2020 年一月至四月
January – April 2020

百万 MILLIONS

People
Quilting for Jesus
Voices from Taiwan

Places
Taiwan 101
A Church that Works for Workers

Participate
Missionary Mental Health Struggles

台灣縮影

Glimpses of Taiwan



MCI (P) 085/04/2019

Heart for Asia. Hope for Billions.

We are OMF International, founded by James Hudson Taylor in 1865 as the China Inland Mission.

We serve the Church and share the good news of Jesus Christ in all its fullness with countries across East Asia. We help place Christians with professional skills in East Asia, and share the love of Christ with East Asians worldwide.

Through God's grace, we aim to see an indigenous, biblical church movement in each people group of East Asia, evangelising their own people and reaching out in mission to other peoples.

編者的話

From the Editor

'I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel…' (1 Corinthians 9:23)

These words of Paul permeated Hudson Taylor's beliefs and practices. He made them his own, saying 'Let us in everything not sinful, become like the Chinese, that by all means, we may save some'. They led him to change his hairstyle and clothes and to learn the language and culture of the Chinese people he wanted to reach. Perhaps this seems obvious to us today, but it was radical at the time and even caused some who travelled with him to China to disagree.

Sometimes obvious and sensible things can seem difficult and costly. If you've ever tried to the change something that's 'always been done like this' you'll know how that feels.

Yet perhaps change and new ideas could open gospel opportunities. What if the way we speak and dress or the times and places we meet shout louder than our best sermons and say 'this message isn't for you!'

How remarkable that we have the freedom in Christ to become all things to all people. How wonderful that Jesus humbled himself, becoming like us and serving us through his life, death and resurrection. How wonderful to hear of those who, recognising this freedom and pattern, have seen God do remarkable things through them.

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Design: sparks-studio.com
Print: Mainland Press Pte Ltd

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OMF Singapore Looks Ahead to a New Decade

The acronym VUCA was first used after the Second World War but today it is often used by all sectors to describe the world we live in which is Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous. We are constantly bombarded by news of the disruptions Industrial Revolution 4.0 will bring and over the past few years, many people have been laid off because their jobs are now obsolete. And as a country that wants to be one of the first smart nations, one major strategy is Innovation 4.0.

In this context of global disruptions, OMF Singapore has been looking at what must remain unchanged and what must be changed in order to keep in step with what God is doing around us globally and locally, and the pace at which we implement changes. Our overall vision and values, such as faith, dependence on God and holiness do not change. However, as we have done in the past, we need to consider how we respond appropriately to the changing global context.

In some ways whether the church or mission agencies embrace change or not, all around us, the public, corporate and non-profit sectors are innovating because they know if they do not, they will indeed slowly or quickly become irrelevant. This is nothing new as each generation has had to make positive changes to keep pace with the work of the Holy Spirit. This is part and parcel of God's way to motivate us to keep seeking and be completely dependent on him, and not on safe and tried ways. And God has been so good in providing for us to do so.

A hallmark, however, of these disruptive times is both the speed as well as breadth and depth of change.

As a Fellowship, we have highlighted three particular areas, among the many global challenges: Engaging with East Asia's global diaspora, exploring marketplace ministry and missional business and how we partner in the changing face of global mission.

To address these areas, we are trying to cultivate a creative environment which allows us to experiment with some new ways of working to address these challenges.

We were pleasantly surprised when we first started our quarterly Business as Mission and Marketplace Prayer Meeting in 2019, we had nearly 90 attendees and since then we have always had more than 60. In addition, we have started a forum for diaspora and diaspora returnee ministry. We are also developing one particular ministry partnership as a model for greater collaboration between churches, theological seminaries, godly business leaders and mission agencies to facilitate a missions movement.

In 2019, I have been particularly looking at the passages on 'new wine and new wineskins' found in Matthew 9: 16-17; Mark 2:18-22 & Luke 5:33-39. May we all reflect on what it means in our own context and be like the disciples who took Jesus at his word and learned at his feet to become change agents or like the Pharisee Saul who was transformed to become the re-wired, renewed Paul, apostle to the Gentiles, after the Lord removed the scales from his eyes so he could have a clear vision of Jesus the Messiah! May we all pray to the Lord for wisdom and discernment to know what and how he wants us to change to fulfil his purposes in this generation and age of disruptions.

