

“Held by the Light”

Dedication on June 2, 2019 at Cameron House

On June 2nd, 2019 the Healing Committee and Women's (Spouses') Group gathered the community together to dedicate 'Held by the Light'—a new art installation in the Cameron House healing chapel that honors the courageous and loving work the "Women's Support Group" has done - and continues to do - to heal themselves and their families from the wounds of clergy abuse. A beautifully-etched glass piece, 'Held by the Light,' was created by the women together with the artist, Christina Amri.

On the following pages are three resources that will provide a richer appreciation of the Held by the Light glass artwork. The first is a 2-page article written by Healing Committee member Jeanne Choy Tate that describes the Dedication event and includes detail on the development and meaning of the art.

Following that article are the text from two speeches made during Dedication ceremony by two of the members of the Women's Group. The first is from Carol Dolezal, who was the wife of Bill “Willie” Ng, a Cameron House alumni and Presbyterian minister. In her speech, she presents some of her own healing journey and thoughts about the purpose, meaning and symbolism of the Held by the Light glass art piece.

The second speech is from Carolyn Chan, who is the wife of Clinton Huey. Both Carolyn and Clinton are long-time, very well-known Cameron House alumni. You will see that Carolyn's presentation is actually a description of the wonderful ritual and “Blessing” she invited all the participants to join in during the event. Small stones, bowls of water and candles were used during this ritual to provide a physical way for us to see, remember and engage in this community healing moment.

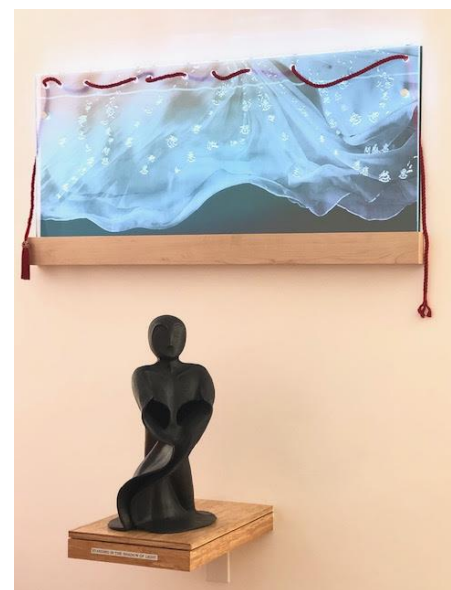
By now most of the CH/PCC community know about the many male victims of clergy sexual abuse harmed at Cameron House from the 1950s through 1970s. Few however know that, in addition to seeking healing for the victims of that abuse, the Cameron House Healing Task Force brought together a support group for the wives and partners of these victims. Here, in a safe and sacred space, women were able to process their fears and confusion, anger and grief, loneliness and vulnerability, helplessness and exhaustion. Here, they were not alone. For far too long, the pain and struggles of these women have remained hidden and unvoiced.

On June 2nd, the Healing Committee and Women's (Spouses') Group gathered the community together to dedicate 'Held by the Light'—a new art installation in the Cameron House healing chapel that honors the courageous and loving work the "Women's Support Group" has done - and continues to do - to heal themselves and their families from the wounds of clergy abuse. A beautifully-etched glass piece, 'Held by the Light,' was created by the women together with the artist, Christina Amri. The piece is filled with symbolism that gives expression to their journey into healing.

Over 60 people came to witness the dedication of this art piece and learn more about the struggles secondary victims face when clergy sexual abuse occurs. For abuse not only impacts individual victims, it also sends out ripples that impact spouses and families, congregations and local communities. While the healing of victims is, of necessity, a top priority, these many secondary victims—particularly the spouses and partners of these victims—bear a painful burden as wounds are brought out into the light for the first time. When their relationships began, spouses were usually unaware that they had fallen in love with men who had endured the great injustice of clergy sexual abuse. Indeed, until the reality of the abuse was openly named, their partners may not have known themselves that what they experienced was sexual abuse.

A translucent curtain of light, 'Held by the Light' complements and arches over the survivors' sculpture created by Noel Chun, 'From Darkness into Light.' The waving curtain of etched glass expresses the movement from relative darkness on the right to golden light on the left. This captures the way that healing work is dynamic as the story of abuse moves out of secrecy into the open. A series of small stitches across the top of the curtain represents the work of women in mending and stitching the lives of their families and communities back together again.

