

# The Christian Science Institutional Service Committee for the State of Oregon



## Message From The Executive Committee

"LOVE the Liberator."

Everyone of us is born with the desire to love and to be loved. When that desire is thwarted, a kind of perversion occurs. Hurting people tend to strike out to hurt others. But treat them with love and respect and they will blossom. Show trust and appreciation, and they reward you, often far exceeding our expectations.

Love always triumphs. Jesus set that example for us 2,000 years ago. Right where defeat was blatant came the greatest triumph the world has ever known.

When I began serving in a correctional institution, fulfilling a childhood dream, this understanding was the foundation of my work - discovering this beautiful, innocent, amazing child full of potential and joy and love.

Virtually all the men I have worked with are attending church regularly, having "turned their lives around," and many are also working to "give back" to the community. One is involved almost full-time mentoring those at risk.

We can completely trust God to always know what's perfect for us and to be working His purpose out in our lives to the minutest detail. Nothing is wasted in God. All our unique experiences work out to be a blessing, and to bless others in wonderful and unexpected ways.

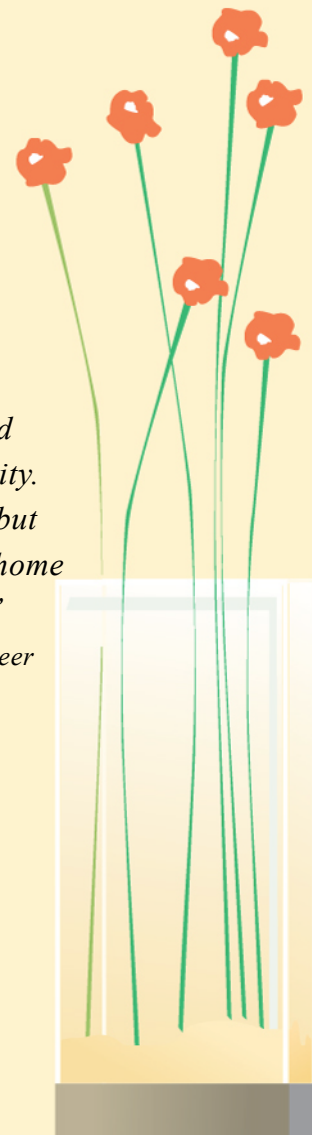
Our job-description - our duty, our privilege, our joy - is to express God, to rejoice in Him and in each other as He rejoices in us - to love Him and each other as He loves us. This is our primal urge, to be His perfect, complete, lovely reflection, even as He has made us to be.

The ability to demonstrate the love of God is ours - eternally, lawfully, gloriously ours. No one is left out, no matter what their lot in life. Either here or hereafter, each one of us will discover it for ourselves. And, as St. Paul said, '...behold, now is the accepted time ...' (II Cor 6:2)

Merry Peix-Sherman, Executive Board

*"I have never been involved  
in a more rewarding activity.  
We go out to bless them, but  
we are the ones who go home  
feeling doubly blessed."*

*Quote from a volunteer*



## ***Christly Example***

One of the girls gave a wonderful account on how another girl in the group had been a terrific Christly example to her. Apparently this girl was baited by a group of other girls to say she had lied about something, but she wouldn't react. At dinner, one of the girls that had been baiting her was in the line of fire when a girl threw her dinner at a staff member. Despite how she had been treated earlier by this girl, she came right to her aid and helped her clean up and loaned her clothes to wear. This girl was amazed at this wonderful example.

## ***Going Forward***

Though we only had one girl in each study group, it was a happy occasion as both were expected to be released soon. One expects to be reunited with her baby daughter - something that seemed out of the question two weeks ago, and the other expects to go into the Job Corps and truly begin anew, where her past is not known. We talked about listening to God and how to make it central in their lives, to pause and listen to good thoughts and the "still, small voice" of Truth before they speak or act, and to be willing to get help when needed. One girl took the Sentinel "I will listen for Thy voice" and was reminded that the answer to the question, "who are you?" is "I am the image and likeness of God." The other girl has a very thorough grounding in the Bible and was encouraged to keep her treasure chest of Bible verses in her heart that remind her that she is capable, pure, and able to be her true self as she goes forward.



## ***Rebuilding***

As volunteers, we always prepare our thought before entering a facility. Tonight we talked about focusing on the story of Nehemiah from that week's lesson and afterwards we felt it was an inspired and effective evening. With each group we told the story of Nehemiah as an example about how to effectively rebuild their lives when they leave. Through the story we stressed using the time they had left in the facility for quiet, redirection, and prayer before going out to rebuild. Nehemiah also modeled an excellent strategy for staying focused on his mission when "friends" repeatedly tried to get him to leave the work and "come down to them," and how Nehemiah did not react or lose his focus even when they tried to publicly spread dangerous lies about his work. And as they all worked, they carried a weapon in one hand, wonderful metaphor for "being a law to themselves". The building of the wall was a metaphor for building strong defenses in thought.

## ***Substance***

In our study group on the subject of "Substance" one of the words we worked with was "ingredients". When we spoke of ingredients, it was asked what comes to mind? The answer was a recipe. They were asked did they know the Bible is often referred to as "the recipe for healing". They had not heard that before. It was then asked what happens with any recipe if you leave out an ingredient or a portion of the right amount required. Answers were: it doesn't work, it doesn't have flavor, or the texture is affected. It was pointed out, it is the same with us, we all have the same ingredients, Life, Truth, Love, Mind, Soul, Principle, Spirit, but if we don't acknowledge and use these ingredients in the ways called for in our recipe (our recipe being any situation that calls for aid) and see the importance of how each one of these ingredients enhances our lives, lives are effected in the same way. Each of us stirs these ingredients in a different way, just like a chef, some use an egg beater, a spoon, a blender, some don't use anything and still others don't even release the ingredients from the package, but those that do stir and blend these ingredients together can bring about a perfect result. It isn't important which tools you use to stir, but it is important that you blend all the ingredients together to end up with a perfect product and in this case perfect, complete man of God's making. So they were asked to ask themselves what is the ingredient of my thought and will it bring about a rich full flavor that will bless mankind and is the texture of my thought tender, loving and palatable? We had so much fun and got so much "food for thought", (no pun intended) from pursuing questions from a culinary background regarding this subject. Try it you'll like it.