Susan





Medics in Action

In summer 2019, I spent a month shadowing a Christian doctor working in East Asia.

It was a huge eye-opener for me, having mainly spent time working in the healthcare systems of more developed countries. I benefited hugely from spending time with Christian workers there - hearing their stories and learning from their experiences in life as well as watching them live out their call to share Jesus in day-to-day life.

I also got lots of opportunities to spend time with local people and build relationships with them myself, mainly through daily interaction with colleagues. I was reminded from this experience that we are all witnesses for the Lord wherever we are, with the same call to make disciples of all nations and the same God helping and directing us. While it may be costly and unglamorous, this was the same pattern of ministry our Lord told us to expect. I'm thankful for the chance to have seen mission in action from such close quarters, and to be encouraged in my own mission.

*John**

A short-term worker from Singapore

*name changed

台灣簡介

Taiwan 101

Taiwan is an island of contrasts. It was named Formosa, meaning 'beautiful island', by Portuguese explorers and after decades of industry and pollution is now rediscovering its beauty through dedicated recycling efforts and is keen to promote eco-tourism.

Taiwan has a distinctive culture shaped by its political relationship with China, 50 years of Japanese colonisation (from 1895 to 1945) and the modern adherence to K Pop and J Pop music and Korean dramas!

If you traveled around Taiwan you'd see the many 7-11 convenience stores, the architectural marvel of the 101 building (the world's tallest from 2004 to 2010) the profusion of brightly coloured and active temples, the food and market stalls spilling over onto the pavements.

A closer look will reveal lives and struggles of Taiwan's 15 million working class people. So OMF Taiwan aims to make disciples and grow communities of faith among these people, who do not easily fit into existing churches due to differences in background, mindset and education.

Fact File

Total Population	23.6 million
Languages	Mandarin, Taiwanese, Hakka, many Indigenous languages
Major Religion	Mixture of Buddhism, Taoism and Traditional religions
Folk Religion	~90%
Evangelical Christians	2.8%
Working class Christians	~0.5%
OMF began work in	1951
Number of OMF workers	74 (in 2019)

Did you know...?

- Taiwan is one of the most earthquake-prone places in the world. It experiences over 1,000 noticeable earthquakes a year and over 17,000 non-perceivable quakes.

- In 2019 The World Happiness Report ranked Taiwan as the 25th happiest country in the world (out of 156)! This is a lot higher than Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea and China.



Taipei

台北

The capital city, home to the Shopworkers Church and 13 small groups scattered around Taipei shopping districts. The Pearl Family Garden team reaching marginalised and-risk women and Hope Team reaching at-risk families are based in Wanhua, a poorer district of Taipei.

– Has many hot springs since it sits in a basin surrounded by mountains, some which are still volcanically active.

Taichung

台中

Taiwan's second city, where all new OMF workers do language and culture study. A church ministry team is also based here.

– The birthplace of pearl milk tea (an iced tea, also known as bubble tea due to the tapioca balls at the bottom of the cup). Bubble tea is growing in popularity in cities across the UK why not try a cup next time you're out and about?

Puxin Township

埔心

A rural township where Jason and Hiwin Tam (AU) work as church planters.

Chiayi

嘉義

A church ministry team is based in Zhongpu, a suburb of Chiayi, led by Jennifer McIntyre (US), while Seann & Amy Gibson (US) do student work near Chiayi University.

– Is known for its most famous dish, Chiayi turkey rice.

MeiShan Township

梅山

Church ministry couple Kat (Tang) & Putao Lin (US) work here.

Tainan City

台南

Judith Jackson (NZ) serves in student work.

Kaohsiung

高雄

A church planting team led by David Ullstrom (CA) is based here.

– The Fo Guang Shan temple features a unique way to ensure that Buddha receives worshippers' prayers – a touch screen interface allows prayers to be recorded electronically.

Da She

大社

A suburb of Kaohsiung where Brian & Faith Janssen (US) lead a student ministry team.

Donggang Township

東港

A church ministry team led by Aaron Koh (AU) is based here.

– Every three years, an eight-day festival honouring the Wang Yeh gods, ends with a full-size wooden ship being burned at midnight. (Watch a video of this at go.omf.org/boatburning)

拼織為耶穌

Quilting for Jesus

I never could have predicted that when I started to make quilting my hobby it would be used for a much greater purpose.





