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of the Church of
Christ, Scientist

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First Church Of Christ, Scientist
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Progress Report 2011

State Committee Liaisons

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VENTURA
SECRETARY-TREASURER

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SANTA CLARA
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LA, SAN DIEGO, CHINO, RIVERSIDE/SAN
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SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY & SACIR

Executive Secretary
FRANCES J. BELDEN

Christian Science Committee on Institutional Work in California

Editor's Corner

“God made man free,” says Mary Baker Eddy in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. (226:16) Being free is seemingly impossible for the State Committee clients who are locked away in institutions, usually because of criminal behavior of some kind. Those men, women and young people our chaplains and workers serve want freedom more than anything. Not just their physical freedom from incarceration, but also mental freedom from persistent beliefs such as belonging to a dysfunctional family, having a disability, guilt, shame, illness or all the other *et ceteras* by which mortal mind tempts people to disbelieve in the loving, protective presence of God.

Our chaplains bring mental and often physical freedom to institutionalized people. The radical message Mrs. Eddy revealed—that everyone is good and the rest of it is just a mistake, a bad dream—liberates. Recognition of their goodness, acceptance of the loving, protective presence and guidance of God gives our clients, first, mental freedom and then, quite often, the physical freedom and successful lives they crave, evidenced by unexpected early releases, favorable court outcomes, and internal transfers to better settings. Once they are released, our clients regularly obtain good jobs, find peaceful living situations, and start to thrive. This should not come as any

surprise. The Bible tells us, among many stories of liberation from custody, for example, that Peter, who was guilty of violating Jewish and Roman law, was freed by an angel. [Acts 12:6-17] Paul and Silas were freed in an earthquake. [Acts 16:16-40] Spiritual law must and does prevail today just as it did in biblical times.

**“No power can
withstand Divine Love.”**

Mary Baker Eddy

Some facts about California’s prison population tell a sad story. There is a 70% recidivism rate. At San Quentin, it is said, 90% of the inmates were placed in foster care at one time or another. Almost all inmates have a history of substance abuse. Many are virtually illiterate and have never been taught values. Gangs rule many institutions with a culture of revenge and violence. Working with our chaplains, and with the study of Christian Science has, mitigated or totally eliminated these adverse conditions for many of our clients. In one jail this last year, several inmates applied for and were granted Mother Church membership. One of them used his knowledge of Christian Science to avert a violent disturbance. Our clients were healed of many illnesses, including some thought to be incurable such as Hepatitis C. We have demonstrated the power and healing

of Christian Science.

Although many times it has proven difficult for our chaplains and workers to obtain access to institutions they wish to serve, including the Veterans Administration. There are various reasons for this, from security concerns to opposition from other clergy and staff who may initially be hostile to Christian Science. Nevertheless, with dedicated prayer, chaplains usually secure admittance. The process may take years but they persist and have good results. In one instance, the sharing of approved periodicals resulted in the healing of a relative of an institutional staff member. This healing changed the entire picture from hostility and avoidance to respect and welcome.

People outside prisons may condemn inmates. For example, during a recent hunger strike at the Pelican Bay prison protesting problems such as solitary confinement lasting up to ten years plus denial of adequate food, online comments read that cruelty was nothing more than these inmates deserved. The Bible tells us otherwise. When the woman caught in adultery was facing a death sentence, Jesus touched the consciences of her executioners. To the woman, he asked, “Hath no man condemned thee?...Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more.” [John 8:10-11] Mary Ann Haines, Editor



From our chaplains and inmates:

Improved thinking and persistent cough healed:

In one of our first meetings, an inmate told me that after reading just a few chapters of *Science and Health*, his thought became very clear and calm. He was very much astounded by this...In our most recent meeting, he told me that he had finally finished reading the whole book. He also said that he no longer had a cough that had plagued him daily for quite a long time.

Hepatitis C healed after 12 years:

A very excited inmate said he just had to tell me something that he said was humanly impossible, so he knew it had to be the power of God that had done it. He said that for twelve years he had Hepatitis C, ever since he contracted it getting a tattoo in prison. But he just received word from his last physical that the condition is totally gone. He is just bubbling over with gratitude and joy.

Skin cancer healed:

[During the first session], the group expressed concern about one individual being sent to the doctor with a claim of skin cancer. I pointed out that wherever she is sent, they can only see God's perfect reflection. There is not other true images. Perfect God and perfect man is the basis of healing. Nothing that anyone says or does can be the perfection of that God always sees. [A week later], the same individual reports no sign of the growth, so skin cancer, which was biopsied, was apparently healed. It had not been removed but had fallen off.

