

**DRAFT**  
**Reading Room Report to Members – October 25, 2016**

Mr. President, Fellow Members,

When a Pharisee lawyer tested Jesus by asking him, "...which is the great commandment in the law?" our Master answered, "'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.... And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself' (Matt 22). Our free provision of the spiritual riches of a Reading Room to our community demonstrates our loving obedience to these two commandments. And the unselfish service of librarians and a few support workers, reflecting God's impartial love for man, is keenly felt by those who come through our doors as well as those who pass by, pausing to study our Free Rack or read something in the window.

Many come in asking what Christian Science is, and nod in enthusiastic agreement and delight when Mary Baker Eddy's discovery is explained to them. Many come in looking for comfort. A high school girl said she needed the air conditioning. After an explanation of the purpose of our Reading Room, she became so interested that she read the lesson and asked to see current testimonies of healing. She spent a couple of hours reading and taking notes, and when she left, took several pieces of literature from the Free Rack. A mother and her daughter came in needing a quiet place to pray. They knew nothing about Christian Science, but were very receptive to the explanation they were given, and stayed to read the lesson. A woman who has moved here from Liberia has been coming in to the Reading Room for prayerful comfort and also has been attending our church services. A distressed woman from Uganda came in and said she had been praying to God for help in finding work and providing winter clothing for her children. She said she wanted to read the Bible and just calm down. She prayed aloud, reading the first few sentences of the chapter on Prayer in Science and Health several times. A lawyer from Rockville came in to learn more about Christian Science, saying he had never been in a Reading Room before. He asked lots of questions, was given a donated copy of Miscellaneous Writings, borrowed a Manual and a biography of Mrs. Eddy, and stayed to read for quite awhile. He has been attending our church services ever since that visit. A Spanish-speaking woman came in after spending 10 or 15 minutes browsing through our Free Literature Rack. She was full of questions about Christian Science and loved everything she was told about Mrs. Eddy's discovery. Her son is now attending BCC high school across the street. She took the Spanish literature that was on the Free Rack and borrowed two children's books from the lending library thinking they would help her and her son. She was especially pleased to learn that she could say NO to recurring nightmares because they are lies, not of God, divine Love, who gives her power to speak with authority to them. For many months now a woman who struggles with anxiety issues calls on a regular basis for comforting, Christly messages. A woman from Sierra Leone came in needing help in praying about disturbing "voices or spirits" troubling her. She was assured that such so-called voices were just lies, and had no power to harm her; that the only true

power was God, GOOD. A practitioner from another state called and asked us if we could take some Christian Science literature to a very distressed man who had made contact with her through JSH-Online. She gave us his phone number, asking us to deliver some literature to him. We called and discovered that he lives in a Bethesda apartment building. He was so pleased that we could take him the literature, and asked if we could also bring him “that book.” We were able to add a donated Science and Health to the package that we left for him at his apartment building.

These are just a few examples of our on-going demonstration of loving our neighbor. We can be sure that this outreach of love blesses our whole community as well as ourselves with Love’s healing power. We have at the Reading Room information cards regarding our church services and our Reading Room, and these include the call-in numbers for those who might like to listen to our services over the phone. These are also available outside the Clerk’s office and you might consider sharing them with interested friends.

We continue to make progress in renovating the Reading Room. Although it now has more light, we are still working to meet that need. One of our new librarians has much experience both in reorganizing book displays as well as the files in our computer, making things much easier to find. We could definitely use the presence of more support workers so that the librarians can continue working on organizing and reorganizing our displays and resources. We need more ways to reach out to the growing number of Spanish speakers in our community, so if you have any expertise in that language, we could use your help. We are tentatively planning a Sunday Open House for church members early in December, after a church service, similar to the very successful one we held last year.

Finally, if you haven’t been in the Reading Room recently, we hope you will come in more often to pray and to support our outreach. Although we still seem to be a work in progress, progress is certainly going on. And as our Leader writes, “Progress is the law of God, whose law demands of us only what we can certainly fulfill” (SH 233). She also writes in her essay entitled “Christian Science,” “In love for man, we gain a true sense of Love as God; and in no other way can we reach this spiritual sense, and rise – and still rise – to things most essential and divine” (Mis 234).

Respectfully submitted,

Pat French for the librarians