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'Held by the Light' Art Dedication *(continued from page 10)*

Etched into this curtain, an abundance of Chinese characters tumble down unsorted and disoriented. The eight strokes basic to Chinese characters at the top slowly coalesce into words as they near the bottom of the curtain. Thus the jumble of characters portrays the process that the women experienced of gradually growing into consciousness with an increased ability to articulate their experience as they shared with each other. The words formed all have the Chinese character for 'love' or 'heart' at their root. These characters span a full range of emotions, both painful and healing, for example: Distress, Sadness, Endure, Suffer, Anger, Fear, Worry, Lament, Witness, Forgive, Wisdom, Listen, Sex, Gratitude and Love—to name only a few of the words rooted in the character for 'heart.'



A red silk rope winding through the top of the waving curtain symbolizes the ancient Chinese proverb known as the 'Red Thread' or 'Red String of Fate.' In the proverb, people destined to meet and share a major life story together are tied together with an invisible Red Thread. Challenging everything people have been taught about love as "happily ever after," a red thread couple is destined for a relationship that may be rocky and tested by difficult circumstances. Because their lives are bound together for all eternity, though the Red Thread may become tangled, contracted or stretched, it will never break. Through-out their lives, the relationships endure as couples adapt to the many changes that come their way. Because their journey—and that of the CH/PCC community's decades-long healing process—is still on-going, one end of the rope remains unfinished.

With this piece of art, the Women's Group has found a way to honor the many challenges they have faced. In their journey into healing, they have become courageous and self-aware truth-tellers. The Healing Chapel at Cameron House has become an inspiring, sacred space to acknowledge past wounds and express gratitude for the many ways healing continues to move forward. Thanks to the Women's Group who have so beautifully and courageously given expression to this movement toward healing for the whole community. The chapel is also now enhanced by a beautiful stained glass window depicting Jesus with children in honor of the healing work of four women: Lorna Logan, Florence Logan, Mae Wong, and Tien Fu. If you haven't visited the chapel recently, you should plan to do so soon!



We As Spouses

Introduction: 1.5 minutes

With these words from Rumi, I greet you on behalf of The Spouses. “The wound is the place where the Light enters you.”

We as The Spouses, each share an experience of falling in love and marrying our husbands, and thus we are part of the thread of the Cameron House and Presbyterian Church in Chinatown community. Some of us grew up within this community; others married into this community. However we arrived, we are secondary survivors of the darkness of the Clergy Sexual Abuse that touched this community for 4 decades.

We and our families and this community have been able to work toward healing wounds and finding Light through Community Healing events, individual and couples therapy, retreats, and support groups; thanks to funds provided by the Presbyterian Church (USA) (Presbytery of San Francisco, Cameron House, Presbyterian Church in Chinatown) once the abuse was acknowledged. As one of us said about our group, "I have felt it to be a sacred, safe space to process my fears, helplessness, confusion, loneliness, exhaustion, vulnerability, frustration, anger, grief and sense of self as a secondary victim due to a gross abuse of power within a trusted and respected institution."

As many may not know about our Spouse Group, let me first acknowledge, as one of us who are out and open, that there are others who request privacy for various reasons. I am Carol Dolezal and here to give voice to our group and share a bit about our journey.

Point 1: 3 minutes — Group origins

After a Community Healing event held here in Cameron House... in this very space, the first formation of the Spouse Group emerged. For over 14 years, there has been a Spouse Group meeting. WE have been able to live into this ever-evolving process of healing, which we learned, is non-linear.

In the beginning we met at our facilitator’s office. We were blessed to have Brenda Wong as our group therapist and facilitator. About a year ago as funds for our facilitator were exhausted, the group chose to stay together and continue meeting. We renamed ourselves The Women’s Group, as a statement of our transcendence and claiming ourselves. We began meeting in a member’s home and continue this way.

We have had two retreats; one which allowed us to hike and have the sacred meeting with a herd of cows in a meadow. That same retreat allowed us to work together to solve the issue of the dead rat. Perhaps this was divine intervention, but we had a dead rat at the bottom of the stairs in our path from our retreat house to the riverside. This team building opportunity enabled us to agree that none of us wished to deal with the dead rat, and we called the neighbor to take care of it. In a humorous experience, we lived out one of our lessons within our journey... not to always be the caregiver; that it is perfectly okay to ask for and accept help.