Depression healed by reading Science and Health:

A man showed up at a service – the only attendee. He “had to come and find out what Christian Science was about” he said, because in a very low moment he found the recent *Sentinel* on depression left “for me” in the inmate library – and was healed by reading it.

Tears of joy:

[Several women] offered to help set up and one went around the yard inviting other inmates to come, saying, “Christian Science is the best!” During the short interview time afterward, several women expressed gratitude for the service and said they could feel the power of Spirit and Love. Several women cried as [the chaplain] talked about God’s ever-present love for them.

Suicide averted by reading Science and Health, release from quarantine:

A man was in quarantine but was allowed to visit with me. He was struggling with what he had learned about God in his previous religious training. He said before he was quarantined he was reading *Science and Health* that he borrowed from his roommate and the man said that book saved my life and he asked him how. He said he was going to commit suicide and started to read it and could not put it down and all desire to end his life just left. And my friend said to him I was just going to give up reading it - now after hearing that, I decided I better keep going. He said what are the chances of that man sitting next to me and telling me about that? We agreed that was an angel God-sent message for him. He was released in just a few days from being quarantined and said he knows it was because he stayed with *Science & Health*.

The best sermon ever:

What I have to report is best summarized in what happened in today's meeting when one of the inmates was so overcome that he broke down in tears of joy upon hearing the Golden Text and Responsive Reading of this week's Bible Lesson. We went on to read together and speak about the Lesson. After two hours, they said it was the best sermon they ever heard in their life!

Love is not a doormat:

One lady expressed concern about going back to her regular life and the influence of a boyfriend that she knew was not good for her. We discussed Genesis I and how it applied to her AND her boyfriend. We discussed that God only wants good for her; sees her as good and worthy and loves her and cares for her continually. We also discussed that God is Love but also He is Principle. She could stand strong against any influence that could harm her or lead her astray. Love is not a doormat.

No bad kids:

During training, they said that, due to budget cuts, this is the only youth facility in the area and they get the “worst of the worst.” In fact, the kids view us volunteer chaplains as special and treat us with respect. We see only “good kids.”

Many healings—an injured arm, roommate problems, a real estate problem:

A friend of “Karen’s” (not her real name) fell from her bed; her arm was hurting badly. “Karen” prayed for her friend, and told her she should get into her *Science and Health*. The friend did read about 30 pages. Next day, the friend told “Karen”: “I can’t believe it. My arm doesn’t hurt any more.” The next week, “Karen” complained in exasperation about her roommate being unclean and of an unsound mind. “Karen” had sent many snivels, and spoken with several deputies, pleading for their help, but she said no one seemed to be paying any attention to her request. As “Karen” was pouring out her frustration, love came gently our way, in words from Mark 5:15 “And they come to Jesus, and see him [that had been disturbed] sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind.” We were smiling, and that conversation ended. In the same mod awhile later, I was with another inmate, a deputy called up and said “Get ready for a new roommate, “Karen.” The following week, I shared the story of the woman who needed to pay her mortgage. “Karen” related this new development. Her husband had approached the bank on options for unloading their rental property, on which he was having difficulty making payments, as he was now the only “breadwinner,” his wife being in jail. He was willing to take a great financial loss, because the payments had become burdensome. The home was presently worth much less than the purchase price they’d paid, even well below the mortgaged amount. The bank, on their own, came up with this solution: they reduced the total mortgage amount and monthly payments, of not only the rental property, but also of the home they resided in, by more than half!

Seeing the light:

An inmate who had been healed 3-4 years ago of a physical condition diagnosed by the doctors, asked to see me. He had told me before then that the healing came after it became very clear to him that man is the perfect reflection of God. He told me that it was like a bright light in his thought for just a moment or two and was so wonderful. He was healed by the time I had made my next visit and given a clean bill of health by the doctors. This time, after he been in solitary confinement for a couple of months, he related that he had been very depressed due to the circumstances and that, at his lowest point, someone had given him an old paperback Bible. He began reading and praying. Then, like the

previous time, he said, “I saw the same thing that I had experienced in the first healing except it lasted a lot longer.” He told that he knew with an absolute conviction of God’s allness and man perfect in his image and likeness. He said he wanted to shout out for joy and tell someone but he couldn’t. So instead, he just walked around his cell rejoicing.

