

The Christian Science Committee for Institutional Work in Texas
Forty-Sixth Annual Report
October 14, 2006

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

Dallas - Ft. Worth Zone

One worker writes, "In the past, I have always been a tad bit apprehensive (fearful) about this work especially whenever we got to the jail. I worked with the following quotation from S&H, 'The great fact that God **lovingly governs** all, never punishing aught but sin, is your standpoint, from which to advance and destroy the human fear of sickness'".

"I now realize that there is great resistance to CS ministry. During one of our visits, we set up the room and waited at least 30 min before we started. Although we got there before the other gentleman from Covenant Church, they called his floor before ours. When I noticed this seeming anomaly, I started affirming that 'God lovingly governs all.' Darrell then made it clear to the guard on duty that we were not with the other gentleman. In less than 5 minutes, we had a good crowd come for our meeting. The atmosphere was very, very cordial and loving. We sang all 3 hymns. Darrell explained what CS was to them and encouraged them to ask questions at any point during the service. At the end of service, all but one attendant requested different books (Bible, *Science and Health*, and the Quarterly)."

"This was a really good service and it made me acutely aware of the need to pray for everyone involved and the service itself - to do the mental work required to break the mesmeric resistance to CS."

Another Christian Science worker reported the thrill of calming a small boy's distress of leaving a jail after visiting with her with his father by telling him of God's loving motherhood. The boy was responsive to this love expressed by the worker and became quiet.

Lackland Air Force Base

On Friday evenings, I usually have about 35 new trainees in our religious orientation who have just arrived at Lackland that week. These, mostly new to Science, are given a 30 minute orientation about our religion, and one of the greatest things coming out of these periods of discussion is: that it is NOT Scientology, or any other 'ology'. When they come on Sunday, they know what they are coming to, and they bring others. We have 65 to 70 Air Force recruits and Airmen attend our two hour worship service each Sunday. I set up

CS literature for the early-birds to study. This is their family hour to meet new friends, discuss Christian Science, and have counseling when needed.

We have wonderful healings weekly. During the month, one young lady lost a family member and it was all handled wonderfully by the entire body of students practicing the love they had learned to use daily in their work. One young man had had an emergency in his family. Healing resulted and he did not have to miss one day of study. Another man found out that his father had to be hospitalized the second week he came to Lackland and that was healed through prayer. Many are healed of physical problems weekly.

One Protestant minister of a San Antonio church, told us at a chaplains and ministers' meeting how he uses the Christian Science Journal to research his sermons. He has healings at his Lackland services, as well as in his congregation, and tells everyone about Mrs. Eddy's wonderful discovery of healing through prayer. I just gave him a new textbook, since he had worn his other one out.

Young people are graduating every Friday who thought they could not pass the tests required, but found they can through the study of Christian Science. Almost every week, a new recruit tells me that they have friends coming in who they have already shared the 'good news' with.

A young man, who came to our Friday Evening Service has been writing and telephoning his fiancé about finding Christian Science. He had been searching for the right church to attend because he had become dissatisfied with being raised as a Jehovah Witness. He told me that they fit into the military ranks as conscientious objectors; cannot bear arms, will not participate in war, etc. He wants to go into security services, who carry the guns primarily in the Air Force. He is in that part of his training now, and loves it.

He said that he had not attended his own church for several years, and had been visiting many churches, but saw none of them healing, or making him feel that he was a perfect child of God, ...until he came to Lackland. He loves Christian Science and wants to raise his family in Science, and is passing along all he learns to his fiancé. He said that he felt safe raising his family in Science, especially knowing who the real Father-Mother God is!

San Antonio Zone

The San Antonio area workers are always busy with the prison ministry and we always welcome new workers. A lady has just moved to our area who was working in the prison ministry in California and has volunteered to help us with the jail ministry.

We currently do monthly Bible Studies at 4:30 on Wednesday afternoons and have an average of 60 inmates attending regularly. The inmates are given Scripture selections to study one week in advance of each study, that consists of ten programs from the Ten Commandments and the first chapter of Genesis. It always brings healing. We take sign up sheets for those requesting a textbook and then deliver the books to them.

We are on call daily to do personal counseling when requested. During our meetings and counseling the inmates are checked to see if they would be a candidate for the Therapeutic Drug Court Judge Alonso arranges interviews with those that he feels can complete his program that has attracted national attention. Each inmate that we get into this program, saves the county some \$20,000.00 annually. We had 56 graduate last May, and that is a savings of over \$1,000,000.000 for taxpayers. Our Reading Room is visited by inmates once they are free. There they are given a lot of free literature furnished by the Reading Room and the Literature Distribution Committee at church.

Christian Science literature is mailed to inmates in other corrective systems upon request. A lot of literature has been mailed out this past year. Our local branch churches furnish textbooks and publications for those who request it. and several contribute financially. This really helps with the large expense incurred by our busy ministry work. Metaphysical support is the greatest activity needed, and our daily needs are being met.

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Miscellaneous Writings, page 263:

These two words in Scripture suggest the sweetest similes to be found in any language — *rock* and *feathers*: "Upon this rock I will build my church;" "He shall cover thee with His feathers." How blessed it is to think of you as "beneath the shadow of a great rock in a weary land," safe in His strength, building on His foundation, and covered from the devourer by divine protection and affection. Always bear in mind that His presence, power, and peace meet all human needs and reflect all bliss.

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

Executive Committee Members for 2006-2007

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| Mr. Jim Dinsmore | First Church of Christ, Scientist, North Richland Hills |
| Ms. Judy Reigle | First Church of Christ, Scientist, Midland |
| Mr. Pedro Saldano | Seventh Church of Christ, Scientist, Houston |
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