sights and Sounds of the Past – One Prayer at a Time. Sept. 26, 2007.) He could see that this time in jail was a time for him to immerse himself in the "fresh water" of how God sees and knows him—by discovering more about his true self through the teachings of the Bible and Mrs. Eddy's writings, and the Sentinels. It's not wasted time, but growing time.

***Corresponding Chaplain:*** One individual stated that he had been going through a dark time, and as he returned to God, his faith improved and he is feeling better. Another fellow is grateful to receive my letters and CS materials, and says he realizes he is called to serve Christ and he has severed ties with everyone at the prison who brings him down. He said that he feels that God is ordering his steps as a righteous man, although he humbly admits he may not yet be that righteous man. He expresses gratitude for my time as a volunteer chaplain and my compassion.

***Chaplain:*** A month that closes with the Thanksgiving holiday can only be somewhat of a challenge to incarcerated individuals. At our last meeting (not held on Thanksgiving due to staffing shortages), we read the Thanksgiving Bible Lesson. Then each person had the opportunity to give some thanks. One man was grateful for his cellmate, who cooks for him. One was grateful for our church services. One was grateful for his 6-year-old son, who gives him joy whenever they speak on the phone. And it went around the room.

A new participant has now attended a few times and carefully reads along with every word of the Bible Lesson. Our discussions are filled with questions. Some years ago, I once asked a group who Jesus was speaking to in one of the Bible stories. They answered, "To the disciples." This was surprising to me. I responded, "Jesus is talking to you." The Christ, Truth, is ever present. This was eye opening to some!

***Chaplain:*** One incarcerated woman reported that a cellmate had been causing great ruckuses and loudly accusing others of outrageous things. While she had avoided being the

spotlight of this woman's ire until then, the attacks turned in her direction. She was practicing not reacting, while prayerfully addressing the situation. Finally, a custody officer asked her if she wanted to be moved, but the room she was offered was worse, so she asked for time to work it out with the cellmate. One less-aware custody officer decided to get the whole group together and have them air their complaints, which just escalated the situation, with the cellmate screaming absurd accusations which were totally untrue. The woman attending the Christian Science services prayed and stayed calm, and when asked by custody to respond, was led to simply state that she was just listening carefully to see if the cellmate expressed any specific requests to change her activities or behavior in any way and that she hadn't heard any. Another wiser officer discerned the spurious nature of the complaints and told the cellmate that if things didn't calm down in the room, she would be subject to being moved. This seemed to clear the air and the cellmate was now treating her as if they were good buddies. The attendee was grateful that she hadn't been tempted to defend herself and felt a healing correction had taken place in the room.

**Chaplain:** I made 4 visits to the prison last month, and met with various incarcerated men for Sunday School type sessions. Sometimes only one attends. I have been praying to know that the Science of Christianity is actively speaking to hearts and that no void can find place in its purpose for mankind. Although the prison asks for a minimum of 3 attendees at services, they have allowed me to continue the services with only 1 or 2 each time. So in a way I could not have planned but in prayer that I might be useful, twice I have arrived at the chapel when no state chaplains have been present that day. However, there at the chapel doors stood large numbers of men from 2 different faith communities designated to have their scheduled services. With approval given to me by custody since I was a volunteer chaplain, I was able to allow them access to do their own services, while I was in an adjacent office conducting our Christian Science session. Numerous of the men from these faith communities have come to me in gratitude for enabling them to do their services and we have exchanged some common-ground truths. Our Father continues to unfold His plan, His timing, His promise.

This past month a new individual has started coming to our services. He has been reading Science & Health and has been inspired with many underlined sentences. He has a high regard for Mrs. Eddy and is a broad thinker in searching out what a "true science" looks like. This continues to be an inspiration as thought is moving up and forward, shedding the old man and putting on that new man which fits so perfectly. Joy and gratitude.

**Chaplain:** This past week I sat in the chapel praying, as no attendees showed up. I was impelled to be vigorous in knowing that the Christ was present, ever active, and fully operating in consciousness. In about half an hour, an incarcerated clerk for one of the state chaplains came over and wanted to talk. He said his weeks had been flooded by problems both with his lawyer and a long-time partner who had dropped him and was now in an abusive relationship. I had previously met this man and knew that he was a deeply sincere Christian, full of good works in helping others find their way. I shared with him that week's Bible Lesson Golden Text from Psalms: "I cried unto thee, O Lord:...Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name." This so moved him that he started crying in gratitude, speaking of how God had lifted him up so many times. As we talked further though, he spoke of being afraid of coming close to

a total end. I said “You know, there are no ‘close calls’ in God’s protection and place for you.” I shared a short experience about no close calls in God’s plan: I was late for work, under pressure on a project, and anxiously driving through a parking lot. A man and wife and their teen were walking between two parked cars close by. They stopped, making eye contact with me to allow me to drive by. However, I heard clearly an angel word...go slow, go slow. Unseen to me because of the height of the parked cars, their small toddler pushed the baby in its carriage directly out in front of my car. Because of the angel message I heeded to slow down, I was able to slam on my brakes and stop with the bumper right at the carriage. I parked, and cried in gratitude that God never allows for close calls, but is ever answering our need, clearly and timely outlining the way. The clerk again began to cry and was so deeply moved by how the tender grace of the Father speaks, and we hear and are blessed. He requested treatment this past week. I look forward to seeing him tomorrow and, assuredly, other individuals. “How wonderful is Thy mercy, Lord, how faithful is Thy kindness...Thou holdest all things in Thy sight...and in Thy light shall we see light.” (Hymn 130)

**Chaplain:** It has been my experience that the Bible Lessons alone can provide enormous encouragement, enlightenment, and inspiration to the men in this maximum-security facility. When their subscriptions are late, or not received, they definitely want a replacement! Inspiration and spirituality have been topics most discussed in the past few months. Being a more spiritual person, and reflecting more of God’s qualities, are what attendees ask for the most.

And what better teacher is there than the Bible Lessons? Every topic brings to light so many spiritual ideas and lessons. The attendees want to learn more of Bible stories, characters, and their place in Bible history as well as teachings. What does the story of Daniel in the Lion’s Den have to teach us? Complete faith in God. How can I demonstrate that more fully? How did Jesus heal? This is the question I post on the chalk board before every church service. And I leave it there for others visiting the chapel to see later, with the date and time of our service. The number of men on my attendance list is quite full—at one point it numbered 17, while the small chapel room can only hold about 14. Not all come every week as sometimes they are working or taking other education classes. But the ones who come are faithfully gaining in this knowledge. Christian Science teachings are full of lessons for all of us to learn. And I am so grateful for the periodicals also, with articles I copy and either bring or mail to the men. If someone did not attend one week, they ask what handouts they missed. They want those!

**Chaplain:** One new attendee at the CS service on the induction yard was happy and relieved to hear we are not in any way related to Scientology. When she heard about Science and Health she had a light of recognition and she signed up to receive a copy. She told me later that when she was on the street, she found a Science and Health in the dirt and started to read it. It was meaningful and helpful to her. She was pleased to hear about Mary Baker Eddy, the woman who wrote it, and some of her life story and healing work. Last week we had an individual announce at the start of the service, “I love Christian Science!” This was a nice introduction for all the other newcomers. We continue to have very good responses from the women and much appreciation expressed for the services and the messages in the Bible Lessons.