No surgery required:

An inmate writes: “One morning about two weeks ago, I woke up in extreme pain in my stomach. I thought I was having a heart attack. I could barely walk. I was rushed to the hospital in an ambulance. It was my gall bladder. They wanted to operate immediately. I told the surgeon that I wanted to pray and give God an opportunity. Twelve hours later, I told them to take me off the morphine for the pain and that I felt fine. I denied the illness and saw myself as perfect as God made me. The medical personnel were frustrated with my Christian views, however, they accepted them reluctantly. I’m feeling great and also empowered by my knowledge of Christian Science.”

A riot forestalled:

One inmate reported how he had stopped a riot in his module. He noticed two inmates arguing, then splitting up and moving to opposite sides of the room, gathering their friends to them. The inmate knew this would be very bad for the two groups but also for everyone else because the jail would be locked down and privileges removed. The inmate felt compelled to go and talk to both of the leaders and to show them that there was a better way to resolve this dispute. After much negotiating, he eventually had them shaking hands and forgiving each other. He said that he could only have done that because of his new found understanding of the Bible and of man in God’s image and likeness.

They take us home:

One of our workers was waiting with the program officer and another person of a different Christian denomination. The officer spoke to the other person about the fact that they had found left over copies of their books in cells after the inmates had departed and asked the person to check and see whether it could be used again. The officer then turned to our worker and remarked that “They never find any copies of that blue book.”

Chairman's Report:

The State Committee has had many opportunities for prayerful growth this year, resulting in many blessings. The Committee expresses a great amount of gratitude for the service and support of past committee members Warren Berckmann, Diana Davis Butler, Nick Nowak, Cathryn Rathsam, Steve Scheiern, and Pamela Scott, and with special appreciation to Jacquelyn Reid, our Executive Secretary for the past eight years. We wish all continued success and the very best. In May, three very capable new liaisons were added to our roster, Jan True, Pam Wade and Edie Young although, later, Edie felt the need to leave the Committee. We currently have the present strength of four dedicated State Committee liaisons, all committed to maintain the supportive efforts of institutional involvement on the state level. **We look forward to welcoming five additional liaison candidates who are committed to serve in this important work at the state level.**

The Mother Church has reached out her loving embrace by continuing to supply the libraries of our various institutions with regular copies of *The Christian Science Monitor* and, also this year, by offering a new Bible Lesson license whereby our chaplains and workers can reproduce copies of the various editions of the English *Quarterlies* for distribution in the institutions at a reduced subscription cost. To begin, our chaplains have requested 110 copies.

It is with great gratitude and expectancy of growth that your State Committee continues to help and support those institutional and church workers in bringing the strength of loving assurance to the hearts of those receptive to the Christ. Our leader, Mary Baker Eddy, reminds us that there is only one man, perfect in the image and likeness of God, "The spiritual man's consciousness and individually are reflections of God." (*Science and Health*, 336:14-15). How refreshing new insight awaits those seeking freedom through the Christ thought.

We are so grateful to supportive Christian Science churches, societies, chaplains and workers and, especially, to the Solvang Legacy Fund and Monterey Bay Church's special fund, all in helping to bring to the institutions our outreach of the Christ, Truth and its efficacy to heal. Our expectancy of good is met with countless institutional blessings and healings throughout the year, all in appreciation to your selfless efforts. With best loving regards, Ed Holloway, Chairman

Treasurer's Report:

State Committee has been blessed again this year to have received regular monthly *per capita* donations from nearly 100 participating branch churches and societies, individuals and associations, as well as generous and very welcome awards totaling \$76,400 from the Solvang and Monterey Bay churches. Our investment portfolio has performed well under the direction of Nancy Challenger. There were some unexpected expenses. Our printer needed replacing and our office was moved to Redding with attendant start-up and transition costs. We were however, able to maintain last year's level of service, enhance our support to local committees, and expand our literature distribution. We expect this good performance to continue in the next year.

Mary Ann Haines, Treasurer

Executive Secretary's Report

The transition of the State Committee's office to Redding has been harmonious, although time-consuming, and much progress has been made towards having it run smoothly and to be responsive to the needs in support of the Chaplains. The patience, understanding and prayer by each of you involved in this rewarding branch church activity is deeply felt and very much appreciated and the State Committee's office is benefited by it. Because we are about our Father's business, based on the Christ, Truth, we can all expect much fruitage in the coming year and beyond.

Frances J. Belden, Executive Secretary

FRANCES J. BELDEN
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