

STA OUTREACH REPORT FOR 1/28/16

From Bob: Today was notable for the graciousness with which five or six people received Science & Health. And one, an older man, had even heard of Christian Science, which is unusual. He said he'd read "some papers" authored by Mary Baker Eddy ---and liked them---and was thus quite pleased to receive her book.

Another nice thing: the young man who had demonstrated some strange loud behavior last week (and was the recipient of the half-sandwich from a young woman) came back to the premises and was quietly sitting on a distant bench for the last hour I was there. In our short encounter today I assured him that he was equally the recipient and the very expressing of God's goodness, control, and love, and asked him to remind himself of that as often as he can. He explained himself in some strange ways but appreciated hearing that. And he, too, was most gracious.

From Tina: Thinking about "Home" this CS Outreach week - and about the word "Synchronous": Most of the "guests" at our table might be defined by what they lack - a home.

A fellow spoke of his profound change of thinking as he experienced street life around the clock for several years. He stood and spoke of his spiritual transformation - his willingness to look at life from a different vantage point. Not only was I blessed and impressed by his vision, but

two others were drawn to the table and touched by listening to his compelling narration as well. After he departed, the one fellow stayed around and commented, "I really needed to hear that - it really helps me." He went on to say that he, too, was struggling and that it had to be synchronicity that brought each of us together. Even the custodian, who had stopped by to return a rejected copy of Science and Health that had been left elsewhere in the bus station by an earlier recipient, had stayed and listened quietly.

I was reminded of my own version of 'homelessness': I was sixteen and it was Easter Sunday. My best friend since fifth grade had invited me to her Christian Science Sunday School that day. Our friendship was deep but I didn't have any idea what Sunday School involved. I thank God I accepted her invitation! I had no more than stepped inside the SS door when I became very aware of "coming home." Not, "coming church" but instead feeling in a very palpable way, that Home equaled God and I was being welcomed with the quiet voice within which said, "Where have you been? I have been waiting for you!" You are home now." The rest of the story is my spiritual adventure in Christian Science.

Following up on the "synchronicity" the young man noticed at the bus station while listening in on the other person's story - and his gratitude for being there at the right time reminds of of a long ago Home Forum essay in the daily Christian Science Monitor. I don't think I can ever find the article again, but what has remained with me was the

writer's observation that synchronicity is: "God, saying, "HI."

May His greeting be received by all who find their refuge in the bus station, on the streets, in a shelter. A simple greeting that transforms, renews, restores and blesses!

As I was about to finish writing my report I also finished reading the The Christian Science Monitor Weekly (December 28, 2015 & January 4, 2016) and wouldn't you know, the theme of the Home Forum essay just synchronizes beautifully:

HOW YOU HELPED MY BROTHER - AND ME

A sister's ode to her homeless brother, who passed on in New York City, just a few days before Thanksgiving.

By Lisa Suhay, Correspondent

My brother Adam Goldenthal's life ended a few days ago at age 45 in a cold subway stairwell in New York City, where he fell asleep for the last time. He was found "as if he was sleeping" on "a nest of flattened cardboard boxes" according to the NYPD detective with whom I spoke. (Was it the years of smoking, alcohol abuse, or living rough? The coroner won't know for sure for weeks.)

It sounded so peaceful as the nightmare stereotype came true. I had always prayed this wouldn't be the way he died – alone and cold on cardboard. I had hoped for at least a

hospital bed or shelter. I dreamed of him being well, able to be with family here in Virginia or in New Jersey with our mom.

I had to ask my husband to Photoshop the only image I have of Adam to hide the bruises and stitches visible on his face after a fight in a shelter last year so I could have something for the obituary and memorial service.

That kind of thing comes with the hidden territory of the families of the homeless. If they are called the “invisible people,” we are called nothing at all, if we’re fortunate, or by cruel names by the uninformed. People think we abandoned our loved ones. They think we turned our backs and don't care. It may be true for some, but not for any I've ever met.

Adam was diagnosed bipolar, alcoholic, and had lived on the streets for the better part of the past five years, when not jailed for minor crimes.

During this time, there were many different iterations of Adam.

To clientele at the Starbucks and Barnes & Noble in Times and Union Squares, Adam was that funny homeless guy who played gorgeous classical and jazz guitar while puffing an unfiltered Camel cigarette.

To police, EMTs, ER security guards, social workers,

shelter staff, and transit police, my brother was that often witty homeless guy who went off at the drop of a hat, spewing obscenities and spinning wild, paranoid delusional tales as he went down swinging at the world he couldn't fit into.

To my 85-year-old mother and me, he was someone we loved too much to walk away from, but who frequently took aim at us both physically and verbally during manic episodes. Then, he was terribly sorry.

We prayed for God to grant him peace, but when that peace came it took too finite a form.

There is only one road to peace for me now and it comes with this opportunity to give thanks to all of those who were able to help my brother when I couldn't.

I am thankful for every person who ever cooked a meal at a shelter, set up the cots, and cleaned up the messes.

For the police, transit, and security officers who dealt with him often enough to know he had been diagnosed with a heart condition and chose not to taser him when he attacked because they would rather take a hit than kill him, I give thanks.

Every police operator, dispatcher, ER, and shelter staff person who ever took time to call me with updates has my undying gratitude for giving me and my mother the precious gift of knowing he was alive.

Mostly, I want to let every single person who ever dropped change into his guitar case, let him use their cell phone to call me, or bought him a cup of coffee to know that they did something valuable.

You, the givers, are my inspiration. I have always freely handed money, food, and time to every homeless person who crossed my path because I knew you were there crossing his. He told me about every dime, smile, and sip.

Every time we give, both the homeless person and their family members are uplifted. While giving to my brother couldn't save him, it fed our humanity, our sanity, and our hopes, which is a big thing for a little spare change.

While our family is smaller this holiday season, it is bigger with all of you as honorary members. Thank you.