

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE COMMITTEE ON INSTITUTIONAL WORK IN CALIFORNIA

Selected Chaplain and Corresponding Chaplain Fruitage Reports May through July 2026

Chaplain: One individual I minister to in the jail reported that he's been sleeping poorly. On top of that his shoulder has caused him a great deal of pain. I can't remember the specific Bible passages we talked about that day, but he said our discussion was a good help. He said that night he woke up in pain. He closed his eyes and had one of "those moments" where he reached out to God speaking to him as a friend. He felt very "heard" and peaceful after this. When he woke in the morning, he felt much better. Later, the deputy in that pod offered to bring him an additional mattress hoping that would help him sleep better. This is a good example of Divine Love healing and meeting "every human need." He continues to sleep better and his shoulder is much improved.

Another incarcerated man I've been visiting is an enthusiastic student of the Bible. He said he's been reading the book of Matthew with his "cellie" and really enjoying it. He says he's had lots of opportunities to help others in his pod. I brought to his attention that people are drawn to his goodness and kindness which has to be a result of how he's sharing what he's learned from his spiritual study and incorporating it into his own life. He said he's also noticed that he used to have anger management issues and would lash out without thinking about what he was doing. He said, "I don't do that anymore; I now have the tools to approach things in a more productive way."

Chaplain: I have continued to pray for a woman in the County Jail, who was admitted in the summer of 2024 while expecting a baby. The baby was born that fall, and he will be two years old in October. She has never seen or even touched the child. She has grown from being angry and resentful to loving God and expecting good. During this time, she told me that her court appointed lawyer has never returned her calls, sent her letters back unopened and has generally neglected her. She has had no court appearance, other than to arraign her. She has asked for a trial, and has heard nothing until last week. Without warning, she was brought before the judge and her lawyer announced to her and the judge that he would no longer be representing her, that he was moving to a public practice and she would need a new lawyer. The new lawyer has been very attentive, listens to her, discovered that she is entitled to Far Northern services, and a Far Northern worker has been assigned to her case and has scheduled her for an evaluation. I told her sometimes it's as if God is in a helicopter and we are on a meandering river. We don't know what is around the next bend, but our Father-Mother God knows, and is looking out for us! She continues to be aglow with God's omnipotent care.

Chaplain: One of the youths at juvenile hall commented a while back that he doesn't care whether he lives or dies, is incarcerated or outside. During one of our sessions this month, he opened up about how he doesn't feel that way anymore. He realizes he has been answering to

the wrong people (gang members) instead of his mom. I was in awe of how the Christ has touched him, and he understands his value.

Another young man has heard me suggest, when deciding whether or not a thought is from God, to add “Dios dice?” (God says?) to the end of the thought. During one of our sessions, he mentioned he has “muscle memory” for jumping into a fight. But in the past week two situations came up where he paused, thought of me, and asked himself, “Dios dice?” As a result, he chose not to fight. “God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love and of a sound mind” (self-discipline).

Chaplain: One man at the jail came up and asked about where our bricks and mortar churches are, as he really wanted to pursue this new understanding he resonated so well with. He happily requested the textbook and samples of our publications. For many of the men, it is a slow process of letting go, releasing themselves from habituation to and expectation of conflict, and tentatively testing the power of forgiveness and love to improve their lives by acting from their divine nature.

I was able to get back to a pod where the meeting is conducted primarily in Spanish. A lot of men enthusiastically came out, many returnees and many new. The guard warned them to behave themselves, not realizing that this was totally unnecessary. The group was all focused in a sincere and grateful desire to reunite with our Father! We covered a lot of ground, and step by step rediscovered Christian Science—understanding our own perfect spiritual being, always in the present moment of Creation. And the consequent commandments to love God—meaning to fully see and understand our Father and His reflection in us, and then to love our neighbor in that same understanding that they, like us, are also able to reflect the nature of God as Love. One man spoke up, twice, to say how grateful he was for how simple and clear this truth of ourselves was, and comforting—a relief from the experience when some religious service providers come to castigate them all as sinners and lost souls. We practiced over and over remembering who we are, and why we can forgive continuously, and then enjoy our freedom to love and bless. The opportunity was clear for the pod to be a little slice of heaven from now on!

