

“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.” (John 6:63)

FRUITAGE REPORT

Christian Science Reading Room Jointly Maintained at the San Francisco International Airport Spring 2021

Greetings and blessings from the Christian Science Reading Room at the San Francisco International Airport. John Mitchell, a long time attendant and previous board member of our Reading Room, gave us a wonderful message for our annual meeting. Enjoy some excerpts from his talk, *The Timeless Relevance of Christian Science Reading Rooms*:

“I have loved my association with the SFO Reading Room over the last 15+ years. I love knowing there’s a haven *from* the world right in the midst of one of the busiest international airports *in* the world. There’s no proselytizing, no overt marketing, no call to prayers—just a gracious presence that welcomes anyone to find and feel the Christ.

“No matter where a Reading Room is located, it can be somewhat intimidating to serve there! But I will never forget a key point that our wonderful Committee on Publication for Northern California, and CSB, Eric Nelson, shared at one of his seminars. Essentially, he said, ‘We don’t have to be authorities on Christian Science when we are asked a question, nor do we have to give the perfect answer. Instead, we simply share what our own experience has been in Christian Science—how it has animated our life. That’s the most important thing to say and is what the questioner is most interested in hearing.’ Our own stories are central to the way we engage with fellow church members and with the outside world.



“How often do we pray to support the CSRR as a healing presence in our community? As a presence that uplifts the neighborhood, protects the neighborhood, and maybe even startles the neighborhood awake to a different reality? It’s a peace-filled place for ‘earnest longings’ to be revealed and responded to. It’s a quiet place for individual study and where one can find a safe and comfortable community—just the visitor

and the librarian or attendant — to more deeply explore *The Word*. What an invitation the Reading Room is for us, as practicing Christians, to share the fact and the proof — *our own healing experience* — that ‘He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered *them* from their destructions’ (Psalms 107:20). The Reading Room is a non-judgmental and discreet oasis.

It’s an uninterrupted place where ideas can be tried out, shared, developed, researched. Its presence, *its vibe*, is all about healing, even when we don’t know that we’re looking for healing or needing healing. Just think of the countless blessings Reading Rooms have been privy to, if not instigated, through the years—more evidence of ongoing relevance!

“From my vantage point, a lot of people *are* searching for God—they’re seeking a spiritual view because they see a human picture that appears to be hopelessly flawed, if not shattered. The CS Reading Room and the attendants or librarians who serve there offer the open hand that aids their search. (That sounds to me like the Reading Room has timeless relevance.)

"There's no magic formula for a Christian Science Reading Room to be successful. It's not complicated. It takes work and a commitment to doing it. It requires the power of prayer, including those of the membership, as well as dedicated human effort. The stories that touch us always include an attendant who has devoted time to praying while serving—which invariably draws the seeker (if not several) to the window, and then through the open door. Christian Science Reading Rooms have changed the way they look to remain current with the times. But their purpose, their feel, their outreach to the world—their relevance as the open hand of the Christ, Truth—is truly timeless." —JM

Enjoy the fruitage reported by our attendants:

A man came in and asked, "What is Christian Science?" and immediately began telling me his story. I listened a little while, and he told me he was a terrible sinner and had been to prison. I said, "It is OK. You are better than you think you are. Stop beating up on yourself. You are a good man who has made a mistake or two, and who hasn't?" He said, "What about judgment day?" I said, according to *Science and Health with the Key to the Scriptures* (to which I was about to introduce him), judgment is ongoing here on earth. "No final judgment awaits mortals, for the judgment-day of wisdom comes hourly and continually, even the judgment by which mortal man is divested of all material error." (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, Mary Baker Eddy, p. 291:28–31) Finally, he let me tell him that Mary Baker Eddy figured out how Jesus healed and wrote this wonderful book. He had several questions which I answered, and I told him these were answered more fully in the "Physiology" and "Science, Theology and Medicine" chapters of *Science and Health*. I asked him if he had \$13 to buy the book and he replied, "No!" Behind the desk I found a small blue leather *Science and Health* which had few markings, and I gave it to him. He treated it like a treasure. I saw him later in the airport when he walked by, and he waived at me with the little book in his hand. Before he left, he told me he would read it and share it, and I prayed that it blesses everyone who has it henceforth.