> "As we quilted, we'd discuss the story, our lives, God, and how the story could help us.

When my husband and I moved to Puxin to join our ministry team, my neighbour Shujuan showed me the best places to buy groceries and taught me how to cook simple Taiwanese meals. Every time Shujuan stopped by our house she brought a bag of seasonal produce, steamed buns, or fresh grapes from their field. How could I ever repay such generosity?

One day, Shujuan saw a bright-coloured quilt I had made and commented on it. Right then I knew what I could do. I would teach her how to make a quilt. Over the next three months, every Tuesday Shujuan came over to my house. We chatted away while we cut, arranged, pinned, and sewed. By the time we finished hand-sewing the binding onto the edge of the quilt we had talked about food, Thanksgiving, the difference between Catholics and evangelical Christians, temple worship, heaven, and Christmas. One Tuesday a friend of hers was driving by my house and saw Shujuan's scooter sitting outside. She immediately called Shujuan and asked where she was.

Before I knew it, her friend was sitting across from me and the three of us continued in conversation. As with most people, she asked me why we had come to Taiwan. I shared with them the restorative work God had done between myself and my parents and how God wanted to do the same for families in Taiwan. Just then, my husband poked his head into the room to ask me if I'd like him to buy me a tea. I gave him my order and thanked him as he left.

Shujuan chimed in, 'You two are so sweet. Why?' she asked. You see, generally speaking, the working-class Taiwanese rarely show such affection toward one another, especially in front of others. The easy answer was, because he loves me of course, but it was more than that. I thought for a moment. 'Because God loves us,' I replied. 'My husband uses God's love to love me and I use God's love to love him.' It was the first time they had ever heard that there is a God who loves and that we could experience this love ourselves.

I would go on to use quilting to disciple young girls as well. We'd read a Bible story together and then start to create a block with an image from the story. As we quilted, we'd discuss the story, our lives, God, and how the story could help us. By the end, they would have a quilt full of stories to remember who God is, what he desires for us, and be able to share these stories with others.

You see, in God's hands, quilting becomes a tool to build relationships with people and introduce them to him.

Cheryl Alexandr
OMF (US)

腳踏車福音事工

Cycling for Jesus



Shortly after arriving in Taiwan, I discovered I had high blood sugar levels. Our doctor urged me to change my diet and start exercising to keep my body healthy. So I started to cycle. Through cycling I realised how beautiful Taiwan is, started to feel better physically and discovered sports could be a powerful tool in ministry.

It is often hard to reach men here, to get to spend time with them and have deeper discussions about life and faith. So as time went by I started to use sports more intentionally to reach out to others. On bike rides with other guys I had the opportunity to sow into their lives. This could happen by sharing Bible stories on the go or praying for someone as we took a break after climbing one of the many hills surrounding our home. Other times, it would be a run through the countryside sweating together and sharing life stories. I found that through any sport conversations about life, God and faith came easily.

During the last year I have been studying Mandarin and was very encouraged a few months back when I was out for a run and was able to share my first Bible story in Mandarin. I shared the story of the prodigal son, which opened up a good conversation about what kind of God we worship. My friend has even referred back to that story a few times since.

After returning for our second term I have been learning more about how to use sport creatively in ministry. As a team, we want to intentionally engage with the community around the church plant. For example, our team leader began aerobic classes to minister to the ladies in our community. During our first week we had about 20 ladies come along and two of them came to our Bible study the following Wednesday. The possibilities for sports ministry are endless.

> “I found that through any sport conversations about life, God and faith came easily.

My prayer is that we can use sport together with other more conventional outreach methods to bring people together, build friendships and give people the opportunity to hear the gospel and experience the love of God. My hope is that sport can play a significant part in reaching out and transforming this community as well as others for the glory of God. How could God use your sporting interest for his mission?

Markus Laurinkari

Markus is from Finland. He and his wife Annie are sent out with OM Finland through OMF's international sending partnership, New Horizons.

一位植堂者的旅程

Planting on Pavement: A Church-Planter's Journey

The first time I spoke to Yong-yi about spiritual matters, her face showed a distinct lack of interest — a look I had gotten used to since starting ministry as a church planter in southern Taiwan.

