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STEPHEN MINISTRY IN CBCM

By Pastor John Tung

CBCM has had Stephen Ministry (SM) since 1992. SM is a one-to-one lay caring ministry to people who are going through crisis or significant change in their lives. SMs receive 50 hours of quality training and serve for a total of 2 years matched up with "care receivers."

I would like to give a brief overview of the history of this caring ministry in CBCM. *Our SM history can be divided it into 5 periods of time.* Here is a brief description of each of the periods and in the next issue I will share a story of how SM has helped someone.

1. The Wonder Years – this was from 1992-1997. SM had a lot of initial excitement as we began this ministry. Elder Rudy Lee and Pastor Tung received training in 1992 as Stephen Leaders with the support of the BOE. Our first SM training class that Fall had 7 students. Our second class in 1993 had 6 students. More students were trained in each of the following years. During this 5 year period we had many care receivers as people were interested in having this ministry care for them.

2. The "Wandering" Years – "Wandering" does not mean SM lost its direction as we describe the period from 1997-2002, since there were still SMs serving and doing an excellent job in caring. But the word "Wander" contrasts with the first five years. From 1997-2002, there was a decline in the number of SMs who were trained, and there were fewer people asking for care. The original Stephen Leaders (who coordinate the SM) were busy serving in other ministries. Also, having served in SM for 10 years now, they were not able to give as much time to coordinating SM as at the first period.

3. The Waiting Years – after a time of prayer and consideration, SM decided to take a break and give SMs and SLs a rest. During this period if someone did request or need care, SM still provided it by calling upon previously SMs. As it turned out, the break lasted three years, from 2002-2005.

4. The Welcome Back Years – The Lord worked in people and we were able to have a new Stephen Leader trained in 2006 and this also corresponded to more people from the Mandarin congregation becoming SMs. It seems there was a renewed interest and two other Stephen Leaders were trained in 2007, 2008 to sustain and further this ministry from 2005-2010 and a good number of people were cared for.

5. The "What's Next" Years – From 2010 to the present, we continue to have people taking the SM training and there are some care receivers, but the numbers of care receivers are declining. Possible remedies are to be more intentional to find people in our community who need support but who are "hidden" from us. Another possibility is to have SM training in the Chinese language and thus open up more access, especially to those from China.

Look for more in the next issue. But in the meantime, if you know of anyone who is going through a tough time and can use emotional, spiritual support and care, please let us in the SM know. John.tung@cbcmm.org; Karen Yu at karen.yu@cbcmmgroups.org; John Lei at john.lei@cbcmmgroups.org.



Getting To Know Us – Missions Department

CBCM is currently supporting 5 primary missionaries, 17 associate missionaries, and 14 missions organizations.

I feel so blessed to be a team member of the Missions Department (MD). This is where I see our Missions fund being put to good use in proclaiming the gospel all over the world. There is much joy in serving with dedicated team members who serve the Lord with gladness. Here are my impressions of some of our team members. We have a deaconess who is super-organized, and has the energy of a 20-year-old, a deacon who has a special voice like Ronald Reagan, a brother who always has a radiant smile and has excellent translation skills, and a very thoughtful brother who always brings us delicious home-made snacks at every meeting. (We recently started a snack rotation schedule for our meetings.) Some of our MD members have been visiting CBCM cell groups to share with them our MD’s vision, missionary care, and short term missions. We have also been receiving feedback from the groups concerning their overall impressions of the MD, and areas of improvement. The cell groups are thankful for the outreach efforts from MD, and we have been looking at their written comments carefully, and will continue to discuss them at our meetings.

The vision/goals of MD are 100% global missions awareness in all our congregations (Mobilize); 50% of all congregations to be involved in missionary care through adopting a CBCM supported missionary, providing financial support, and/or praying (Participate); 10% of all congregations go on missions trip (Develop); and 1% of all congregations to become full time missionaries (Send). CBCM is currently supporting 5 primary missionaries, 17 associate missionaries, and 14 missions organizations. We promote awareness through Sunday School, literature, missionary sharing, Sunday sermons, and yearly missions conference in October.

We thank God that many cell groups have taken the steps of adopting missionaries that CBCM supports. We encourage them to have regular communications with their missionaries, and invite them to their homes for sharing when they are in town. They also provide encouragement to the adopted missionaries by sending care packages to them. The MD would like to support cell groups that decide to send care packages to missionaries. Starting this year in 2014, the MD will reimburse a cell group up to \$75 per year for shipping costs of these care packages. The cost of the contents of the care packages is excluded from this reimbursement, and cell groups can submit shipping receipts to MD deacons. MD is sponsoring several short term missions trips for 2014; participants age 18+ need to attend a training class once every 3 years, and applications are available on church website.

