



Christian Science Institutional Committee for New York State

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THE WORK CONTINUES

People have asked how the current mandates related to the pandemic have affected our work. The answer is, They have not stopped our sharing of the Christ, Truth! Our work continues uninterrupted by sin, disease or death.

Divine Love reaches beyond the limits imposed on the Christian Science Institutional Committee by government mandates. These limits stated that there should be no more visits with prison inmates or nursing home residents, nor should Christian Science church services be held in nursing homes, prisons or youth facilities. These rules apply to all religious groups.

But the healing truths of Christian Science cannot be locked down, locked out, or manipulated by anyone anywhere. They exist in Mind and the children of God have that one Mind. Our prayers pass right through the barriers. Truth is ever-present. Purity is a quality of God and, therefore, ever-present. Man is safe in God's care completely protected by divine Love. These simple statements encourage and uplift those who seem to be trapped in mortal thinking. They open wide the windows of heaven to allow showers of blessings.

Correspondence with prison inmates has increased due to the distribution of electronic tablets to those serving time in our New York State facilities, making it easier for them to contact us by email, and making it possible for us to respond immediately if necessary.

When the news was first reported of the pandemic, we wrote to those whom we felt would take a prayerful approach to the news. We worked with Psalms 23 and 91, the Sermon on the Mount, especially the Lord's Prayer. A few of the men gathered in groups to share their thoughts and to increase an atmosphere of hope and freedom from the pandemic. They reassured each other that God would protect them and keep them from harm. What started as panic, with calls and emails expressing fear and helplessness, became calls of faith in God.

When the news of the tragic happenings in Minneapolis and the ensuing demonstrations which followed were reported, there was a natural progression to pray for all mankind regarding race relations and justice reform. We have maintained throughout that Love is the

only answer to all the problems of mankind, and that our prayers are powerful protests of Truth which will bring healing to all. Love will be triumphant over every claim of evil.

The events of the present have turned the thoughts of those we serve to pray for all mankind instead of just themselves. We have seen a greater sense of compassion for their fellow inmates and their families.

An inmate, who has been transferred many times from one facility to another, called a worker daily for several weeks screaming and carrying on about how terrible things were, and how afraid he was concerning the conditions in the world. Each time he was reminded that he was in the presence of God right where he was, and he would eventually calm down. Then one day he called and read a poem he found in a recent *Christian Science Sentinel*. He read it beautifully, calmly, with great meaning. His calls since have included the reading of articles from the *Sentinel*, passages from the Bible, and genuine healing thoughts.

Another man, determined to bring the word of God to his section in the prison, started prayer gatherings centered on the 91st Psalm. He had had very little contact with his family over many years. He asked for prayer to be reunited with them. Within a very short time he received a letter from a relative putting him in contact with his family and there has been a complete healing of their relationship. He continually expresses his joy and gratitude for this healing, eagerly acknowledging God's presence and power. He has shared a few of the hymns from the *Christian Science Hymnal* with his sister and she found them very comforting when she was dealing with an illness. He hopes to go into the ministry when he is released.

SUFFOLK ZONE REPORT

This report was presented by Fran Iwanicki at the Christian Science Institutional Committee Annual Open Meeting, held November 17, 2019, at Fifth Church of Christ, Scientist, New York, N.Y. It presents the Zone's activities before current restrictions were in place.

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness:.." (Ps 100:2) The workers of the Suffolk Zone of the Institutional Committee do serve with joy and gladness. Our Zone is blessed with twelve dedicated workers, who take turns serving in the Riverhead Jail every Monday afternoon and at the Yaphank Jail every other Thursday afternoon. Our workers come from Southampton and Patchogue Christian Science Churches and the Bay Shore Christian Science Society. The love for the institutional work that these workers display is absolutely inspiring. They travel great distances to get to these jails in all kinds of weather.

