

STA REPORT FOR APRIL 16, 2015

From Bob:

Hi all, and it was good to be back in business at the Plaza today. Not just good. It was great. And probably the most amazing day in the approximately 300 I've spent there! Tina and I will both report on the same things because we were both so taken with our experiences.

The first three persons, who all happened to be men of diverse ages, had all read S&H at one time or another and were favorably inclined toward Christian Science. All were serious thinkers. All were interested in discussing spirituality, which we did in a mutually sharing mode. The one gentleman spent 45 minutes as we talked about the nature of God, healing, prayer---he tries to continually practice prayer moment to moment in all his daily activities---and LIVING our faith. Amazing congruence with our belief system though he is a member of a sect not heretofore known by either of us. Tina will probably tell more about that. One of the three had received his copy of S&H from us at some earlier time so that was another lift.

As if those three weren't enough, along came two more, and all of this in the course of two hours! Again, we were in mutual sharing mode and enjoyed conveying ideas and particularly the definition of God from S&H. I believe all five of those thoughtful fellows who had substantial conversations with us were completely satisfied with the definition of God...and really, everything we shared. "The time for thinkers" was indeed evident today. The two who had not known about S&H happily took copies of the book and we mutually felt great about meeting and sharing deep subjects with each other.

There were several women who were happy to get books, too, including one who came up from behind while we were both deep in conversations noted above. She tapped me on the shoulder, "That is a really wonderful book...we have them all over at our place!" (I'm not sure what "our place" meant, but maybe a halfway house.)

What a day!

From Tina:

During my college years I found a small piece of paper with the words, "Why be earthbound?" printed on it. I taped the question inside the leather carrying case, which held the Bible and Science and Health. Every very time I saw the quote I felt its nudge and promise.

It is a good thing the law of gravity operates uninterrupted because the encounters at our recent outreach day lifted us off our feet - why, we could have sailed away, soaring and singing, were we not tethered!

We met a slew of spiritual thinkers in the 120 minutes we were on duty this Thursday:

Bob, who attends Unity church, loves teaching in Sunday School, loves MBE and compares her to Jesus; he said he has read Science and Health through twice.

Then along comes Darren, who said he has never taken even an aspirin, born at home, a student of the scriptures - belongs to an off-the-radar church called Followers of Christ, Church of the First Born. He read Science and Health when he was 15 because somebody told him it was similar to his own beliefs. We talked about reincarnation, predestination, baptism, heaven, church buildings, spiritual healing, and about not judging others. We were on the same 'page' - and he was earnestly delightful.

Next, Eric, a Mormon, told us how he finally had arrived at a theology he could nestle in - after much searching. And after much respectful dialogue, the back and forth-ing that enriches both sides of the table, my fellow staffer shared with Eric what Mrs. Eddy wrote in the preface to her book: "The time for thinkers has come" - and he praised Eric by telling him that we knew we were in the presence of one of those 'thinkers' right now.

Following that visit came a young fellow named Mac who asked us if we would like to see something in his backpack. I asked him if it might be a book and he pulled out a Bible, which had belonged to his great-grandfather. What a treasure! He told us he was studying the Rosicrucian beliefs. I am pretty sure we tucked a Science and Health

in with his ancient copy of the Bible. Another spiritual 'thinker' encounter.

Two young women were drawn by our offer of a free book on spirituality, based on the Bible. They read the back cover of the book, and one said, "I'll take it!!!!" Her friend was hesitant to take a copy for herself and said she could share with her roommate. "No, you must have your own!," I said. ("Study it, ponder it" - write in it, let it bless you" - I said to myself).

At last, Shem drops by. He loves the writings of Basheer and invited us to look Basheer up on the Internet. Shem appreciates open conversation with other religious groups doing outreach at STA.

Usually, he said, he gets turned off by the closed-mindedness of the staffers who think their way is the only way, and are not willing to have a meaningful two-sided conversation. He delights in discussing spiritual things. Again, here in our presence is another person who thinks deeply about spiritual reality. He was satisfied with our answers to his questions. We were too. He resonated with Mrs. Eddy's definition of God, which our Bob shared with him. Did he take a copy of S&H? Darned if I know. The glow of the encounter took away any remembrance of a gifting.

As I left the bus station, there was Ed, the security guard mentioned in last week's report. He was keeping watch over the loiterers (smokers) who gather in the designated outdoors smoking-allowed area. He said he had been busy during his shift but wished he could have joined us on the second floor. How nice. I told him we had just had a fabulous shift and then we shook hands and he returned to his shepherding.

I've already mentioned the Mormon, the follower of Basheer, a Rosicrucian, and the practicing member of The Followers of the First Born; and then, as described in last week's report, a CS lecturer was coming to Spokane. She brought with her a passenger, an amazing woman - a Catholic who practices Hatha Yoga, and is a student of Christian Science. She had attended the lecturer's talk in British Columbia, which was delivered the previous day. On the 2.5 hours drive to speak in Spokane, the lecturer/practitioner/teacher/healer engaged with my friend wonderfully, and sent her soaring spiritually.

Our friend and house guest is smitten and inspired by Mrs. Eddy's writings since the last three years as she has added Christian Science to her spiritual repertoire; she has been demonstrating her clear understanding CS.

In awe I realize how many true searchers and thinkers have come into my experience in the last few days! And again, as the chocolate sauce on a dish of fine ice cream, came two quotes, shared with me by Ellen - yet another person who also studies and appreciates CS:

"Each religion has certain unique ideas or techniques, and learning about them can only enrich one's own faith."

"Love and Compassion are the true religions to me." ~ The Dalai Lama

Bless his heart!

And finally, truly, as I close my report - I want to share the last paragraph from an Episcopalian bishop's article I read Saturday morning following outreach. It is titled, "The Meaning of the Passion Opens into the Meaning of a Resurrection" in which he closes his discussion of the Gospel of Matthew. This paragraph links together my week's entire outreach experience by expanding those 120 minutes into days and days of exciting continuity and inspiration. I am one who has found her home in Christian Science, all the while knowing that "each religion ...enriches [my] own faith":

"Ultimately the resurrection is a call to universalism. Go to all the world, go beyond the boundaries of your fears. Go to those you have defined as unclean, unworthy, unsaved, uncircumcised and unbaptized. Go to those you have reduced to being the object of your prejudices. Go to those who are different. Go to the rejected of the world and teach them what I have taught you, namely that God is love and that love embraces all that God has made, that love has no boundaries, that love rejects no one and that love is the essence of the gospel. The Great Commission was never meant to be a charge to us to convert the heathen, as it has so often been interpreted to be. It was and is a call to see everyone as living inside the love of God. That is why Matthew implies that all will see the risen Christ when all

return to their Galilee, that is, when all of us return to our homes. For God is not out there somewhere, God is present in the least of these, our brothers and sisters.”

“So on this note Matthew brings his gospel to an end and we bring our study of this gospel to an end. Resurrection means that we live in God and participate in God’s oneness. It means no one stands outside the love of God. It means that we are part of God and God is part of us. It means that life in God is eternal because God is eternal. That is the gospel that Matthew proclaims, the gospel that Matthew’s Jesus bids us to preach. It is a gospel to be lived, not just to be repeated, because God is not a noun, that demands to be defined, God is a verb that invites us to live, to love and to be.”

~ Bishop John Shelby Spong

Bless his heart too!

Tina