

The Christian Science Committee for Institutional Work in Texas
Forty-Fifth Annual Report
October 8, 2005

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This statewide committee evolved from the efforts of branch churches and societies to respond to the needs of those individuals confined in institutions (hospital, hospice, mental, penal, welfare, and retirement & nursing facilities) who are unable to avail themselves of the activities of Christian Science churches. The committee meets this goal by:

- Providing authorized books and literature.
- Sharing Christian Science on a one-to-one basis.
- Holding Christian Science services.
- Providing Christian Science treatment for individuals who request it.
- Arranging Christian Science lectures.

OUR LEADER'S INTEREST

As a follower of our Master, Mary Baker Eddy was ready to go “into all the world” to preach the gospel. In *Miscellaneous Writings* (112:15) she writes of her own visit to a prisoner, the assassin of President Garfield. Her interest in the possibilities of Christian Science activities in institutions continued, as indicated by Irving C. Tomlinson in his book *Twelve Years with Mary Baker Eddy* (pp 185, 186). A further acknowledgment of her interest is the inclusion in *Miscellaneous Writings* (pp 403-406) of testimonies of healing of a man in the Massachusetts State Prison at Charlestown and of a woman who had been in a state mental hospital.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

As a result of correspondence from an inmate in one of the units of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), The Christian Science Board of Directors requested that Fourth Church, Houston initiate action to establish a statewide committee for institutional work in Texas. By 1960, *Bylaws* of this Committee were approved by The Christian Science Board of Directors. The *Bylaws* were revised in 2002 to reflect and accommodate current circumstances.

ORGANIZATION

This statewide committee comprises representatives or their alternates from each participating branch church or society. Annual meetings of the state committee provide opportunities for branches, through their representatives, to hear reports from the field. An Executive Committee consists of one member each from the metropolitan areas of Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio along with two members-at-large from the less populated areas of the state. The Executive Committee guides and coordinates the work carried on by individual churches, zone committees and specially designated workers. The work at the local level is carried out by individual workers appointed by their church or society, and worker/chaplains appointed by the Executive Committee for specific institutions. The office of the Executive Secretary is available to assist local areas with information, guidance, and literature.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The function of the Executive Committee is to assist the organization and coordination, as necessary, of Christian Science activities in institutions. This includes office activities of general correspondence, paying incurred expenses, receiving and accounting for receipts from churches, societies and individuals. The Executive Secretary's office mails copies of the English and Spanish *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* and other works by Mary Baker Eddy, *Weekly Bible Lessons* to inmates at their own or the request of relatives, Christian Science churches, or Christian Science practitioners. The office also initiates contact with inmates as requested by relatives, Christian Science branch churches, Christian Science practitioners, or The Mother Church and offers to each books, literature, visits (where possible), and applications for free subscriptions to *The Christian Science Monitor* and the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

FIELD ACTIVITIES

HURRICANE KATRINA MINISTERING

Feed my sheep. I just returned from Kelly AFB Crisis Center for the flood victims. I delivered Bibles, textbooks, Sentinels, Journals, and Monitors. There is a table for Chaplains and Ministers set up at the South end of the building. The Science & Health textbooks were gone before I got them out on the table, and there were about 40 Sentinels and a lot of Journals and Monitors, going as fast as we could unpack them.

Meeting human needs. Today was amazing! The Muslim Imam, who I know from Lackland, came up and gave me a great big bear hug, and said: "You people certainly know what you are doing!" He felt the work going on and was most grateful for our being there. A Texas Guard Chaplain (who married six couples there today), a Methodist minister, and several Air Force chaplains, were working 12-hour shifts. A distraught mother had been looking for her missing daughter since last Tuesday week. The daughter had been picked up on a bridge to be saved from the rising water, and the mother was taken to Houston. The daughter needs some type of medical work done three times a week and the mother had just gotten beside herself with grief. We took her to FEMA, and then the RED CROSS, and crosschecked data sheets arriving every few minutes, and found her daughter in a center in Mississippi, got her telephone number and got the mother in touch with her. The Red Cross is going to find a way to send the daughter to San Antonio tomorrow to join her mother, who is now crying tears of joy! It was quite a show for a little while.

