

# TRUTH *Leads to* HEALING

COMMITTEE ON CHRISTIAN SCIENCE WORK IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY INSTITUTIONS

ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015

## *What do Chaplains and workers do?*

Each week, our chaplains and workers conduct Christian Science Church Services at the penal institutions throughout Los Angeles County. The services provided to inmates include the reading of the weekly Bible Lesson Sermon, offerings of free Christian Science literature, and one-on-one meetings with our chaplains. These services are often the very first exposure inmates have had to Christian Science. The inmates are overwhelmingly grateful for the service. Sometimes they break into applause and “amen” as the service closes. Most leave with some free literature they select for themselves from the abundant supply provided by branch churches. Copies of all our periodicals, the Bible, and *Science and Health* are distributed, and this sizeable flow of the good news of Christian Science then makes its way into a population that has plenty of time to read and think.

## *What healing impact do these services have on inmates?*

An inmate was having serious problems with her “bunkie” (roommate) who, she said, was very mean and obnoxious — a challenge in the extremely close quarters in which they live 24/7. The inmate sought out a private conversation with our chaplain and read aloud passages pointed out to her from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy. The next week at a service with 30 other inmates, she asked if she could give her report of gratitude. She shared her thought process noting how the problem was healed and stated, “Christian Science really works.” The others in the service clapped enthusiastically!

Another woman asked for help with her addictions and was reminded by the chaplain of the passage in the Lesson that week about being “made in His image and likeness.” Several weeks later, she reported to the chaplain

how she had been applying this truth and others that she was finding in The Bible and *Science and Health*. Her fear and thought of addiction had left, and now she feels a sense of peace and joy.

Medical x-rays taken in prison showed an inmate had two herniated discs in her back. She attended a Christian Science service and talked with the chaplain. The woman inmate studied the books and periodicals she had been given, felt much better, and decided to ask that she be x-rayed again. Medics now found no evidence of the problem they had earlier diagnosed. She told the chaplain, “I just knew this is the truth I have been seeking for all my life.”

Another man was excited to come to one of our church services. He said he’d been given a copy of *Science and Health* several years ago when he was in another jail and had studied it some. He had attended church services off and on when he was on the outside (including services of other denominations), but he really liked what Mary Baker Eddy had to say and felt it was the truth laid out in the Bible. He told of a healing which he attributed to prayer in Christian Science. He had been shot several times and while in the hospital had stopped breathing. In his conscious moments, passages he had read from our textbook came to him, and he held onto them. While in the hospital he met someone who knew something about Christian Science and who agreed to pray with and for him. As a result, he had a complete healing. He was in awe of the presence of God he had felt, and grateful that God had sent someone to pray with him. He has remained grateful to Christian Science for saving his life.

An inmate in juvenile camp, who was waiting for the Chaplain, introduced himself and said he was in a dorm that hadn’t been called to Bible classes for many months. He had no religious knowledge and had never attended a church. After the Chaplain shared with him some ideas

about God, man, and Christ Jesus and his purpose, the young man read Bible verses confirming these ideas. He was very sincere, receptive and rejoiced in what he was learning. At the end of the class he asked for prayer because he was going to court the next day. He was told to keep his mind focused on two Bible passages. The following week he said, in a humble, joyful and grateful way, that the judge had reduced his sentence and he would be going home for Thanksgiving.

The women continue to be receptive and grateful for our church services. About ten women attend faithfully each service. One, who had been dealing with a chronic physical problem, said the condition had improved. She said her thought was much more receptive and expectant of healing. The Chaplain agreed to continue to pray for her and told her that "Truth is always the victor." The next week she smiled and said everything was much better. It is always a joy to see the women so eager to attend and humbling to witness the power of the Christ message uplifting and blessing them.

### *Inmates moved and inspired to change and grow.*

A young man said he knew nothing about Christ Jesus or Christianity and was hoping to learn something that would help him stay out of trouble and find a better way of thinking and a better life. His innocent, pure thought was receptive. He was eager to drink in the truths revealed in the teachings of Christ Jesus as explained in Christian Science. He loved what he heard and learned.