A traveling young man came in and said, "I'm not a Christian Scientist but would just like to look around and read for a bit." I encouraged him to do so. He looked through our older and

free periodicals and after several minutes selected two *Journals* to take with him. After looking through our displays, he asked if we had any books that were authored other than by Mary Baker Eddy, and I led him to the space behind the attendant's desk and showed him several books that would meet his need, including some of the autobiographies for sale. He spent about 10 minutes perusing and reading through various books and then turned around and said, "I'd like to buy this one." I exclaimed, "Excellent, you selected *Science and Health!*" Despite his earlier comments, I had a sense that *Science and Health* was the book he was seeking and searching for all along. The visitor departed very happy and grateful for his "find," and the on-coming attendant gave him directions to security and his connecting gate.

A woman was waiting when I came in at 8 a.m. She really wanted some literature. I immediately put the literature basket outside the door and she looked through it. She selected a *Christian Science Monitor* and a *Christian Science Sentinel* and remarked, "I wish more people knew of this wonderful literature you provide!" I could not help thinking, "It's the best in the world." I said, "It provides solutions to every conceivable human problem!"

An employee of the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) came in and asked, "What is this place? I pass it all the time but really should ask." I told him we are a bookstore and we sell the writings of Mary Baker Eddy, who figured out how Jesus healed. She got really good at it and taught other people how to do it, and eventually they wanted to start a church. So they did. She had trouble getting her books published, so she started the Christian Science Publishing Society. He asked, "Do you have the book?" I showed him the *Science and Health* on display, specifically the first page, first sentence, of chapter one, and read it out loud. I asked if he wanted a copy, and he replied, "Yes, I think I do." He gave me \$20 and would not accept the change!

One of our attendants was vacationing in Hawaii, and staying at a bed and breakfast. The couple they were staying with had some real physical challenges. The attendant mentioned to the couple that she was a Christian Scientist and that through their understanding of God and man and Christian Science their needs for

healing would be met. Would they be open to spiritual healing? They were very receptive. The attendant tried to find a local reading room but was unsuccessful, so she thought of our reading room, knowing we were open for business. She called us, and gave us their name and address, and we sent the couple a copy of *Science and Health*, a *Christian Science Journal*, a *Christian Science Sentinel* and *Christian Science Monitor*. I mailed these to them on my way home and was told they arrived in two or three days. We were so happy we could help! I am confident the couple are on the way to full healing and spiritual growth.

A young man came in while waiting to be picked up. He asked, "What is Christian Science? Your sign intrigued me." We discussed God's creation is "very good"—"perfect for the purpose God designed it," according to *Dummelow's Bible Commentary* by John Dummelow. He asked about a virus. I explained that a virus is not from God. As to his concern that evil could win over good, we reviewed the account in revelation where the dragon is defeated—the battle was already won! Before his ride arrived, he selected a *Christian Science Monitor* and six or seven *Christian Science Sentinels* from the Free Literature basket. And I was able to explain how he could find a church or reading room at his final destination through ChristianScience.com.

One of our Fruitage Report readers called to tell us how much she enjoyed our reports. She is a librarian at a downtown reading room. She noticed that in nearly every account the attendant introduces the visitor to Christian Science, its founder, Mary Baker Eddy, and that the attendant presents *Science and Health* and invites the purchase. The caller said she got a visitor who asked, "What is this place? What is Christian Science?" She introduced the visitor to Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy and her discovery, and invited the visitor to purchase the book—and she sold her first copy of *Science and Health!* Bravo!

A woman came in asking about how to help her nephew who has a problem with addiction. We talked about Christianity and how Christian Science is Christian. I had noticed the 2018 *Christian Science Sentinel* on addiction in the Free Basket and gave her that and a *Journal* so her nephew could find a church near him. Then she mentioned not understanding the Bible. I

explained how *Science and Health* is a key to the Scriptures, and just like a key doesn't replace a door, it opens the door, *Science and Health* helps explain the Bible. She accepted an older full-text bible lesson CD as a gift. We looked in the *Journal* and found there is a church near her. I also told her about a chronological Study Bible. I read it last year and encouraged her to study the Bible herself.

