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How Stephen Ministry Helped One Person

By Pastor John Tung

In the last issue of Cross Talk, I wrote a brief overview of the history of Stephen Ministry (SM) caring ministry in CBCM. Continuing that topic, here is an anonymous testimony written by someone who was helped by SM:

If it wasn't for Stephen Ministry, I would not be the person that I am today. Fifteen years ago, God graciously used Stephen Ministry to save my life, marriage, relationship with my children, and most importantly, my personal relationship with God. With God's Holy Spirit and the SM's love, I was able to become a successful business owner, and our family, my husband, our children and I are devoted Christians.

My first marriage was a very abusive relationship, and when my son died unexpectedly 30 years ago, I went into a depression. Over the years, my depression became very severe, and suicide was constantly on my mind. I built up imaginary walls to close myself in and keep the outside world and pain out of my life. The walls became so thick that even the births of my other children were not able to break them down. I loved my second husband and children, but I could not be there mentally for them. I believed in God, but my relationship with Him was non-existent. When people said to me that it was "God's will," it made the situation worse because then I blamed God for all my pain. I was so angry with Him and the

world that I was an empty shell, having no feelings or love for God or my family.

I had sought counseling in the past but it was fruitless. The first time I heard about Stephen Ministry, I was very resistant to the idea of being counseled by them. However, by God's grace, I was matched with a wonderful Christian lady, who was and still is very patient, compassionate, loving, caring, and a wonderful listener. She opened and closed each meeting with God's word and prayer. It was through this Stephen Minister's love and God's grace that I was able to let go of my buried pain, forgive myself and start the path of recovery.

The path to healing and recovery is not an easy road, but by God's love and grace, nothing is impossible. Since the Stephen Ministry experience, God has placed other loving Christians in my life to assist with my healing, recovery and discipleship process. Malachi 3:2-3 have provided me with strength and encouragement while Stephen Ministry guided me through the difficulties of my refinement process. I realized now that it was "God's will" and grace that made me who I am today.

Malachi 3:2-3: "But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. 3 He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness."

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First Days

Dear friends,
family, and
partners,

We love the Bible verse: "The Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes" (Psalm 118:23). It's so applicable to so many things, even though the original context talks of who Jesus would be. As we opened up Pilgrim House for the first time this past Thursday, we had another moment of, "Wow. The Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes!"

Walters Newsletter

By Faith Walter

We wanted to share some photos of our first days and invite you to join in the wonder of Pilgrim House finally being at this point. We put our sign high up in the window and put out the black sandwich board for the first time (the easel with the arrow; to- left photo). The message wall had information about hostels and restaurants in Santiago, a “Question-of-the-Day” that pilgrims could answer, and a space for pilgrims to leave messages for each other (top-center). We all enjoyed the quietness of our living room before the first pilgrims came in (top-right).



people made Nate and me stand behind the reception desk together. I'm glad they did, though, because I kept forgetting it was our anniversary (bottom-center). Min—from South Korea—and Jana—from Germany—were the very first pilgrims to come in on our first day! They hung out for several hours and talked, wrote, read, and ate with us. It was exactly how we imagined pilgrims would use the space (bottom-right).

On Saturday—our busiest day to date—Pilgrim House welcomed about 20 pilgrims throughout the day. They came to the Camino from Israel, France, Germany, Sweden, Korea, Hungary, and Great Britain (below-left). The kids were excited to see Pilgrim House finally open, too, and visited one day before the morning shift started. They just weren't allowed to put their shoes on the furniture (below-right).



huge milestone with us! Our team does not walk through this alone, and this past week—receiving so many messages from you all—has made that clear. Thank you!

Take care,
Faith, for Nate and the kids

We celebrated with the team and took lots of smiley, happy photos with Anne, Brooke, Luke, Alley, Nico, and Gale. The only ones who were missing were Jeremiah and Danielle, who are on home assignment for the summer (bottom-left). The giddy, smiley

So it's been a smooth, peaceful first four days of being open. Thanks for being so engaged in what's been happening here in Santiago and for celebrating this

Missions Department Corner

Some of you might wonder what goes on at our monthly MD meetings at CBCM, so I would like to share some inside scoops with you. The meeting usually lasts about three hours with plenty of snacks. We start the meeting with each team member going around the room praying for missions. Our missionaries are constantly fighting spiritual battles out there in the mission field, because Satan is always trying to discourage or distract them with hardships or inconveniences. We often ask for godly wisdom with our decisions, and for the physical, emotional, and spiritual protection of our missionaries. Prayer also keeps us humble, for it teaches us to rely on the power of God instead of our resources. The power of prayer in action is that God will give back to us “far more abundantly all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20). There are always discussions of possible support of new missionary units, and we frequently have a special sharing time with our missionaries visiting the area, and I always look forward to hearing their stories in the mission field, their joys and challenges, and their experiences of God’s hand at work. We also have a very capable team member who is in charge of the financial affairs in MD—we call him the “Money Man.” He prepares the financial reports and checks for the missionary units that CBCM support and is always extremely eager to have the checks ready.

