



Christian Science Committee
FOR INSTITUTIONAL SERVICE
IN THE STATE OF OREGON

Bringing light and healing within the setting of Oregon's penal institutions

Greetings Fellow Branch Members:

We have only three executive committee members and need two more. Right now we meet via phone conference for working sessions and in person each quarter. We would be happy if new members could join us in the quarterly meeting and perhaps review materials from working sessions in preparation for the next quarterly meeting. Visit the website csisoregon.com and contact the secretary at csiscoregon@gmail.com for more information, including the application.

Snippets of news/actions taken

We will talk about people releasing into our field. We each need to be ready to accept these newcomers to Christian Science who are just like us with different skin tones, long hair, short hair, tattoos, piercings. We use different words to express our Christianity including addressing church friends as “brother” or “sister.” We heal ourselves and others with our work, and so do the newcomers. They may be new to Christian Science. They are hungry for the Truth and hungry to join us and learn more. Their understanding of Reading Rooms, Wednesday night meetings, order of service, etc. may be limited. They may make you think more clearly about what Christian Science is and what it means to you. Are we ready to accept these healing people as they are? Children of God, simple seekers for Truth?

The Department of Corrections has a new term we believe fits better than “inmate” or “resident” so we have decided to start using too: Adult in Custody or AIC. You will see the term throughout our newsletters, guidelines and procedures.

We need a chaplain at the State Hospital in Salem for two AIC’s. If you are a class taught Christian Scientist, please consider applying. We have had several requests in the last two years and we need to step up. This committee gives mileage reimbursement.

A local practitioner notified us of a request from an Adult in Custody (AIC) in a county jail who was then transferred to a facility where we don’t have a chaplain, so our letter writer is corresponding with him.

Through an AIC, Warner Creek (southern Oregon) requested subscriptions to the *CS Monitor* and *CS Sentinel*. We also sent a requested copy of MBE Christian Healer after verifying with the facility chaplain that the AIC could receive and keep the book. It was great to hear the overwhelmingly positive response from the facility chaplain.

Two AICs requested periodical subscriptions in a facility that doesn’t seem to share well so we are granting the request knowing they will share within their units as the Spirit moves them.

In August, the Christian Science Publishing Society (CSPS) sent a notice to IS committees, nursing facilities, etc. that we could apply for a discounted price on copies of *Science and Health* in the Marble Edition. We ordered them and have restocked for our volunteers as they request.

An AIC in another state tried to get us to locate someone. Appropriately, we wrote a letter politely refusing and sent the information to the proper state committee. The second letter we did not answer but emailed the other state’s committee who knew the AIC and thanked us for the communication.

If you like to see other reports of progress from prisons or what a chaplain does, etc. click on lightinprison.org, the website of the CS Institutional Services Committee in California.

We are continuing to work on our guidelines and procedures. Since they work as a whole, we have decided to post none until all are complete. Do you have questions regarding this committee or its work? Ask by sending an email to the secretary csiscoregon@gmail.com or a letter to PO Box 1233, Wilsonville OR 97070. If you prefer to talk on the phone, email the secretary, and she'll schedule a phone call.

Mentors needed

We have a couple AICs releasing in the next few months and we are looking for CS mentors. The mentor keeps an arm's-length relationship, but can suggest housing or job possibilities; can provide or suggest transportation, especially to and from church services and Reading Room; can help the person see their parole officer as a child of God; know the person can "make it" regardless of the hard stuff; can give a Christian Science perspective on issues. Please contact us if you may be interested in being an outside mentor. Volunteer chaplain cannot be mentors for those on the outside without special permission.

From Volunteer Chaplain reports

We did not even get to the reading of the lesson because of questions and answers which the men were engaged in. One of the men is serious about using Christian Science and has many questions in his effort to understand the difference between what he was taught in his youth and what he understands about Christian Science. He's so serious in fact he has invoked Department of Corrections (DOC) Policy: 90.2.5, Christian Science Health Assistance, and that process is slowly grinding through the system. The primary reason the process is going so slowly is the facility chaplain who is supervisor for Christian Science has had his hours cut back significantly, so he is not at the prison much to get paperwork done. **Prayer needed for institution chaplains.**

A new man has a religious upbringing and was able to grasp Christian Science concepts, even though they were not what he had grown up with. We read through the lesson and had a brief discussion after each section. When I started talking about spiritualizing biblical passages he became really interested. He expressed confusion over the purpose of the ten commandments -- if they were rules for mankind what good were they to address humanity at such a low level. When I said it was important to spiritualize the commandments he excitedly exclaimed "Do we have time to do that?" We did a little bit in the time we had left.

A volunteer chaplain was told a man had died of an overdose shortly after he was released. It turns out that the story was not true, and the volunteer chaplain was very glad to let the men that come to the Christian Science service put that ugly rumor to rest. One man has been released and needs our prayerful support. Another releases in March and has a mentor through HGO (Home for Good) and this committee.

In another facility there are three men attending Christian Science Bible Study. One releases in December, one in early January and one mid-January. All are anxious about what awaits them and we are working together to establish/bring to realization their oneness with God.

Studying the Bible Lesson we focused on "grace", discovering the various states of thought grace includes within the wide ranging concept of grace. Another week "Probation After Death" included the discussion of probation after doing something terrible or something terrible happening which lead to a discussion of the 3rd tenet regarding the forgiveness of sin.

