

## STA REPORT FOR 7-2-15

**Joyful News!** The STA Project has been blessed with two donations this week. A very generous donation from a church foundation and a donation from a loving and faithful supporter who lives in another state. She loves what we are doing. Here is the text of her note to us:

"Second Church"

I was so happy to see your large envelope in my mail box! I know it is full of love and inspiration.

When I read the photo of the 10,000th copy gifted of S & H didn't turn out, I have to admit.....I laughed out loud! It came to me so clearly that the Outreach isn't about giving away books, even though the quantity is quite impressive! It's all about "Beholding the Perfect Man", "our fellow expressings of God". (Thank you, Bob, I love that!), loving our neighbor as ourselves and sharing the Truth.

My, oh my am I filled with joy be a tiny part of this wonderful Outreach!! So, enclosed is my check to honor my pledge for 2nd quarter 2015.

I'm having happy, happy grateful thoughts of all of you!!

Lots of Love and God bless us everyone,"

[Wayne wrote a wonderful response to the lady's letter above that I want to share with you.](#)

"She really said it well. Her joy and gratitude of being a "tiny part" in this remarkable outreach is something we all should be grateful for too.

Support from Second Church helping in the beginning by donating books, supplies, and even seed money in the beginning to purchase books. Also helping by being the fiscal agent, taking donations from individual supporters and generous support from the Monterrey Church.

Support from the team of Christian Science practitioners that pray in support of the outreach every week. They have been invaluable in handling the impersonal attacks of animal magnetism from within and without.

Support from the people who request the weekly fruitage reports. There are still new requests from people to be added to the mailing list. (Note: I, Theodora, just added 2 new.)

Support from the unselfish staff who week after week donate their time and attention to "loving our neighbor as ourselves and sharing the Truth."

What are we supporting? Putting the Comforter, Science and Health into the hands of the "lost sheep of the house of Israel". The one-on-one loving staff interactions with the patrons, sometimes even praying with them on the spot. The fruitage just pours in week after week, year after year - "...by their fruits ye shall know them."

This work is certainly, "Christian Science, working out the harmony of Life and Love."

Many thanks to you all,

Wayne"

[Here is the note from the Foundation.](#)

"June 2015

Dear Friends,

On behalf of . . . I'm pleased to inform you that enclosed is a check . . . to help fund the Spokane Bus Station Program, also known as the STA. Thank you for sharing your fruitage reports with our members, each one of them is a true blessing to read and enjoy. We are grateful to the STA outreach program; it serves such a vital part of furthering the cause of Christian Science and revealing the Christ message to those that are seeking the Truth.

The Christ light is shining brightly and is being felt, recognized and heard.

With gratitude,

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**From Bob:**

Hot hot hot outside today but so pleasant inside the Plaza...for which we are most grateful! Almost every week something happens while setting up our display. Today it was a mid-range gentleman who waltzed up on long strides, said, "What's this? Is it Christian Science?" I gave him my best shoe salesman smile and assured him it was, and asked him how he was familiar with it. He replied that his grandmother used to write for the organization. I asked if she was writing locally or in Boston or.....? He said he thought it was Oklahoma where she lived. I asked if he knew much about the book and its contents and if he'd like one. He replied that grandmother had told him how "the universe was like an ocean and we are like drops of water, rising out of the ocean sometimes, and then dropping back in...and I don't get it. I believe in Jesus." At which point he hurried away. A bit of substantial miscommunication or misinterpretation there! We'll hope he hasn't been sharing that with others on a routine basis. But it was worth a chuckle afterwards...picturing humanity rising out of the ocean and dripping back in.

Things went definitely uphill from there, including a couple of moving interactions Tina will share. It was just a steady easy flow for the whole two hours with another twelve or fifteen books out the door. There are certainly a lot of folks out there who have some interest in spirituality.

**From Tina:**

STA July 2, 2015

Triple-digit heat outdoors might have tipped a fellow's one word comment about Science and Health: "Propaganda" he snarled. I hadn't thought of our dissemination of S&H *that way* before. The dictionary definition is not flattering and I can't identify our outreach activity with it. What does MBE have to say, I wondered:

"...to demonstrate Science and its pure monotheism — one God, one Christ, no idolatry, no human *propaganda*\* — it is essential to understand the spiritual idea. Jesus taught and proved that what feeds a few feeds all. His life-work subordinated the material to the spiritual, and he left his legacy of truth to mankind. His metaphysics is not the sport of philosophy, religion, or science; rather is it the pith and finale of them all." ([My. 303:17 to](#)) \*emphasis added.