> "we all persevered, which had a profound effect on the budding Christian community

God? Who's that?' she asked curtly, taking a step backward. Calmly, I told her about a mother's gathering I had started, where we talked about relating to others.

'Well....maybe I'll come,' she said, but, as she turned to leave, I felt certain I would never see her again.

My husband and I had come to Zhong-pu knowing that starting from scratch in a rural unreached area (0.3 per cent Christian) would be slow work. But we had little idea how lonely and discouraging it would feel to plough such hard soil.

We soon realised that we desperately needed local helpers, both to help us to be locally relevant and to encourage each other. After asking our supporters to pray for this, we got to know a Baptist Church in the nearby city of Chiayi.

One day, the pastor unexpectedly asked us if he could come visit our tiny Gospel Centre. He asked questions about our ministry and notable lack of resources; little did we know that he was seeking a rural church plant to partner with. Eventually they chose us because, as the pastor told us, 'You guys seem so "可憐" (pitiful!)'!

Once our partnership became official, things began to change. We were no longer strange, lone foreigners bringing an obscure religion. People saw us working alongside people like them — those who had come from traditional Taiwanese religious backgrounds but, against all odds, had turned to worship Jesus. One elderly woman, who we thought might be resistant to hearing about Jesus, peppered our new co-workers with questions about their previous beliefs. Through powerful prayers, she became the first baptised believer in the church.

The Baptist Church also helped us with both teaching and evangelism, particularly at a local park where we held a weekly family outreach. This included Bible storytelling, song singing and crafts. Thus from the church plant's inception, the flavour of local culture was infused into the bubbling group of new Christians —a group that eventually included none other than Yong-yi.

As we held various activities to attract seekers — tea nights, aerobics classes — attendance at the weekly Bible study grew to a point. But then it became stagnant. So our team decided to try something not usually found in the working-class church-planters playbook.

We started a Sunday service.

As it turned out, working class Christians found a service to be less intimidating than small group Bible discussion.

'I like coming to church because there's such a warmth in the people here,' said one non-Christian we had first met at the park. 'My kids love learning about Jesus.'

The service also attracted previously 'hidden' Christians in the area.

'I haven't been to church since I moved here two years ago,' said a woman who saw a poster about our new church service. 'There are no other Chinese speaking churches nearby!' Before long, she was attending regularly and soon started teaching the children's Sunday school.

My husband Thomas, an avid preacher, cherished the opportunity to preach after spending more than five years focusing on evangelism. But since he was new to preaching in Chinese, we reached out to our prayer supporters. One supporter knew a woman who volunteered to translate my husband's sermons. Because of her, Thomas was able to present God's word clearly — and as she translated, she felt spiritually edified as she pored through the sermons. And she started supporting us financially too.

As the church started to grow, we immediately felt pressure from the enemy on all sides. Several women had husbands who tried to prevent them from coming to church, including by physical violence or the threat of divorce. Yet in many cases, after appealing to our supporters for prayer, this pressure started to decrease. One woman even got permission from her husband to be baptised.

Other signs of spiritual warfare came in the form of illness. After starting our weekly service, each member of our missionary team faced some major health crisis. Yet we all persevered, which had a profound effect on the budding Christian community as well as our partnering church.

'Look at all the suffering these missionaries have gone through to preach the gospel here,' one of the Baptist Church leaders commented. 'It's time for us to do more outreach too.'

One year and four months have passed since we started our weekly worship service. Attendance varies from six to fifty depending on the season. The Lord has given us a local pastor, and we've begun transferring some work to him.

'How can we get our members to take over more responsibilities in the church?' asked Yong-yi, who is now one of our key co-workers. She answered her own question: 'Like in everything, it seems impossible. But we must persevere and trust the Lord.'

Jennifer Su McIntyre
OMF Taiwan



Pray for the Zhong-pu church:

- That a continuous stream of seekers will come into the church through their outreach events.
- For God to help members have a greater burden for service as the church transitions to local leadership.
- For the young local pastor: That he would feel increasingly confident in ministry and that the church will be able to financially support him.

為基層人士所設的教會

A Church that Works for Workers



"Throughout the service, delicious smells waft through the air.