Our gatherings always include food and check-in time... a time of sharing about our own journey and our families journey. Along with talking, we have explored our feelings and experiences through dance, art, yoga, silence, meditation, guided visualization, prayer and laying on of hands when one member is in special need of our support. There have been tears, laughter, conflict, joy, pain, reflection, celebration, healing and transcendence.

Above all, though we are unique women, we found we have a shared experience of loving someone who has survived and remains with pieces of the abuse which impact our lives and relationships. WE have found a safe place together to be vulnerable and speak the unspeakable. Finding our feelings and voices has allowed us to stand up for ourselves, our families, and partner; and most of all, find understanding.

In spite of the ripple effects of abuse that could have very well “derailed us, We spouses have shared many milestones and significant life events of "moving forward”.

Those include: Marriage, separation, divorce, birth, death, care-giving/death (of partner/parents), parenting, single-parenting, new relationships, publication of book, educational/professional advancement, career changes, financial independence, retirement, activism, physical and mental self-care, health scares and issues..... with healing woven into each step of moving forward.

Point 2: 2.5 minutes — process for healing through art and envisioning

Which brings us to the art piece, “Held By The Light”, which we dedicate today. Throughout our gatherings, we have had many discussions about our place as secondary survivors. When the Survivor Group dedicated their art piece and poem; our group began discussions about an art piece to express our experience, and compliment the survivors art. The Poems: “Stepping Out Of Our

Darkness, Into Our Light” and “In The Light” and the sculpture entitled, “Standing in the Shadow of Light.”

In 2015 we began dedicating some of our gatherings to exploring what we wished to express. During one of these gatherings, we each made a drawing that reflected our experience as secondary survivors.

The combined images included water, tears, hearts, ever present light, love, table, food, fellowship, movement, hands embracing, swirling, struggle, sadness, prisms of colors, especially the color red.

A plethora of emotions came bursting off each drawing page and the juxtaposition of Chinese culture came into light.

One woman had Chinese Characters scattered throughout her drawing and she expressed amazement in realizing all the characters stem from the heart... the root was in the heart. We were surprised as we heard the characters she had drawn... Distress, Sadness, Endure, Resent, Suffer, Rage, Fear, Worry, Hate, Lament, Reflection, Witness, Rest, Forgive, Love, Wisdom, Grace, Ambition, Benevolence, Listen, Loyalty, Mind/Body/Spirit, Sex, Comfort, Gratitude. All of these rooted in the heart... rooted in love. All tied together. We all felt the spirit moving - we had found what we wished to express, now... who could make this a reality?

Carolyn, one of our members, knew Christina Amri, and of her gifts with light and glass. In 2016 I represented our group to visit Christina's studio in Portland, and felt the spirit continuing to move. Through further conversations and a meeting with Christina here in the Chapel, she embraced our experience, picked up the thread, and wove the elements together with love, grace, and respect for the path we as spouses have traveled.

The plethora of emotions represented through the Chinese Characters, the fluidity of the experience, the understanding that it is always in motion, and the Red Thread that was an image our group visited about marriage... all of these elements and more are reflected in “Held By The Light”.

Point 3: 2 minutes

During our rumination about the art piece, The Ancient Chinese Proverb of the Red Thread was shared. It is also known as the **‘Red Thread of Fate’** or **‘Red String of Fate.’**

It goes like this...

“An invisible thread connects those who are destined to meet, regardless of time, place, and circumstance. The thread may stretch or tangle. But it will never break.”

This proverb symbolizes that people who are destined to meet are tied together with an invisible *Red Thread*. Legend has it that two people connected by this thread will have a major story, regardless of the time, place or circumstances. The Red String might get tangled, contracted or stretched, as surely often happens, but it can never break.

It is also true that sometimes the red thread that leads to our destiny is a rocky road. It challenges everything that we have ever believed about love and “happily ever after”. Even when we find the ‘one for us,’ things may not go smoothly.

The time may not be right; the circumstances might challenge the strength of our bond. What remains is that people who are destined to be together will find a way back, because no matter what we believe true love does exist, and it is eternal.

Through our years of meeting and through our continued exploration, we The Spouses have found ways to honor these challenges, found a way back to ourselves. and to the love that is within the relationships we have or have had with our partner, our families, and our community. Love is eternal.