An intended insult led to an inspired statement by Mary Baker Eddy!

Another fellow was looking at the display – the new cover art on S&H arouses curiosity. "Same book," we often explain. "You already have this book, don't you?" I asked the fellow. "Yeaaaah – awesome!" He signals two thumbs up and shakes my hand.

A woman quietly looked at the contents displayed on the bookrack. We then had a good visit and I learned that she had found a peaceful place to live, having been physically and emotionally abused for ten years. She had spent months in a hospital after having all the bones in her face broken, and many more months in a women's shelter. Alcohol fueled her own poor choices, and especially those of her abuser. Her recovery was supported by a new-found faith. She is a motivational speaker now. My heart thumped with compassion and respect. She was grateful to learn that the book we share enables healing, and accepted a copy. On occasion it seems right to share CS lecturer John Wyndham's book, The Ultimate Freedom along with S&H to some who come to our table. Our visitor's own ten years of captivity was as harsh as Wyndham's. His ultimate mental and physical freedom was underpinned by his study of Science and Health – the "pith and finale" explaining one's unbroken being as God's own child.

One of the few positive meanings of the word propaganda is "propagating the faith" and the visitor and I both felt the presence and power of Faith - and sealed its presence with a big hug.

[Please know that the rest of my report is lengthy, contains extensive quotes, and is inspired by a woman at STA who just knocks our socks off with her comments, observations, stories about her past – all spoken with a southern drawl that is just delightful]:

Last week I wrote about her, Liz, the bus plaza custodian. We've known her for all the years we've been doing outreach but we did not know the astounding depth of her compassion and humanity until recently. I'd like to relate what she shared about her "upbringing" with us today - shared before she set off to work on her shift cleaning bathrooms, washing windows, sweeping, and emptying garbage cans, etc. (I can't recall what started the conversation in this direction.) She told us she had raised her six siblings, each one younger than her, in West Virginia, until she was eleven years old. That is when all the children were separated and placed with foster families. Both parents were neglectful and abusive. Alcohol consumed her father and *vice versa*. Liz fed, clothed, played with her littler charges, and kept them away from her father's wrath. I won't go into the sordid details except to say that her youngest brother died of AIDS in his early thirties and she was at his bedside when he asked her "if she thought God would forgive him for being a homosexual." "Hell yes!" she told him. "Do you have any problems with your brother's homosexuality?" I asked her. Another "Hell no! – it's not my way... but not my way to judge, either – too many people do that. It's between him and God." Bob and I said the author of S&H left us a legacy of explaining God's love for his creation – all of His creation – including her brother. Since she already has a copy of the book (but doesn't read much) I asked her if I could share something from another progressive theologian who wrote a manifesto concerning the Scriptures and homosexuality. (See below.) "That would be OK," she said. Next outreach I will bring her a copy (and its 2015 follow-up) – in fact, I'll just bring her my report for today!:

"I have made a decision. I will no longer debate the issue of homosexuality in the church with anyone. I will no longer engage the biblical ignorance that emanates from so many right-wing Christians about how the Bible condemns homosexuality, as if that point of view still has any credibility. I will no longer discuss with them or listen to them tell me how homosexuality is "an abomination to God," about how homosexuality is a "chosen lifestyle," or about how through prayer and "spiritual counseling" homosexual persons can be "cured." Those arguments are no longer worthy of my time or energy. I will no longer dignify by listening to the thoughts of those who advocate "reparative therapy," as if homosexual persons are somehow broken and need to be repaired. I will no longer talk to those who believe that the unity of the church can or should be achieved by rejecting the presence of, or at least at the expense of, gay and lesbian people. I will no longer take the time to refute the unlearned and undocumentable claims of certain world religious leaders who call homosexuality "deviant." I will no longer listen to that pious sentimentality that certain Christian leaders continue to employ, which suggests some version of that strange and overtly dishonest phrase that "we love the sinner but hate the