Recent MD Sponsored Event (5/30 – 6/1 and 6/6 – 6/8 weekends): Remembrance of the Martyrs Exhibit by Brother Sik Pui Wong. It included photos, last words, and letters from the missionary martyrs of the 1900’s Boxer Incident. The exhibit and workshop was well received, and CBCM also invited outside churches such as the Germantown Chinese Church to attend. Many people bought the book written by Brother Wong, and there will be a set available at the church library.

Something New at MD: MD is encouraging our Young Adults (YAs) to start Vacation Bible Schools (VBS) locally in economically disadvantaged churches to better equip our teens and YAs for VBS in short-term missions trips. MD will provide financial support for these local VBS projects upon approval. Please contact MD for more details before contacting the local disadvantaged church.

MD team members have been visiting cell groups and receiving feedback from them. One received suggestion is that they “want more news and photos of the missionaries’ lives and their work (ministries).” We have included excerpts of two newsletters from two missionary families that CBCM is currently supporting. David and Lila Chang are currently serving in South Thailand and are involved in evangelism, church planting, and English club. It truly touches my heart every time when I read the closing part of their newsletter with the phrase, “Gazing Heavenward.” I looked up the word in the dictionary and it says to “look steadily and intently, especially in admiration, surprise, or thought.” This phrase sums up their goal in life and their reason for being in Thailand. Nate and Faith Walters are currently serving in Spain, and their ministry focus is to outreach to the pilgrims who walk the Camino de Santiago. On July 24, they celebrated the opening of the Pilgrim House, a pilgrim welcome center which serves the pilgrims in the area. Even before Pilgrim House was opened, there were times when they have hosted pilgrims in their home, even though they already have a very busy household with four young children. CBCM is truly blessed to be in partnership with such special people for His Kingdom purpose.

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Engineering Ministries International

By Joshua Tseng

Hello! I'm back from my internship at Engineering Ministries International (EMI), and was quite the memorable summer. Now being back in Maryland for some time to collect my thoughts, I wanted to share with you my thoughts and experiences while I was in Estonia.

To start off, I would like to quickly talk about the EMI. EMI is a Christian Engineering Organization made up of all kinds of design professionals from architects, surveyors, to structural and civil engineers using their gifts to further God's Kingdom. They help ministries with any kind of design problem, whether that is fixing a sewage problem or designing hospitals and community centers.

Our project in Estonia was to design a master plan for a foster care village and to help solve the water problem at the site. The village would have about 10 duplexes, an administration building, gardens, a soccer field, greenhouse, and a barn. The village is going to be on a 12 acre plot on a children's camp. The children's camp is owned and run by a ministry called Strategic Angel Care (SAC) and the United Methodist Church of Estonia. SAC is the ministry we worked with on this project, and they mainly minister to the orphans in Estonia and Russia. They help teach kids life skills and try to provide backpacks, clothing, school supplies, etc. The vision of the project is to foster children in these homes, bringing them up on Christian values and teachings. One of the goals for the duplexes is to make them as energy efficient as possible so that the families will be more financially settled from the burden of adopting a child. My responsibility on the project was to help the mechanical engineer volunteer with the HVAC system for the buildings. I did a lot of HVAC sizing, energy modeling, and searching for different components on the internet or talking to a local architect that came by to help us understand the building culture in Estonia.

While I was in Estonia, I was able to talk to some of the workers at the camp, and make an effort in getting to know them. There was a language barrier between us—they spoke Russian while I only spoke English—but some of the workers understood a little bit of English, so I was able to talk to them about the ministry and how they felt about what they were doing. One of them explained that it is very hectic and tiring when the kids are there, but felt that it is all worth it because they get to tell the gospel to kids who normally wouldn't be able to hear the gospel. It was encouraging to see their passion for the kids and for Christ because a lot of the workers were young adults who take time out of either their studies or work to help with the camp.

Looking back on this experience as a whole, it has definitely changed my perspective on missions and how to use my vocation and skills as an engineer to further God's Kingdom. I learned that I can use my skills as an engineer to help ministries spread the gospel and that the work we do in these countries will help bring life to the communities. If you want to learn more about EM, were thinking about volunteering, or have more questions about my experience, you can look at their website @ www.emiusa.org or email me at joshua.tseng11@gmail.com.

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EXALTING JESUS CHRIST

EDIFYING THE BELIEVERS

EVANGELIZING THE WORLD