Hear more of Pastor Kevin's story: go.omf.org/kevin

On an unremarkable street, in an unremarkable room of an unremarkable building a short walk from Liuzhangli MRT station, something truly remarkable is happening.

It's Sunday morning in Taipei, Taiwan. We cross the road outside a 7-Eleven and wait for Irene.

Irene Nicholson has lived and worked in Taiwan for 27 years. Today she is taking us to visit a shopworkers' church. Whilst there is an established Church in Taiwan, it has mostly reached the middle-class. OMF's heart is to see the working-class of Taiwan reached with the gospel too. In 1988 Elizabeth, an OMF worker from Germany, saw that shop workers had very little opportunity to go to church or even meet a Christian. But with long working hours, a traditional model of church and evangelism was unlikely to reach them.

So Elizabeth began going from department store to department store, meeting shop workers, getting to know them and studying the Bible with them. When someone came to Christ, Elizabeth discipled them and encouraged them to share Jesus with those who worked around them in the store. Over time this humble grassroots work became a church, and is now a whole series of churches. Today the ministry continues to multiply and grow across Taipei and throughout Taiwan.

When Irene arrives, she takes us through the ground-floor entrance hall of the building into a medium-sized room, perhaps 10 metres by 8 metres, where about 60 chairs are neatly set out. We are greeted by Pastor Kai Yuan (aka Kevin), a Taipei local. His life was transformed by the gospel as a young adult. His sister shared the good news with him at a time when he was struggling with involvement in drugs, alcohol and gangs. Kevin was later met and discipled by Elizabeth and others from the shopworkers church at the Japanese restaurant where he worked as a chef.

Several people have started turning up and children have begun milling around between the rows of chairs.

We find a seat near the front, Irene helpfully provides translation at various points as the service is conducted in Mandarin. The service begins with Kevin's wife leading the church in a time of prayer for the world and mission, including for migrant workers from Indonesia and Myanmar in Taipei. The room has been filling up since we arrived and appears to now be standing room only.

We stand to sing as a YouTube video starts playing on the small projector screen at the front. Irene explains that this is an alternative to having a worship band since these church members' lower incomes mean they have few opportunities to learn musical instruments.

One of the congregation's favourite songs speaks of the difference knowing a God who listens and speaks makes in their lives.

After a couple of songs, around a dozen children and young people gather at the front for prayer before heading out to their groups.

Kevin then preaches, encouraging the church from Ephesians 4. His points are punctuated by dialogue with the congregation. He throws out questions to his listeners and either generously affirms their answers or, when needed, gently corrects their misunderstanding. He knows his congregation well, joking about what individuals are known for and applying the Scriptures to specific areas of life for his hearers.

Irene notes that today's sermon is a little shorter than normal because there will be three baptisms. It is a joy to witness the testimonies of these local people and see them publicly declare their love for Jesus in this way.

Throughout the service, delicious smells waft through the air and Irene explains that every Sunday the service is followed by a meal together. A few church members are busy in the next room cooking for everyone!

After communion, we sing again, and after a closing prayer, the room is swiftly transformed into what resembles a large family dining room. A long table is set up in the middle of the room while a smaller round table is set off to one side for the younger children. Bowls of rice, pork ribs, tofu, fried greens with garlic, an omelette-style dish, stir-fried sausage and vegetables are brought to the table. The sound of prayer and singing is replaced with conversation and laughter, one of those wonderful experiences of community that only seem to come when we eat together. After more food and an 'interesting' experience of grass jelly drink, our time together, unfortunately, comes to an end. As we make our way through the humid streets back to the MRT station I reflect on the wonderful scenes we have just been a part of. An outworking of God's grace. His powerful work through humble acts of love and service. To see this vibrant community of local people following Jesus to hear the stories of those baptised, to see young and old praising God together, and to know a similar gathering will occur at 10:30 pm for those who are working today, was a heart-warming joy and a highlight of an exciting trip to East Asia.

Chris Watts
OMF (UK) Communications Manager

宣教士的精神健康

Missionary Mental Health Struggles

What would you say if you found out the missionary you support deals with depression? Would you feel disappointed or let down? Would you question their spirituality? Let's be honest here. The reality is, missionaries are human. Humans face spiritual battles, loss, disappointment, betrayal, physiological challenges, failure and personal sin.



> "let us each care for the members of the body, giving grace and providing a safe place for transparent and honest living.