An individual was arrested for stealing and wanted to free himself of this desire. He had a copy of the Lord's Prayer from our service and said that he was going to study the line, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." He felt supported and strengthened.

A woman inmate came to her first service and found herself saying "Yes" to so many passages she was hearing for the first time.

After a recent service, a quiet young man who attends services regularly said, "Christian Science saved my life." He thanked the Chaplain for coming and said he had been healed and would be going home at the end of November. He returned to his pod with his *Science and Health*.

Before one of our services, a man came to the Chaplain privately to say he was being released and this would be his last Christian Science service. He had made a beautiful box with pictures from the Christian Science periodicals taped or glued around it. Inside was a very kind and thoughtful message of gratitude. He said Christian Science had really

made a difference in his life, and he would continue reading *Science and Health*. Because of security issues, the Chaplain was unable to accept the gift, but explained that the thoughtfulness would be cherished.

One man was moved to tears with the idea that Jesus saw through the sin and sickness to what God really knew of His creation, whole and good, and that was how sinners were saved and the sick were healed. He didn't seem to know what to say, except that he'd never been able to see himself or others that way and what a light it shed on everything in his experience.

After a service, a woman stood up, weeping, and said, "I'm going to miss you. I'm leaving next week. You don't know how much you have helped me these last five months. You have saved my life."

A man came up after a service wanting to talk and asking if the Chaplain would pray for him. He said he didn't know how to control his violent temper. In tears he said that his parents had never raised him to be violent. He just didn't know how to stop the cycle; but, coming to our service, he said he felt something there that offered him some hope. The Chaplain talked with him about his being God's idea, God's reflection, and that since the Bible tells us that God is Love, he had to be the image and likeness of Love. He just couldn't get away from that. As Love's reflection, he had to be loving as well as loveable, and he had to be completely loved. The example of a mirror and its source was used: the reflection couldn't do anything different from its source. It's a "done deal," and he could remind himself of that each time he felt himself reacting negatively to situations around him. The example seemed to comfort him, and he thanked the Chaplain for coming.

A young man recently came to a church service in a general population module. He said Christian Science had really helped him when he was in the psych module. He loved listening to the Bible Lessons and reading Christian Science literature. He was able to decline medication, think clearly and felt more joyful. This resulted in his transfer to the general population. Holding *Science and Health*, he said, "This book has changed my life. I've never felt so free and happy as I do now."

Many men comment about how uplifted they feel after attending a Christian Science church service. One man said to the chaplain, "You are always so joyful!" A first-time attendee said, "This is really good stuff. It's such a different way of thinking about God and man. It really is a different kind of church."

# Lectures.

One lecturer focused on the question, "Are you ready to take the first step?" He noted that the desire to trust God to guide us when we find ourselves in difficult situations is effective. God is always there directing our path to more harmonious relationships and stable health, breaking through self-doubts and fears. We are never stuck in a problem. The lecturer recounted a healing of rheumatic fever, supposedly incurable, during his teen years. His lengthy stay in the hospital provided time to study the textbook, *Science and Health*. The consequent growth in his understanding of his true relationship to God ultimately brought about permanent healing. Forty-six copies of *Science and Health* and three Bibles were distributed. At the second lecture that day, deputies allowed us to invite inmates from every dorm on the floor, something that never happens as they do not mix inmates with different security levels. Forty-three men were in attendance.

Another lecturer spoke on the topic, "God's Love Answers All Your Needs." This was particularly true for the lecture that day when the floor sergeant said he would only allow fifteen to twenty men to attend the lecture, but twenty-six men showed up. It was then discovered that the deputies had not mentioned to all of the men that they were being let out for a Bible-based talk about the practice of Christian Science; nevertheless, all the men were very receptive. The lecturer had them engaged, laughing and asking questions. They seemed to relate to him and feel the love he genuinely expressed.

Another lecturer's talk completely fit what the men are dealing with. So often these men are told they are worthless and will never amount to anything. At this talk they were told not to try to replace one material story with another material story but to focus on God and His/Her perfect creation. A healing was shared of a graduate student who was blind in one eye. The Holy Spirit could not see him as such. He could not be outside God. So the prayer lifted him out of the material story.