sin.” That statement is, I have concluded, nothing more than a self-serving lie designed to cover the fact that these people hate homosexual persons and fear homosexuality itself, but somehow know that hatred is incompatible with the Christ they claim to profess, so they adopt this face-saving and absolutely false statement. I will no longer temper my understanding of truth in order to pretend that I have even a tiny smidgen of respect for the appalling negativity that continues to emanate from religious circles where the church has for centuries conveniently perfumed its ongoing prejudices against blacks, Jews, women and homosexual persons with what it assumes is “high-sounding, pious rhetoric.” The day for that mentality has quite simply come to an end for me. I will personally neither tolerate it nor listen to it any longer. The world has moved on, leaving these elements of the Christian Church that cannot adjust to new knowledge or a new consciousness lost in a sea of their own irrelevance. They no longer talk to anyone but themselves.” I will no longer seek to slow down the witness to inclusiveness by pretending that there is some middle ground between prejudice and oppression. There isn’t...

The battle is over. The victory has been won. There is no reasonable doubt as to what the final outcome of this struggle will be. Homosexual people will be accepted as equal, full human beings, who have a legitimate claim on every right that both church and society have to offer any of us. Homosexual marriages will become legal, recognized by the state and pronounced holy by the church... “We will and we must learn that equality of citizenship is not something that should ever be submitted to a referendum. Equality under and before the law is a solemn promise conveyed to all our citizens in the Constitution itself. Can any of us imagine having a public referendum on whether slavery should continue, whether segregation should be dismantled, whether voting privileges should be offered to women?

The battle in both our culture and our church to rid our souls of this dying prejudice is finished. A new consciousness has arisen. A decision has quite clearly been made. Inequality for gay and lesbian people is no longer a debatable issue in either church or state. Therefore, I will from this moment on refuse to dignify the continued public expression of ignorant prejudice by engaging it. I do not tolerate racism or sexism any longer. From this moment on, I will no longer tolerate our culture’s various forms of homophobia. I do not care who it is who articulates these attitudes or who tries to make them sound holy with religious jargon...

This is my manifesto and my creed. I proclaim it today. I invite others to join me in this public declaration. I believe that such a public outpouring will help cleanse both the church and this nation of its own distorting past. It will restore integrity and honor to both church and state. It will signal that a new day has dawned and we are ready not just to embrace it, but also to rejoice in it and to celebrate it.”

Much has happened since Episcopal Bishop Spong's 2009 manifesto. He added this update in response to the recent Supreme Court decision:

"I traced my own changing attitudes from the overt homophobia taught to me by the church of my youth and undergirded by quotations from the Bible lifted primarily out of the book of Leviticus, to the place where I was willing to put my career on the line in order to be an advocate for the full inclusion of homosexual people in the life of both our nation and my church. I asserted my firm belief that the only "sin" of which homosexual people might be held to be guilty was that they were born with a sexual orientation different from the majority. Homosexuality... I now saw it as a "given" not a "chosen." Homosexuality, I continued, is something that one "is" not something that one "does." Homosexuality thus was no different in its moral character from being left handed or having a particular skin pigmentation or a particular eye color. To discriminate against other human beings because of a "given" in their lives could never be moral. As a Christian I too sought to undergird my new attitude with biblical quotations. Jesus was quoted in the Bible as having said: "Come unto me all ye." He did not say: "some of ye." No one was ever portrayed in the Bible as rejected by him. Jesus was also quoted as having said: "I have come that they might have life and have it abundantly." No one can give life by being prejudiced against who or what a person is. The world might judge a person's doing, but not a person's being. No church should ever sing: "Just as I am without one plea, O Lamb of God, I come," unless the members of that church are prepared to welcome those who presented themselves in response to this invitation. Anything else is sheer hypocrisy."

In our friend Liz there is no hypocrisy. She gave her brother comfort – something the rest of the family couldn't do. She didn't dole out arguments, - and her tender expletive and Christian encouragement helped give him peace. She just loved.

We have much to learn from the folks in this community of holy friends who trust us with their stories. Hymn 345 sings, "We see the glory shine from heart to heart." And we sing along.

Tina

(I am attaching a local newspaper correspondent's essay to this week's report – I read it this morning after studying the lesson sermon and writing my weekly report – I appreciate its connectivity and timeliness to the topic inspired by Liz.)