Recently our Zone co-chair, Jinny Ewald, retired from that position after many years at the helm. Her work has been invaluable to our Zone. She has been a liaison to the officers in charge of the Rehab Unit at the facilities and has implemented many improvements for us over the years.

There was a time when the guards at the Riverhead Jail were not very cooperative and a bit negative. However, we prayed about this, and we have been receiving wonderful coopera-

tion since. Within the year a new Lieutenant took over the Rehab Unit and although the past commanding officer was very kind to us, this new officer has opened many doors, such as getting us into Yaphank Jail and changing our time slots from evening to afternoon. It has proved to be a great blessing at the Riverhead Jail since we have had better attendance.

For several years our Zone had been trying to obtain a time slot at the Yaphank Jail. Jinny was able to secure an evening slot to have Christian Science Bible lesson studies there.

We like to have our Services announced as "Christian Science Bible Lesson Studies," rather than just "Christian Science," so the inmates understand that we will be focusing on the Bible. We choose a Lesson Sermon from the previous month's Full Text Quarterly to read with the inmates and each one is given a Full Text Quarterly to keep. They love taking turns reading and participating in discussions during the hour or so session. The Bible stories are very meaningful to them—something that they usually can relate to. We end our sessions with the Lord's Prayer and its spiritual interpretation given in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, by Mary Baker Eddy.

While we were still conducting our Services in the evening at Riverhead, another Bible study ministry met at the same time. Their attendees passed by our table, which was piled up with a substantial number of *Christian Science Monitors* and *Sentinels*, as well as Bibles and copies of *Science and Health*. Many of the men asked if they might take our literature, which we gave away gladly. Each week a few would stop by for more. One or two asked for a Bible or *Science and Health*, which we gave them. One young man from the other group said that he had read *Science and Health* several times. He is due to be released this month and has expressed his desire to attend the Patchogue Christian Science church, which is near to his home. We are eager to welcome him.

One of the inmates who attends the other Bible study group but frequently takes our literature and is reading *Science and Health*, seeing that we did not have any attendees one evening, remarked "You must never stop coming here." Another inmate attending our service was so grateful to discover *The Monitor*. He remarked that it is a much better publication than *Time* or *Newsweek*, and "so impactful," as he hugged his copies to his chest with such a look of gratitude.

We sent an e-mail to the *Monitor* editor, conveying these sentiments. In response Mark Sappenfield wrote: "That is so great! We hear so often about how much *The Monitor* means to inmates. We're always looking for new ways to support institutional work. It's wonderful to hear about the work you're doing."

All the workers who serve at both facilities are joyful and expectant. They serve with great love and the attendees feel this. After each Bible Lesson study we send an e-mail to each Zone worker summarizing who attended and how things went. To read these short reports is so inspiring. The love expressed is very palpable. And it is a joy to see the encouraging remarks from the co-workers.

After many weeks of serving at the Yaphank Jail with no inmates attending, a worker was led to send a beautiful e-mail of encouragement to all the Yaphank workers. I'll share it with you:

"Winston Churchill gave a talk during WWII in which at the podium he turned to the left and said, 'NEVER GIVE UP!' Then he turned straight ahead, and said, 'NEVER GIVE UP!' Then he leaned to the right, and said, 'NEVER GIVE UP!' Then he left the stage. This came to mind with regard to praying for our work at the jails. Divine Mind will melt the mortal thought trying to block the attraction to Truth. Staying at our post will bring success even though it demands continuous work when you don't immediately see the fruit of your labors. That is what you are doing with so much love and patience. I appreciate and respect your devotion to this Christian Science Cause."

Jesus said, "For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth." (Luke 22:27) We are in good company when we are doing the Lord's work. Our Zone is grateful for all our workers who serve so unselfishly and for the New York State Institutional Committee that is doing such great work throughout our state.

The Christian Science Institutional Committee is so very grateful for the support of all Christian Science Churches and Societies in New York State for enabling us to serve.



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