Corresponding Chaplain: In my letters to the incarcerated, I shared a quote from one of my favorite Christian Science practitioners, Deborah Packer: When we look back at all the stupid things we did when we were teenagers, and we wouldn't do it now...it's not that we grew out of that, it's that we dropped off the things that were not true about us. They just fell away, because they were never us. Our core identity has been the same all along, as God's image and likeness (see Genesis 1:26). The human history might say it's a journey, but it's not, it's a dropping away of falsehoods. That is what growth is. Growth is a spiritual thing, it's just the falling away of that which was NEVER us. We may think of growth as accumulation of things, but it's quite the opposite. (From CS Sentinel Watch: Aging gracefully? Or just not aging? -- with Deb Packer) And as Paul says, When I was a child, I talked like a child; I thought like a child; I made plans like a child. When I became a man, I stopped those childish ways. It is the same with us. Now we see as if we are looking into a dark mirror. But at that time, in the future, we shall see clearly. Now I know only a part. But at that time I will know fully, as God has known me. (I Corinthians 13:11-12, International Children's Bible translation) What a wonderful promise! And I like

considering with the men that as we learn more about God, we will get closer to our core identity, which has been the same all along, as we are truly in God's image and likeness!

Corresponding Chaplain: A now released citizen (released about 18 months ago) with whom I corresponded for a few years has been invited to speak at the California State Capitol about the "tiny house community" program he has been working on for unhoused people. He helps build the tiny houses and works with other agencies to prepare the new residents for community living. For several months he has shared Christian Science with unhoused people in his local community, including viewing Zoomed church services with them. His non-profit provides food and other helpful items for the unhoused and those in need. He continues to rely on God and Christian Science for inspiration and strength.

Chaplain: A man I minister to at the county jail reported a healing he'd had of very painful back trouble. He awoke one morning feeling very uncomfortable. He went right to what he knows about his relationship with God as the Cause and he as the effect of that perfect Cause. He recalled the story in Mark 8 where Jesus heals the blind man at Bethsaida in two steps. First the man was able to see but only with blurred vision; then when Jesus made clay by spitting on the ground and covering his eyes with it, he could see perfectly. The man I minister to said initially he felt a little better having prayed, but then later by totally relying on God he was completely well. He could see clearly that this "total trust" step effected the healing.

There were so many instances of transformation and progress that I witnessed this month at the jail that I could write several pages! I will focus on two that seemed especially transformational to me.

First – The release. A man in his mid-30s requested a chaplain visit after another individual I see had told him this was possible. We were able to meet and talk 7 or 8 times over the next couple of months. He shared that he'd been in and out of juvenile hall, jail, and prison since he was 12. When I met with him, he very much wanted to discontinue this cycle and was very open to spiritual ideas and a way forward that he could count on. We talked about God knowing our need before we ask Him and also that "desire is prayer" and he could trust that he would be led. Initially it looked like he'd be released with nowhere to live. He worried that he'd go right back to his previous destructive patterns. I told him this was absolutely something we could pray about and we commenced to do so over the next few visits. "God puts the solitary in families"; "Divine Love always has met and always will meet every human need" and more ideas along those lines were what we discussed. A week before his release he was excited to tell me that a place had opened up for him at a residential facility that would also support him staying sober and drug free. We both rejoiced about this. He said, "I get out Monday or Tuesday at 8 am." He said there would be no one to pick him up, and that he would have to find transportation to the facility in Hayward. As I returned from being away for the weekend on a red eye flight Monday morning, it came to me that I should go and meet him when he got out of jail. I quickly packed up some sandwiches and snacks, drove to the jail, got there at 7:15, parked as close to the exit as I could so I wouldn't miss him (I wasn't even sure if he was getting out then) and waited about 10 minutes. He walked out at 7:30 totally not expecting anyone, let alone me to be there! I was able to give him the food plus a duffle bag I had in the car – they are only given a clear plastic bag

with their belongings in it, which he said is a dead giveaway that you just got out of jail or prison. I offered to take him to the bus stop where he could get a ride to where he needed to go. He was very grateful and so was I that I listened to that angel voice telling me to go and meet him that morning. I trust that God is still guiding him safely.