[July 2, 2015 Spokesman Review](#)

**Stefanie Pettit: Gay marriage ruling doesn't fix everything, but it's something**

“I am the mother of a gay son.

When I watched coverage last Friday of the Supreme Court’s decision affirming marriage equality as the law of the land in all 50 states, I felt sad initially. Not sad at the decision, of course, but sad that my son Sam’s right of access to full citizenship had to be determined by a Supreme Court ruling.

Growing up I didn’t give marriage much thought, other than to think that I probably would get married someday. I took it for granted; it was my right. Until last Friday, it was never my son’s right. That broke my heart.

As I write these words, the decision is a day old. Already there are expressions of fear that the ruling greatly imperils Christianity and attacks religious freedom. Some of the words are pretty outrageous, and I fear a national, organized workaround strategy is in the offing. I don’t really understand how equality for one group imperils another, but I do understand and expect that there will be some overreaction at first. That’s how things go, but I hope as we settle into the new reality, that everyone finds a way to make peace with it and that we strive to be kind to one another.

We need a little perspective, which brings me back to religious matters.

Most, but not all, of the objection casts same-sex marriage as against God’s law. I have no problem if your personal views about homosexuality are Bible-based, but I do have a problem if you require your religious doctrine to be the basis for how laws for society as a whole should be written. Certainly let the Bible be a good guide for how you live your life, but it is neither legal nor appropriate for its edicts to rule a land where there is freedom of religion and freedom from religion. Otherwise, welcome to a First World version of Sharia law.

I think we need to realize just how much cherry-picking there is in how we apply the Bible to legislation. Many things are listed as abominations in the Bible yet are fairly comfortably legal in society – lying, marrying across religious lines, love of money and more. The Bible also condemns tattoos and eating pork and requires circumcision of men.

True, most of these biblical rules come from the Old Testament, and there is sincere disagreement about whether adherence to Mosaic law is required of Christians. Even so, of all the proscriptions in the Bible, I have long been fascinated by Christendom’s almost singular focus on homosexuality, about which Jesus said nothing (though I’m pretty confident he didn’t endorse it).

This obsession with homosexuality brings to mind something that happened several years ago when a friend, a devout Christian, wrote a story in a newsletter in which he urged boycotting a particular company because it offered benefits to same-sex partners. I challenged him on that and asked why he was so militant about

homosexuality when the Bible expresses another condemnation that is way more prevalent in society and probably has a greater impact on families – divorce.

And it's not just an Old Testament thing; both books of the Bible are quite clear in forbidding divorce. The only exception is if the wife is having sex outside the marriage. Any other divorce or remarriage constitutes adultery.

So if you take the Bible as a literal doctrine, your divorce may be valid in the eyes of the law, but it is not so in the eyes of God. Yet most people I know who cite the Bible in objecting to gay rights are mute when it comes to biblical condemnation of divorce.

For business people who don't want to provide services (florists, caterers, photographers, etc.) to customers who they believe are acting in defiance of God's laws, I suggest they are already doing so, whether they realize it or not.

To my friend's credit, he conceded that Christians are inconsistent in speaking against divorce because it strikes too close to home. Indeed, research from Baylor University last year showed that evangelical Christians divorce at greater-than-average rates. I suggested that there are probably more gay people in his church than he realizes because they remain (or at least did so 20 years ago) closeted. So homosexuality is closer to home than he thinks.

Think about it, if the same level of religious fervor about homosexuality were applied to the Bible's condemnation of divorce, then we would be writing laws that divorced persons could not marry, adopt children, hold certain positions or that they could be blocked in various ways from full participation in society. Ridiculous. Yet such has been the reality for gays and lesbians.

Until last Friday. The Supreme Court's ruling doesn't fix everything. It doesn't change people's hearts or undo centuries of pain and persecution. But it is something, a big something. And I am happy for it, for Sam and for everyone who has a Sam in his or her life.

Sam and I talked Friday morning, a quiet conversation in which he confided that his reaction was kind of muted. It felt to him like a "duh" moment, not a "ta-da!" one. He and I are alike in that we tend to underreact to things, to take them in and think about them and then come forward later after we've processed it all.

We're waiting and watching. We are thankful. And we're hopeful."

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