At two lectures in Men's Central Jail, there were a number of very attentive inmates. One healing shared by the lecturer was of a homeless man in his neighborhood who would scream at people as they passed by. The lecturer decided to see the man as God's image - the perfect child of God. The man began to be helpful to others in the neighborhood and would speak intelligently in a clear mind. The lecturer also shared a healing of an inmate with lung cancer. He had come to a Christian Science service and left with a completely new concept of himself, which brought about the healing of the cancer.

Some of the men wiped away tears from their eyes as they were told that they were made according to Genesis 1 - "very good," and that they were not the "dust men" of Genesis 2. The inmates then shared experiences of how they had felt God's love and appreciated the fact that the lecturer was there to help them answer questions they had from reading *Science and Health*.

## Lectures Given During The Year

- May 5: Jon Benson, Men's Central Jail
- March 29: Enrique Smeke, Men's Central Jail (one lecture in Spanish and one in English)
- April 10: Ricardo Saldivar, Men's Central Jail
- October 10: Mark Swinney, Men's Central Jail
- November 30: Jose de Dios Mata, Men's Central Jail

## Thank you to the...

branch churches who sponsored a lecture this year in the jails where it is so needed and appreciated! We invite the branch churches of Los Angeles County to give the gift of a lecture to those who can then re-enter each of our communities with transformed lives.



*Chaplains see the message* of divine Science and the efforts of our Institutional work blessing and proving itself fruitful in these individuals' experiences. Overall, the men have shown a great sense of appreciation and respect for the services provided to them. The work is blessing the chaplains as well, our Institutions Committee, the Cause of Christian Science and our branch churches.

These are only a few glimpses of the inspiring, transforming work that goes on each week throughout Los Angeles County at its penal institutions – all done by volunteers from branch churches.

The Committee would like to thank all of the branch churches for their financial support, donations of literature, representatives, and for sharing our fruitage with their memberships.



**FINANCIAL REPORT**

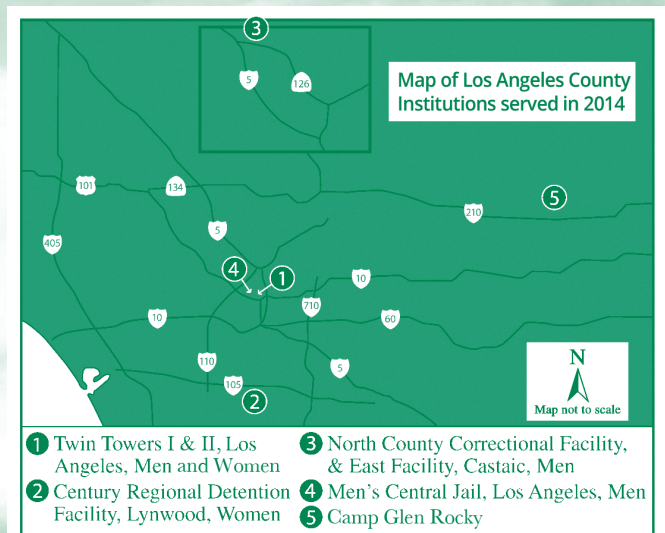
Total Receipts: \$35,827  
 Total Disbursements: \$44,669.

**Executive Board**

Jonathan Barner, Chairman  
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*If you are interested in supporting the activities of this Committee or becoming involved in our healing ministry, please contact:*

**Nanci Newman, Secretary/Treasurer**  
 Committee on Christian Science Work  
 in Los Angeles County Institutions  
 P.O. Box 393  
 Los Angeles, CA 90078  
 Telephone: (323) 664-4910  
 E-mail: cs\_la\_ci@yahoo.com  
 WEB: prayerthatheals.com/institutions



**TO SUPPORT AND KNOW ABOUT INSTITUTIONAL WORK**

- Pray for our services
- Attend a monthly Fruitage Meeting
- Become a worker or rep (from your church)
- Help prepare literature – remove staples
- Donate funds to purchase copies of the Bible and Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures
- Visit prayerthatheals.com/institutions