Second – A reward. The individual who had the healing of the back trouble mentioned above experienced continued evidence of God’s care and love for him as follows:

He’d been living in the most restricted pod for 10 years (crazy to imagine!). I’ve shared (in these reports) many times about his love for God and his sincere study of the Bible and Science & Health during this time. His spiritual understanding has grown exponentially. He shares what he knows with all those in his pod when called on for support. One day the head of the jail, the lieutenant, came to see him. He offered this man the option of moving to another less restricted pod based on his exceptional attitude, behavior, and helpfulness over the last decade. This NEVER usually happens! He was very surprised and didn’t know what to say. Initially he told the lieutenant that he just wanted to be in the place where he could help most and do the most good. The lieutenant said he’d give him time to decide and emphasized that this move would look very good on his record with regard to his court case.

When I visited him just after he found this out, we talked about this opportunity being direct from God and that God would lead him every step of the way. Long story short, he told the lieutenant to move him where he thought would be best. He is now in the workers pod which is the least restricted pod. He can be out of his cell over 11 hours a day. Before this – during those 10 years – he only had one hour out of his cell each day. He is so grateful to be able to participate in some of the programs offered as well as have a job. On my last visit, he was doing so well and is truly grateful that he feels God’s love and direction in all of this. He is a remarkable shining light to so many!

Corresponding Chaplain: I am now referring the incarcerated men I correspond with to the Christian Science literature through the Edovo app on their tablets. One mentioned he was very grateful for this resource since he is not currently receiving subscriptions. I also am letting them know about Embraced Fully’s “Ready for Re-entry” course that is widely available now. One individual I correspond with has completed a fire-fighting training program but is discouraged that he hasn’t been assigned to work in the field. He realizes he has to be patient since he knows God is working His purpose out. I look forward to being able to correspond via email – I am learning how this works and will see if the program is offered to anyone I correspond with. I continue to keep in touch with two “returned citizens” I corresponded with (each for five years) through Embraced Fully’s Angel Team program. The continued encouragement and shared inspiration are very helpful to them and inspiring for me – I am happy to see their continued progress in Christian Science. One has written a testimony he hopes to share soon.

Chaplain: The guard said there was no room for a meeting, but let me go into the pod, and a man soon joined me on the chairs I arranged in a circle. I began to explain the purpose of Christian Science study and as I started to say, “We are going to focus on”...he finished my sentence for me saying: “. . . the spiritual facts of man.” Soon we were informed the special

purpose room was open, and we were joined there by a dozen men and many newcomers. We talked about the purpose of religion—to reconnect to our experience of God, and questions arose since religious organizations offer many varying doctrines and instructions and rituals, all characterizing God in different ways and asking for belief or faith in various ideas and rules. The obvious need for us was to move past believing to actual knowing, being certain instead of relying on hope, and this is the practice of Christian Science. We reflected on our innate understanding that we are the creation of God, and that because God is infinite, All, creation is an activity of and within God's being. We can then see the obvious fact that we do in fact reflect the infinity of God in each of our own spiritual qualities and capacities. And that our spiritual qualities are what matter about us to others! We contemplated the fact that every man in the room could readily admit he was able to love purely and unconditionally, and that was complete evidence of our freedom from all of what we term "history." That the past is gone and weightless. That, although lots of difficult or painful challenges appear in our sense of material creation, none of them touch our spiritual wholeness. One man, who had spoken of God as Love, citing St. John, was interested in obtaining a textbook, and another some Christian Science Monitors. The deputy signaled the end of the session, and the atmosphere in the room was radiant.