An AIC shared that he had never heard of Christian Science before being inside, but had investigated other Christian groups and found them not deep enough. We agreed Christian Science makes us think :-). Another AIC requested a citation quarterly so he has incentive to mark his books and he received one.

We have people actively seeking the truth and we need Christian Scientists to serve them! Please prayerfully consider, as an individual member and as a congregation, helping these simple seekers who cannot come to our churches and Reading Rooms. Christian Science is the most important idea that enters our institutions, and you are the only ones who can provide this most vital of services.

Thank you to facility staff. I discovered that one of the men's Full-Texts had been inadvertently packed up with my things so I made a special trip out so he would have it for the rest of the week. The officer at the desk was very accommodating, called the AIC down right away to get his Full-Text. He was really glad to get it! I'm very appreciative of the treatment I get from the officers as well as the AICs.

Healing of grief. A resident brought a friend, J, still feeling lost and grieving over the passing of her brother two years ago. We shared that since our loved ones would be the first to want us to fulfill our potential, have a life of joy, peace, and prosperity, so actually we honor them more by treasuring the good they expressed and striving to be our best selves as we go forward. J was very still and receptive to these ideas and it felt like a holy time with healing ideas shared and received. D was the first to share her ideas to J! The following week, **J reported she was healed of grief!**

Foster families. We talked to K, A, and E about God being Father/Mother. All have had varying experiences with foster families. All asked for Bibles. K has just rediscovered Christianity and is working hard to apply Christian principles to each day, including praying for all the other girls there, despite their sometimes unkind treatment of her.

Drug addiction. Talked about getting past drug addiction with Gen 1:27. God got there first, made them who they are, so addiction cannot overturn what God made us to be and we can find strength in God to gain our freedom moment by moment. We also recalled together Jesus' parable of the prodigal son. Like the father in the parable, God is always ready to meet us where we are when we turn to Him. Each can recognize their worth as a child of God each day.

Transitioning out. M was leaving this week and a bit scared about falling back into old habits. She asked for an idea to take with her as she left. We shared the metaphor of the butterfly shared in a recent communication from the IS Executive Committee: though we certainly are helped by others, like the butterfly that must break out of the cocoon on its own to be strong enough to fly, she might find it hard at first to begin anew and leave old habits behind. However, she actually has the moral strength from God to do so and "fly away" to be what God made her to be. She really liked that and thanked us for it.

Prayer and tests. Earlier this year I was tutoring a student for her GED. She was very cooperative and hard-working but it appeared that from the scores on the pretests that the material was possibly too difficult for her. Nevertheless she was a very hard worker and she was also diligent in her prayers with me. Before each tutoring session we claimed truths to use as she studied. In early October we found out that she had passed the GED. She will go to a Community College in Southern Oregon, to begin anew.

Forgiveness. "Love your enemies" passage from Luke 6 has helped resident stop judging others in the facility. C talked about needing to forgive in various friendships. We brought out that forgiveness is giving up our resentment, not the same as reconciliation. We listen to God to see if reconciliation is the right thing to do. J wanted to work on forgiveness with her sister who is taking care of J's young daughter and may seek custody. We talked quite a bit about how forgiveness applies here, seeing that God is governing, applauding her desire to do what is truly best for her daughter. J said she wanted to surrender to God like it says to do in Ps 25:1-2. We said yes, "Thy will be done" is a powerful prayer. God will lead them all in what is best for her daughter and she can trust God and be blessed. In another visit we read SH 248:29:

"Let unselfishness, goodness, mercy, justice, health, holiness, love — the kingdom of heaven — reign within us, and sin, disease, and death will diminish until they finally disappear." We talked about each of the seven qualities that constitute the kingdom of heaven in our thought, and that we reap what we sow as it said in Galatians. The girls had good insights about each of the qualities. J copied down the seven qualities to work with them herself. The next week J let us know

that she had been given a 6-month extension on the hearing that will determine whether she can keep custody of her daughter. She was told this was because of her good behavior and progress. She was beaming and gave a heartfelt hug. She will be in our prayers.

Honoring life. Z seemed to be identifying strongly with her brother who had taken his life four years ago because “God told him to,” that he was now home with God. We were praying about how to honor her brother without condoning the suicide. What came was to say first that the love between us and others is forever, no interruption of this, and that she honors her brother by glorifying God with her life, right here. We had her envision an apple in thought. She agreed that nothing could destroy or alter that idea. Just so, since God is Spirit, her brother is a spiritual idea, intact and complete, and going forward.

The following is a poem from an AIC who has seen changes in himself especially in the way he deals with situations, since attending the Christian Science services.

The Pearl

Inspiration, realization, from where do they come?
Is it not already inside me, covered over by pride some?
The core of wisdom and knowledge pushed under the surface as if a pearl placed in a teacup, forced to the bottom
Pinned there not only by material forces, but by willful ones
The swirling of contents in a rush to conquer, acquire, control
the clouding of impurities darkening the whole
Yet, in the moments we may find respite
When the contents calm, when things become clear
the pearl rises up breathing the surface saying
I have been wanting to see your waking
Here is a gift for you, something to embrace
Only for a moment; the moment ends in chase
Back we go again swirling the contents
Unsettling impurities with its portents
Then wonder creates confusion. – was the pearl inside of me?
Or was it a gift bestowed by something overly
the wondering again swirls the contents
And the pearl waits, waits, waits...