Some of our members at MD have attended the Perspectives class, and have shared about the M scales in missions (M1 to M5) with the rest of the team. M scale deals with cultural distance (in language, ethnicity, social boundaries, etc) that exists between potential converts and the culturally nearest evangelizing church. M1 is missions in your own city or area. M1 ministry is what cell groups do when they reach out to friends and relatives. M2 is to those who speak the same language, and are serving overseas. M3 might involve learning another language and another culture (yet still within the US) but does not necessarily mean both are required. An example is outreach to Iranian Muslims within the DC area. They are from a totally different culture and language group but they speak English. M4 mission is reaching across cross-cultural barriers in an overseas context. M5 is for the toughest of environments which may even be hostile to the Gospel, and Christians may be persecuted there. For example, a missionary couple that our church supports serves in a Muslim environment overseas. M4 and M5 are not necessarily rural, and it could be urban yet hostile. MD is planning to support more M3 and M5 units in the future, because they tend to be neglected in missions.

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30 Hour Famine

By Nina Jen

Hunger is a universal concept. For those in underdeveloped countries or areas, hunger is physical, an ache that pierces through their stomachs until there is nothing left but a thin layer of skin hanging off bone. For those who are not in physical want, hunger is spiritual or psychological, an ache that breaks their hearts into pieces. In both senses of the word, hunger is a very real problem that faces the broken world. Every year, Teens Group features an event 30 Hour Famine, which is a self-imposed fasting period of about 30 hours, in order to raise money for malnourished children in third world countries. Throughout the Famine, participating teens pray together and complete service projects together as another way of serving their immediate community.

This year, 30 Hour Famine included several familiar service projects; however, one of the newer projects was a scheduled visit to Arbor Place, the nursing home for the elderly with Alzheimer's and dementia, that is right across the street from CBCM. As a Teens Group officer, I had the opportunity to be on the planning team for this particular service project. The home has been across the street from our church for many years, but for me, this was one of the first times it even crossed my mind for more than a few seconds as I drove by on my way to church. In fact, I devoted several hours preparing materials for activities to do with the elderly occupants of the home, one of which was a nostalgic “box” game during which each teen would be paired with an elderly occupant and use small items to generate conversation about past stories. As I gathered random items from around my house, I wondered when was the last time someone sat down with them and asked about their past with a true interest. What did they remember when they saw a film canister from an old black and white film camera? Did they remember a carnival, or maybe an old school reunion? Whatever the case, maybe they will now think of us, a small group of Chinese teens, when they see those small items, and remember that someone still loves them very much.

Perhaps we were not serving the elderly occupants of the home in the sense that we were fulfilling a physical hunger or need, but I believe that we were able to provide a small portion of the love and attention they deserve. Arbor Place is, to me, no longer that house across the street from church, but rather a place that is just as much in need as any third world country. In the end, although the money raised from the Famine goes toward a good cause, the act of loving others as Jesus Christ loves us is the best and simplest gift we can give.

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30 Hour Famine participants Helping with the Capital Food Bank

30 Hour Famine, which is a self-imposed fasting period of about 30 hours, in order to raise money for malnourished children in third world countries.



Earlier this spring, there were a few Christian-based movies that were released in movie theaters. One of those movies was “God’s Not Dead.” Although the film itself is fictional, the message and theme behind it hold true to our Christian faith.

The story is focused on a college student named Josh. On his first day of his Philosophy class, he finds his faith being challenged by his professor, who threatens the class to choose either renouncing the existence of God or failing his class. As the rest of this class writes “God is dead” as proof of their commitment to their professor, Josh is conflicted and feels impassioned to prove to not only his professor, but to the entire class, that “God’s not dead.” As Josh prepares for this debate, he encounters different people and their testimonies of doubt, disbelief, and faith. The makers of this film state that the purpose is to educate, entertain, and inspire moviegoers to explore what they truly believe about God and spark discussions on important and transforming life decisions. By the end of the movie, Josh comes to the conclusion that although science cannot prove neither can it disprove that God exists, but for followers of Jesus Christ, the underlying fabric of Christianity is faith.

Here are a few quotes from members of CBCM & CBCM-G that saw this movie...

“‘God’s Not Dead’ is what it was expected to be - Christians who watched the movie really liked it, while non-Christians who watched it may have found it polarizing and controversial. While corny at times, the movie has an unexpected ending that left the viewer thinking about God’s hand in our lives.” – Esther Lau

I really enjoyed the movie. Even though it was fiction, it was encouraging to see the main character stand up for what he believes in despite the fact that his professor was looking to publicly embarrass him and that his girlfriend was telling him not to fight his professor as well. It was also neat to see how God was working in the lives of the other characters throughout the film. – Matthew Chang

“As a Christian, I thought ‘God’s Not Dead’ made it easy to relate with the main character and his defense against his teacher. It seemed that the movie was trying to appeal to multiple audiences, particularly those who are genuinely seeking. While recognizing that the movie was not merely centered on the debate but gave multiple perspectives from other people in their journeys, I personally got a lot out of the debate and the main character’s relationship with his teacher. For me, I was more reassured that science as a tool cannot be used to disprove God’s existence, and that one has to be willing to have faith to be sure that God does exist. As a Christian, it is a good reminder to continue to ask God to increase my faith especially in times of hardship and distress.” – Christopher Lau

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EXALTING JESUS CHRIST
EDIFYING THE BELIEVERS
EVANGELIZING THE WORLD