Having a new more restrictive policy on providing printed Bible Lessons offered a wonderful opportunity to emphasize the fact that Christ Jesus did not say we needed to *read*, but that we needed to *forgive and love*. The men acknowledged that the Bible is a compendium of stories of the worst and best things we can do, but that we all already know these lessons from our daily lives. And it presents confusingly different views of the nature of God, and in the New Testament exhortations to have faith. The men defined faith as believing what they couldn't see, so we asked, "What we can see and know with certainty for ourselves, instead of just having faith?" Seeing the spiritual nature of man is the practice of Christian Science. And we did that together.

Chaplain: As a visiting chaplain, I serve two prison compounds in two separate compound chapels. On average 2 to 4 or 5 will attend the Christian Science services at the chapel table. From time to time no one will show up for various reasons. During this reporting period no one showed up at the chapel. When this happens, I will use the time for prayer. I know there is a need to be met, so my prayer is to open my heart to determine the need. What came to me was the example of Christ Jesus, how he, as often stated in our Bible Lessons, walks about the streets in villages and cities, "healing every sickness and every disease among the people." He walked among the people. That's it. That's the need to meet. So, I put on my Christian Science Chaplain badge and walked among the men in the yard and visited the cell dormitories. On my walk I was spiritually sensitive to those who might be seeking spiritual solace or just a kind word. I approached two such individuals sitting alone in the yard. Our engagement was short but clearly meaningful. Two others on the yard approached me with questions regarding spiritual matters and religious services. In the dormitory of building 5, I was immediately approached by an individual in the day room who introduced me to two others with religious/spiritual inquiries. We sat down together at a table and shared our thoughts on these matters. Since my badge indicated Christian Science, I shared the Christian Science mission statement: "to reestablish primitive Christianity and its lost element of Christ healing." I also spoke of our services at the chapel of which they were not aware but expressed an interest in attending. Another man who called out to me I visited at his cell. This man was deeply in need of Christ solace. We prayed together and before I left I handed him a Christian Science Bible Lesson. Walking back to the

chapel through the yard I encountered another individual and had a very meaningful discussion with him about spiritual matters of import. — It was then I determined that I would do this “walk among them” more often. It was even suggested by the CO staff that they make the announcement: “There’s a chaplain in the building should anyone want or need to speak with him.” This is what happens from prayer when no one shows up.

I will also mention that I read the Bible Lesson out loud through my cell phone every week with an Embraced:Fully parolee, and that a friend of his who was recently medically diagnosed with terminal cancer has joined our Bible Lesson reading sessions.

Chaplain: I went to the juvenile hall unit four times this month. Although my time is officially called “Bible Study,” I often take passages from that week’s Christian Science Bible Lesson for our discussion. One week I noticed the word “grace” came up quite a few times, which reminded me of the story about how grace is like grits. A man went into a diner in the South. He ordered a full breakfast. When the waitress brought his food, there was a pile of mush on his plate. He called the waitress back and (pointing to the pile of mush) said, “I didn’t ask for this. I’m not going to pay for this.” The waitress replied, “Son, those are grits. You don’t have to ask for them, you don’t have to pay for them, they just come.” And that’s like God’s grace: we don’t have to ask for it, we don’t have to pay for it, it just comes.

Chaplain: One incarcerated man last month related how he was brought to his senses when he was arguing with another man over who had won the most chips in a poker game. Just as the argument was underway, one of the packets with the Bible Lesson, articles, and a periodical was delivered to him by name. He said he was so confronted with THE WORD being delivered right as he was in the midst of anger, that he went over, apologized, and hugged his cellmate. Now he is regularly holding Bible studies with 10 other men at the jail! He rises at 5:30 AM and reads the Word with one individual with special needs who gets up early to read with him. He encourages all to share the two tablets that they have, so everyone gets a chance to share; he says grace before chow; and is complimented by the guards for having the most peaceful cell of all. Now he’s asking how he could become a Christian Science nurse! Our God is good!