



Greetings Fellow Branch Members!

January 2019

What things are happening in the Christian Science Committee for Institutional Service in Oregon (CSCIS in OR)?

- Scott Brown (Bend) and Joan Reitz (Medford) have joined the Executive Committee. Thank you! Barb Weiser and Karen Rippberger are two other members. Scott is the chair and Karen the vice chair. Barb continues double duty as the secretary/treasurer.
- A committee member was invited to participate in the Department of Corrections (DOC) Religious Advisory Committee. Its purpose is to give religious representatives input in to DOC policy.
- Three more volunteers are in process of being approved by this committee and DOC. They are providing support for volunteers already in place.
- Seven Christian Science Practitioners in Oregon have expressed their interest in giving pro-bono treatments to our adults-in-custody (AICs) upon request. We are going through the process with DOC to update the list on file. One volunteer reported "Two of the men are working with a practitioner and there was praise and appreciation for having a practitioner with which they can converse...."
- We have room for two more members of the Executive Committee if you would like to support the committee in this way.
- A church representative meeting/conference call is planned via Zoom on **February 10, 2-4p**. All are welcome. Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android: <https://zoom.us/j/5569652476>; by phone +1 646 558 8656 ; Meeting ID: 556 965 2476. A separate communication to churches, volunteers, and known representatives will be sent with the agenda about Feb 1. Contact Barb at 503-320-1915 or csiscoregon@gmail.com if you have trouble joining the conference that day OR you would like to set up Zoom prior to the meeting.

This quarter we said we would focus on challenges that are unique to the Department of Corrections (DOC) and Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) environments. The following are just a few and they are all mortal details overcome by metaphysical thought and subsequent human action following God's direction including the laws/rules/regulations etc. AIC = adult in custody

- As volunteers we cannot ask what someone did to get into the system, nor what is keeping them

there, nor when they started or will be released. However, there is a database accessible to the public where we can find out the general charge, the county, the start of incarceration, current institution where housed, earliest release date. The CSCIS in OR secretary often checks an AIC when a new request for literature comes in. We have agreed that “life” AICs should have their own Quarterly/Bible Lesson, Sentinel, and/or Monitor as they request and volunteer working with them agrees. In general, volunteers do NOT check the database as they prefer not to be distracted by mortal details that are not relevant to their work with AICs (AMEN!)

- It can take one to six months to get DOC training, fingerprints, etc. to be able to go into a facility without an escort. Paperwork gets lost, etc. Transitions of volunteers take time and persistence.
- Every person that comes to a facility - a lecturer, a church visitor, a new volunteer – must submit a form that triggers a background check. We must allow at least two weeks for these.
- It is difficult to offer services to all AICs. An AIC cannot call someone that is not on their phone call list. A visitor must be on the AIC’s visitor list. There is a limit to their lists AND quite the process to get on the list. As religious volunteers, we hold “services” that are supposedly available to every AIC. However, they also work during the day, schedules change, some units are not allowed where we are.
- In general, a volunteer in a facility cannot contact an AIC once they have left that facility. We put our status as volunteers at risk when we do that. However, volunteers can answer an AICs’ letter, using the CSCIS PO Box or their church address. Volunteers have “donated by” stickers that may put in literature given to AICs (some facilities do not allow the sticker). A CS Practitioner can “follow” the AIC when the practitioner is on the AICs phone list.
- Some facility chaplain insist that only those that have requested the service may attend. Some facilities limit the number of religious services an AIC may attend, others do not and actually encourage exploring different ideas.
- Any communication AICs do within DOC needs a “KYTE” (inmate communication form) including whether they would like Christian Science services or a copy of *Science and Health* or *Bible*. Our religious volunteers give requested books to the facility chaplain with AIC’s name on it and it is delivered via the facility chaplain.
- One county jail does not allow female volunteers to meet with male AICs for a service. Nor do they allow visitors to give materials to an AIC, nor can we mail a “magazine”. So, the volunteer mailed the lesson to the AIC one week at a time from a Full-Text edition Bible Lesson. In this instance it made sense to send a subscription and the committee is looking into how to best handle this kind situation in the future. The volunteer was able to get on the “visitor list” for the AIC.

And through it all our volunteers LOVE this work! Why? Because we are giving hope and love and seeing the fruition of it.

- A regular attendee arrived in the last 30 minutes as usual. He heard us talking about why Christian Science was “science” and jumped right in... **“it can be demonstrated by anyone!”**
- When the topic of suicide came up, an AIC said that Christian Science made him realize that we are only one thought away from laughing. How many times have we been “down” or angry or out of sorts and someone makes a comment that makes us laugh? We are **one thought away from laughing.**
- **“I know that where I stand is holy ground.’** As this is true for me, it is true for all, yet my heart yearns for the light to shine in the darkest corners that there is awareness of our wonderful rich heritage as sons and daughters of God.” (volunteer)
- “A ‘cup of cold water’ can seem like buckets full to newcomers.” (volunteer)
- A man that had been corresponding with a CS Practitioner signed up to attend the service. I was grateful he felt comfortable enough to interact with everyone present and contribute to the discussions. (volunteer)
- **Working with “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself”** it was pointed out that if you take this to mean loving another as much as you love yourself, that can be difficult because many people don’t love themselves, and some even have self-hate. But if you understand it to mean you are loving another because they are you, it places the command outside the realm of human relationships and into the one Mind where the belief in separation is unknown. Another way of thinking about this came from a more human perspective, which says we see another reflecting how we think about them, and if we desire to know God, then we would think about another as the reflection of Love. (volunteer and AIC interaction)

Below are excerpts from a “thank you” this committee received from Portland Christian Science Lecture Series (PCSLs). Churches participating in PCSLS sponsored four prison lectures last season and the committee split \$1500 between sponsoring churches to help offset costs. The committee has pledged another \$1500 to PCSLS for three or more prison lectures this season.

“Thank you to all the members of the ISC!!

“We are over-the-moon grateful for your thoughtfulness. 😊

“The goal of the Portland CS Lecture Series has always been to rethink the ‘Christian Science Lecture’ and its purpose and place in our community. Prison lectures fit perfectly within that goal and your generous contribution to sharing CS with that audience (both last season and this season) is so appreciated. This partnership has really opened the eyes of so

many on our committee. It is easy to see that the work that you all are doing is making a difference in the lives of so many!!

Much love, The Portland CS Lecture Series

More from a volunteer regarding a lecture at an institution:

Four AICs attended, two were regular attendees, two were new. "They were very interested and both requested" copies of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. "One of the [AICs] asked about a video and said that the talk was so comforting he wanted to be able to hear it again. The same [AIC] had a strong trust in God, in addition to lots of tattoos. He said he'd never even been in kindergarten and was working on a GED and already attained the level to pass. He acknowledged God's guidance in this. He plans to become a drug and alcohol counselor so he can help others." "Both these [AICs] seemed to understand their innate perfection. It was quite inspiring.

Consider a church IS committee

Your state committee focuses on Department of Corrections and Oregon Youth Authority facilities for its work. Branch churches and societies, individuals, have the opportunity to focus more locally. We encourage you, as individuals and branches, to look at local needs like a jail, a veterans' facility, a hospital with a chapel or facility chaplain. Can you take literature there? Can you have an informal group there? Perhaps the next lecture could be hosted there and residents attend too?

Individual donations requested

This committee is a church activity and as such we receive regular donations from branch churches and societies all over the state of Oregon. Those donations do not completely cover our expenses and we are using "savings." We cut expenses, but now need to report that to "break even" each year we would like individual donations. These can be sent via check to CSCIS in OR, PO Box 1233, Wilsonville, OR 97070