BEXAR COUNTY JAIL

Requests for literature. We had a wonderful Bible Study again, yesterday at the Bexar County jail. We had about 50 of them sign up for textbooks, delivered about 16, and taking 12 more back over the weekend, with more coming in. Our church fund is up around \$2,000.00 for the purchase of literature for the committee. We are constantly giving out textbooks and Bibles. I had a call from a former inmate who asked for a textbook and has been studying it for over a year. He comes to the Reading Room occasionally, and has come to church. He loves Christian Science, and has had a physical healing, and a spiritual healing from Romanism. He is most grateful, is steadfast, and has had to move out of his family's home because of his change in faith, but they, too, admit that he has had a wonderful healing. In the past six months, our committee has been busy with its monthly Bible Studies at the Bexar County Jail, where some seventy-five inmates register to study with us, and also sign up for textbooks and other literature. We average about twenty textbooks each month and about thirty Sentinels as they are requested.

LACKLAND AIR FORCE BASE

Sunday services. We are averaging 20 trainees each Sunday morning in the Christian Science service, with many reports of healings of mental, and physical, conditions. The mother of one of our graduates attended our 0800-hour service yesterday. She gave a rousing testimony of how Christian Science had saved her own life and the life of her son, who is graduating with high honors. Her mother had raised six children in Science, protecting all of them from medical intervention, no vaccinations, shots, medical dosing, etc.

Love reflecting Love. The Muslim Chaplain at Lackland, also attended our services yesterday, and was most impressed with all this. He later told me that he had never seen such a well-behaved, and dedicated group of eighteen year olds in his military service. He loved how we were teaching the importance of God and man from our Lesson-Sermons.

Overcoming training difficulties. One man, who had several physical setbacks, was most distraught about not graduating, now has used the truths that Christian Science teaches, turned his life around, and will graduate next Friday. His parents, and his fiancé, are coming to attend his graduation. He is counseling with me about becoming an Air Force chaplain, and we are getting the data for him to study. A young woman, who had not been able to do the physical requirements, started applying the Science she is learning weekly, was given an extra week to get her work in order, has now gone beyond what was needed and will graduate Friday. She keeps telling all the other trainees how grateful she is for what she is learning, and when they hear these testimonies from one of their peers, it takes on a great sense of enthusiasm. Many Bibles and textbooks are delivered weekly, and some of the trainees are sending a copy to their parents.

CARSWELL

Divine guidance. The lady who read the lesson with me has been healed of addictions to alcohol, drugs, and tobacco and feels that she was divinely guided to our meetings. Her experience with AA getting shed of the alcohol problem led her to a deeper search for the true spiritual man. She has embraced daily lesson study with the full text supplied by TMC. When returned to society, she plans to become active in institutional work in some form where she lives. She feels that her history will help others relate and hopefully learn, or at least listen. She is already sharing some truths with others at Carswell and giving out the extra literature that we give her.

Grateful for bilingual Science and Health. I was delighted to welcome back one in the Hospital that had had not met with us for a while. It turns out that she had been involved in an altercation with a couple of other inmates and had been blamed falsely, but wound up in "solitary" for 60 days. She expressed much gratitude for the Science and Health (English/Spanish) that is her prized companion. She is sharing the "good news" and says she will have several new visitors with her next week. Two S&H were left with her for distribution to ones who had requested them, one Spanish, one English.

Daughter healed. During a visit, an incarcerated mom was very distraught because her daughter, who was living in California, was experiencing a severe rash that the doctors could do nothing about. She explained that this daughter had attended a CS Sunday School at times while growing up. A practitioner in that area was contacted with all the needed information. She later reported that her daughter heard from the practitioner promptly and that the skin condition has been healed. She gives much gratitude for the loving support of our local committee and that of the practitioner.

