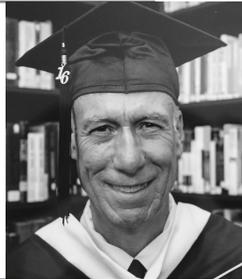




## Christian Science Institutional Committee for New York State

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### GRADUATION AT SING-SING 2016



Among the 29 men graduating from Mercy College at the ceremony held in Sing Sing Prison on June 1, 2016, was Carl Strawitch, a man known to the Christian Science Institutional Committee since the early 90's. He received an Associates Degree in Psychology/Counseling and hopes to do substance abuse counseling when he is released. He will be receiving his Bachelor's degree next June, 2017, and his Masters Degree in 2018. Normally we wouldn't mention an inmate's name and publish his photograph, but Carl has already received some publicity. He was interviewed on Richard French Live on WRNN TV.

Mercy College is a four year, private, non-sectarian, non-profit liberal arts college with its main campus in Dobbs Ferry, New York, with additional locations in Manhattan, Bronx and Yorktown Heights. In conjunction with Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison, a privately funded organization, the two provide the educational opportunities offered to the men at Sing Sing.

Doris Buffet, one of Hudson Link's major contributors, spoke highly of the program and expressed her gratitude for its success in the rehabilitation of prisoners.

When Carl entered the correctional system he was first served by the Christian Science Institutional

Committee's Suffolk Zone on Long Island. A worker there helped turn Carl back to God and to the study of Christian Science. Carl turned from a desire to die to a desire to live and to be a blessing wherever he was. This is what he has done, he has become a blessing in the lives of those around him.

He was transferred to Elmira Correctional Facility in Elmira, NY facing 25 years to life in prison. It was there that he was visited by several members of the South Central Zone.

Members of the Westchester/Rockland Zone have been visiting Carl at Sing Sing for several years. One of the members visiting him is the daughter of the worker who originally helped him years ago on Long Island.

Carl's brother and three institutional workers from this zone, along with the Committee's Administrator, attended this joyful occasion..



# Annual Meeting at The Mother Church and The High Goal Before Us

“The discoverer of Christian Science finds the path less difficult when she has **the high goal** always before her thoughts, than when she counts her footsteps in endeavoring to reach it.”

—Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 426

Do you know that 14 states have Christian Science institutional committees? Most of them were represented at a special meeting for institutional workers on the Saturday before Annual Meeting at The Mother Church. We will report on this event in our next newsletter.

## LETTING THEIR LIGHT SHINE, CONTINUALLY

Two retiring members of our New York State Christian Science Institutional Committee were honored with Certificates of Appreciation and Gratitude for their many years of dedicated service. Helen Mundell of the South Central Zone and Clifford Ehmke of the Central Zone stepped down this past Spring. They humbly served this committee faithfully and selflessly for well over twenty years. Their dedication has inspired us all

While Helen and Cliff worked many years with inmates in the state prisons, Cliff left the field work, several years ago, to become Treasurer of the State Committee and served in that position until his retirement. Helen visited men at Five Points Correctional Facility in Romulus, NY, Southport Correctional Facility in Pine City, NY and Elmira Correctional Facility in Elmira, NY many times seeing several inmates a month. Those whom she served speak of her reverently. Her very first visit in a penal institution was with Carl Strawitch, mentioned earlier in the Newsletter.

Another member of the New York Committee, Linda Ross, C.S., Committee on Publication for Connecticut, has been serving in juvenile facilities for over 27 years, and continues to let her light shine. She began her work in New Jersey and continues in Manhattan, bearing witness to the Christ, Truth, and sharing the love of God in Christian Science with eager ears and hungering hearts.

Working with those in prisons, hospitals, nursing homes, and juvenile facilities is extremely rewarding, as anyone who is doing this holy work will attest.

## PERFECT JUSTICE

Prisoners across the United States are being exonerated at a record rate. In 2015, the University of Michigan’s National Registry of Exonerations says, 149 prisoners – behind bars on average 14 years – were freed, more than double the number in 2011. Roughly three convictions a week are being overturned because confessions were coerced, eyewitnesses or physical evidence was untrustworthy, or police misconduct occurred. The registry estimates that there are “tens of thousands of false convictions each year across the country, and many more that have accumulated over the decades.”

The exoneration movement began in the early 1990s with the Innocence Project at New York’s Yeshiva University and spread nationwide to law and journalism schools and public defenders offices. A growing number of prosecutors have now established “conviction integrity units” to reexamine cases – a recognition, says the report, that “convicting the innocent is a serious public problem that requires proactive government attention.”

Going the extra mile – and the mile beyond that – is necessary, not only to spare the innocent from unjust imprisonment but to safeguard public trust in the justice system.

**John Yemma, Today's View, The Christian Science Monitor Daily News Briefing, February 5, 2016**

## **“FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER”**

-- Ephesians 4:32

The following is a letter from an inmate, originally in Spanish, which we received a few months ago.

In 1999 I was driving a taxi to support my family in the state of Florida; Miami to be specific. Trying to find a passenger I entered a not very safe neighborhood. A young man signaled that he wanted my service. I stopped and he came to my window and told me to take him to the airport, and I said yes. He entered the backseat of my car and I started to drive toward the airport. Three blocks later I felt a blow to my head.

It was a 38 caliber revolver and he told me to give him all my money, watch, ring, wallet, everything that I had, which I handed over without complaints. When he had all my belongings, he opened the door and left.

It was with great anger and hatred that I returned to the same place to look for him. I wanted to seek revenge for what he did. But he escaped and I never saw him again.

This accident turned into a long-lasting trauma. It was because of this fear that I had to leave the job of taxi driver. After trying for several months to get a job, it seemed impossible to find one. I decided to move to New York in 2003. While living in N.Y. in 2015 another accident occurred in my life that led me to jail, The Rock, then to one called The Tomb, and then transferred back again to The Rock (Building C-95).

While inside the jail, for security reasons, they kept moving me from one place to another. During one of these moves they brought me to a house for adults of 40 years upwards, which felt safe as it was far from the younger and more naughty and dangerous youth.

The beds in the bedroom are placed 6 in a row, that is I have someone sleeping near me. I have one above me, another behind my back, one to my left, and another to my right. One morning when I was getting out of bed to go to the bathroom, I see to my right a young man and when I looked into his face without him knowing, I discovered that this is the thief who had attacked me 16 years ago in Miami.

For me this would be an impactful meeting. For two days I was watching him and thinking about what I was going to do with him. I decided to pray. After two days I confronted him. I asked him several questions which his answers confirmed I was not wrong.

God had put him in my hand. After several hours talking with him, he confessed to me that it was he. And he asked me "What was I going to do to him?"

I remembered the teaching that I had learned in my blue book written by Mary Baker Eddy on page 473: 27-30.

continued on page 4

Jesus says that he established through demonstration what he said, he proved what he taught. This is the Science of Christianity.

This was the time to show my belief in this young man, to pay him [pay him back?] with good, destroy the error and illusion with the Truth.

And I told him that I forgave him and that everything was fine, which really surprised him. He had expected something bad from me. He was very thin and weak. I'm very strong. But to his surprise, with Love I forgave him and I felt relief and peace for doing so. The thought

had come to my mind of doing the right thing instead of revenge.

Then the next day I immediately invited him to study with me. He is receiving classes from the Quarterly Bible Lesson with the Christian Science textbook in Spanish. He and I will never be the same:



This is why we give of our time  
and our prayers.



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