Conclusion: 2 minutes

We as spouses, fell in love with men who endured a great injustice. We may or may not have known about their past. They may or may not have known of their abuse when we connected.

WE have had to look at why we were brought together... our red thread

The thread never breaks... it can endure much, just like the heart.

Through learning from the past, we strive for a better future ...

Many of our spouses were introduced to Christianity through Cameron House and Presbyterian Church in Chinatown, as was Willie Ng, my former husband. Part of any faith journey is exploring our unique calling and relationship with the Divine. From Willie and my Christian tradition, and that same faith that bonded our coming together, I'd like to share from the book of John.

John 1:5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

The word of the Lord; Thanks be to God!

There are many to thank and as I reflected on all who have worked toward the healing, it is difficult to ensure a complete list, and it is clear this has been a community wide effort. We The Spouses would like to thank and lift up any members of the Healing Task Force throughout the years, in all its formations. We would like to thank all the staff and board members and elders who worked toward healing this community, and planting the seed of need to create the Healing Task Force. Thank you to Greg Chan who was serving as Board President in 2002 when the Healing Task Force was formed, and for his support as recent Interim Executive Director. For the PCC Church leadership support. We would like to especially thank Cameron House former Executive Directors: Doreen Der-McLeod and May Leong, along with Laurene Chan, for their care and love and attention toward our presence and our needs as The Spouses. And once again, our heartfelt gratitude for our long time facilitator, Brenda Wong, who helped us, as she said, with our “heart fought journey.” We are better equipped because of all of you to continue our journeys!

I’d now like to introduce Christina Amri who has embraced the Spouses and our journeys;
who created the art that demonstrates how We as Spouses, and all those affected by the abuse, are indeed, Held by the Light.

Stones (bowls of water, two sites-one in Culbertson Hall where the candle/blessing site will be set up, one by the Held By the Light piece in the Chapel).

We place this stone for the women, partners, secondary victims from the clergy sexual abuse. Our processes of healing are stones with multiple ripples on many levels, affecting all of us. We honor our experiences, of not knowing what was going on, holding secrets, living with the impact of the clergy abuse by Dick Wichman. We honor the struggles, the insights and sharing, all the feelings and the deep support we have experienced in our group, and place this stone, with the ripples of healing, as offerings for our families, friends, and our community.

We place this stone for all victims from the clergy sexual abuse, known and unknown. We honor all those who have told their truth about the clergy sexual abuse by Dick Wichman and the impacts on themselves, their families, and our community.

We invite any of you, to place stones in the water, to honor your personal, family and community impacts of abuse and healing. You can find an opportunity that feels right to you after the program. Stones and Bowls are available here and in the Chapel. You can also place a stone in a body of water, in a place and time of your choosing (outside of this setting), honoring the ripples and impact of the abuse and healing.

Held by the Light Candle lighting:

1. We light this candle for us, **the women**, spouses, and partners of any person who was sexually abused by Dick Wichman, who have lived with secrets, of being a secondary victim. We honor our process of becoming aware, coming together, and sharing. We

honor the courage it takes to tell our truth, to ourselves, each other and in the community with the intention of healing.

2. We light this candle for the **victims** of clergy sexual abuse by Dick Wichman, including those who are aware and those who are unaware of the abuse and its impact on their lives.
3. We light this candle for the **families** of victims of the abuse and its impact, including parents, brothers and sisters, and especially the children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and generations of our families to come.
4. We light this candle for all those who were a part of the Cameron House program **during the period of abuse**, those who were not directly abused, but felt the impact in various ways and on many levels. Girls and women were especially impacted by an environment with decisions that discounted their gifts and abilities. They were often passed-over/"shut-out" of leadership roles, both at Cameron House and the larger church. Additionally, a calculated tactic of Dick Wichman's abusive power was to confuse and alienate us from our Chinese/Asian heritage with disparaging assertions.
5. We light this candle for all **Cameron House program** participants, leaders, staff, volunteers and clients-**past, present and future**, with hope and faith that the hard work of healing and the lessons learned from this dark part of our history will prevent it from ever happening again.
6. We light this candle **to recognize, honor and celebrate how for all of us, speaking our truth, finding courage to change, being in our process of healing is being HELD BY THE LIGHT. Let our LIGHT SHINE, we are holding the light for each other.**