Back pain dissolved. One of the ladies at the Camp area complained of having pain in the lower back area for the past several weeks, and believed it to be a kidney condition. She asked for Christian Science treatment to support her efforts. We talked through the synonyms and explained how it is impossible for a spiritual idea, inseparable from God, infinite good, to experience anything unlike good. She was given specific Bible and S&H references to support her growth. As we got up to leave, she exclaimed, almost in surprise, that her back was no longer pained and that she felt really better. She also asked that we seek help for her husband who is incarcerated in another state, as he is suffering from some serious claims, and that has been done by contact with a practitioner nearer to him.

GEORGE ALLEN

"What's Christian Science?" We had a wonderful hour with these ladies. One lady asked very pointedly "What is Christian Science... I've never heard of it before?" A bit of history and explanation was given and seemed to satisfy and give clarity. The definition of God (pg587) was shared and you could tell it opened thought to new ideas. It was explained that we always expect healing while there – that a problem will be solved, a fear gone away, a heart comforted. One lady immediately spoke up to say how grateful she was to have met with our chaplain and that she already had a healing. The chaplain she had spoken with had sent her the Lord's Prayer with the spiritual interpretation and that after reading and praying with it, she had been completely healed from the terrible dreams that had been plaguing her. They simply ceased. Tears came to her eyes, as she wanted very much for us to tell this to the chaplain and to say "thank you" to her, for her.

Putting off the old man. What a wonderful gathering! Full of love and joy and spirit! Several brought their SH's. Giving a bit of background to Christian Science and Mrs. Eddy is always received with close listening. They are intrigued with the definition of God. They love hearing about their innate goodness and spirituality. When the thought was expressed that once one has a better sense of God and oneself, you just can't go back to old ways... one dear woman said, "That's right!! I understand better the words like 'infinite' and 'omnipotent' – and I can't go back to the old way of thinking about God.

Healing of headache at service. One woman apologized for not remembering something, saying that she has a memory problem and was also struggling with a headache. It was shared that many have healings during the Bible lesson service, and that she could too. It was shared that God never caused nor created such things for his children, so she need not accept this, but claim dominion over it. She liked that thought. She was much freer by the end of service.

What it means to be a Christian Science Volunteer Worker

A Christian Science Worker writes, "A visit with an inmate particularly touched me. The young man came in very distressed and looking like a thundercloud. He seemed confused and had a hard time expressing himself coherently. Things settled down and he became very receptive to the healing verses from the *Bible*. He requested a copy of the *Bible* and showed interest in, and accepted two copies of the *Christian Science Sentinel*. As our meeting concluded, we said the Lord's Prayer together. He got up to leave, but sat back down. He said, 'Sister, I want to sing you a song.' He sang a lovely gospel spiritual in a beautiful, clear voice. He then offered one of the most simple, heartfelt prayers I have ever heard and left with a shining face. During that brief thirty-minute visit, both, he and I witnessed the uplifting, healing Christ. That, it seems to me, is what volunteer chaplain work in jails is all about."

References to *Science and Health*, *S&H*, and *SH* are to the book, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy

Matt. 25

- 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:
- 35 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:
- 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.
- 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?
- 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?
- 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?
- 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Executive Committee Members for 2005-2006

Mr. Bruce Buckner	First Church of Christ, Scientist, Austin
Mr. Jim Dinsmore	First Church of Christ, Scientist, North Richland Hills
Mrs. Anita Huggins, C.S.	First Church of Christ, Scientist, Athens
Mrs. Bonnie Resley	First Church of Christ, Scientist, Midland
Mr. Pedro Saldano	Seventh Church of Christ, Scientist, Houston
Mr. Elden Stalnaker, C.S.	First Church of Christ, Scientist, San Antonio
Mrs. Ramona Travis	Fifth Church of Christ, Scientist, Dallas

Direct inquiries about the work of this Committee to: Executive Secretary

P. O. Box 6309541
Houston, TX 77263-0941
Houston Telephone 713-781-4947

Toll free Telephone: 1-877-643-8080+4830
Fax: 1-713-781-3166
Email: a.c.kramer@swbell.net