A man from the Ukraine came in with appreciation for the Reading Room as a place to pray. He said, "Every airport should have something like this." We spoke for several minutes discussing Christian Science. He left with one of our brochures.

Three employees from U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agency stopped in during their extended break from a day-long training session. They were inspired by the fact we had a presence at the airport and thought it was wonderful we had been there to serve employees and travelers for 64 years. Following their initial questions and a brief explanation of how a Christian Science Reading Room serves communities around the world, the three visitors were immediately drawn to the colorful display of small pamphlets devoted to spiritually addressing many topics and issues pertinent to the times. One of the visitors took particular interest in and inquired as to the meaning of the pamphlet titled *Healing Animal Magnetism*. I explained that animal magnetism is any thought or claim that comes to our thinking that directly or even subtly opposes God, good, and that and that recognizing these false thoughts helps us correctly see ourselves as the perfect image and likeness, or reflection, of His creation. "How lovely!" the visitor responded. Each of the three visitors then proceeded to select and purchase a pamphlet to take with them — *God's Law of Adjustment; Possession; and True Womanhood*. As they cheerfully departed, one visitor said to another, "I like yours, too. Let's swap and share pamphlets after we've each had an opportunity to read the one we each selected!"

I met a woman in the Ladies Room and she asked where I was going. I told her we had a little store just inside the front door. She said, "I will come in." She did, and I listened to her tell me about her experiences in 2020. It was very hard on her because her beloved husband passed on. I let her pour her heart out and I stood quietly, feeling great compassion for her.

When she looked up, I told her that really there is no death. We talked awhile and she was somewhat comforted. I introduced her to *Science and Health* and to Mrs. Eddy, but her ride showed up soon thereafter. I do think she will come again when she comes through the airport.

A lovely woman from Utah came into the Reading Room and asked, "What is Christian Science?" and I was so happy to invite her to sit down. I had not heard that question as often as I would like since the decline in airline traffic. She was introduced to Mary Baker Eddy and her discovery of Christian healing in the Scriptures, and was told how she came to write her wonderful book. She said she was a Christian and open to new ideas about it. I asked for the sale and she said, "Oh yes, I would love to have a copy." I was elated. As she paid for it, she said, "I have a question for you." Expecting a metaphysical or Scriptural question, I was surprised to hear her ask me how she could get to the Indian Consulate. I laughed at myself as we found it on the computer map and she was told the best way to get there.

A man read our *Christian Science Monitor* window display, and I waved at him and pointed to the free literature box. And then I turned my hand as if to encourage him to help himself. He took two *Christian Science Monitors*, a *Christian Science Journal* and a *Christian Science Sentinel*. Then he popped his head in the door and thanked us for being Christian, and for being here, in the airport! He told me God had saved his life from a car wreck which was supposed to have been fatal. He was totally

healed through the prayers of his friends and loved ones. I beamed and thanked him for helping himself to our literature.

Please visit us on the Web at

www.csreadingroom-sfo.org

Tel: 650-821-0105

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the many Christian Science churches and individuals for their interest in and support of this Reading Room. We have been here for 64 years, meeting the spiritual needs of travelers and airport personnel. We are requesting more volunteers to staff the Reading Room as well as prayerful support and financial contributions.

We thank our participating churches that serve on the board year round. They are:

First Church of Christ, Scientist, San Francisco, CA
Ninth Church of Christ, Scientist, San Francisco, CA
First Church of Christ, Scientist, Oakland, CA
First Church of Christ, Scientist, Palo Alto, CA
First Church of Christ, Scientist, Los Altos, CA
First Church of Christ, Scientist, Hayward, CA
First Church of Christ, Scientist, San Rafael, CA

For comments, questions, or to send a donation, please visit our website or mail to:

Christian Science Reading Room
Jointly Maintained
Harley Bennett, Treasurer
23871 Willows Drive, #384
Laguna Hills, CA 92653

Donations Doubled until May 31, 2021

We have a most generous donor who has offered to double the amount you give up to \$21,000. This will allow us to keep our doors open—to travelers and to the world community.

To make your donation, send a check to our Treasurer (address above)

or visit our website at www.csreadingroom-sfo.org.

We are an IRS-approved 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.