A missionary's life is always on display. That can become a heavy weight to bear. Add to that some kind of mental stress and the stigma can seem insurmountable. Regardless of what we believe about mental health or how it should be treated, shouldn't our response be one of love and support?

In the gospels we read accounts of a God who loved the mentally unstable, the demon possessed, the socially rejected. We see a Messiah who ministered to the emotional and physical needs of those around him. Christ called us to follow him. Why are we so reluctant to follow when it comes to mental health?

Why are we afraid of the topic of mental health?

Sometimes I wonder if our reluctance has to do with our fear.

Fear that being around someone with mental illness will somehow rub off on us.

Fear, because mental illness is something we can't control.

Fear, because displays of pain, sadness or anger confront our personal disconnect from pain and emotions.

Fear, because we want other believers to meet our standards of perfection. Especially those in Christian ministry.

Mental Health in Mission

Which brings us to a very important question. If an individual struggles with mental health issues, do they belong in mission?

This is a complex question and one I don't believe can be answered with a simple yes or no.

One of the highest considerations to this question is whether an individual could pose a risk to other people.

The sad truth is over the years missionaries have done bad things. They have hurt and abused others. Misused their authority. Perpetrated evil. Did all of those people have some kind of mental illness? It's unlikely. People hurt people, whether they have a mental illness or not. And the stigma that mental illness and violence goes hand in hand is unfounded.

At the same time, living with mental health issues of any kind is difficult. Whether it's depression, clinical depression, bipolar disorder or burnout, it impacts one's ability to live and function in a healthy way. All of these things will



become compounded and amplified by the stress and spiritual warfare involved in going to another country for mission work.

At OMF, assessing mental health is a part of the application process for long-term workers. Sending someone to another country if they aren't able to take care of themselves is not going to be helpful to anyone. Yet it is possible to live well and thrive, even in the midst of dealing with mental illness. The question of mental illness and mission is one that needs to be answered with great care and responsibility on a person by person basis.

When a missionary on the field faces depression or other mental health struggles, it doesn't mean they are unfit for ministry. It does mean we need to cover them in prayer, support them and at times give them space from their duties as a missionary. Rather than being surprised when a missionary faces mental health challenges, we should expect they will experience some level of struggle in this area and be prepared to support them when they do.

Pretending Doesn't Help

Many people with mental health challenges feel compelled to pretend as if nothing is happening. They stuff the overwhelming fear and sadness down inside; they reject and repress what their bodies and spirit are telling them. That's dangerous. Pretending doesn't help.

Whether we pretend we're fine, pretend we're holy, pretend we don't need help … The life of pretence sets us up for failure and separates us from ourselves, from God and from others. Whether we face mental health issues or not, we must learn to stop pretending. Our only hope to deal with the challenges of life is to learn to come to the Father and rely on him in our lack.

We are a body, not individual units. At OMF, we care about mental health.

Let us each care for the members of the body, giving grace and providing a safe place for transparent and honest living.

Galina Hitching
OMF (US) Online Content Coordinator

台灣之聲

Voices from Taiwan

> "I was amazed to see the power of God to change things in my family."

A young person: Yin's story

I got baptised in January 2018 after seeing God's power to change my family.

Up until two years ago, life at home was filled with the sound of my parents arguing and fighting. I would take my younger brother into the bedroom each time the shouting began. I often wondered if my parents would stay together or separate. And then what would happen to my brother and I?

But then my dad, Ah Du, joined a Bible study at the wine shop he supplies glasses for. He didn't believe in God before. But soon he believed in Jesus and asked my mum to come to the Bible study too. She reluctantly went and then started following Jesus too. My parents' lives began to change significantly.

Soon they took us to church. It wasn't like I'd expected: all stained-glass windows and stiff, formal worship. The Shopworkers Church met in someone's ordinary apartment. People wore normal clothes and didn't use special religious language. We found we fitted in, could make friends and be part of the community.

The church pastor, Kevin, and his wife met my parents each week to help them understand the Bible. Their faith grew and they got baptised. As their lives changed and the situation at home improved, I was amazed to see the power of God to change things in my family.

A pastor: Jordan & Bella's story

As a fifth-generation Christian, I, Jordan, have always been involved in church and ministry. After serving in a church for a while, I decided to go to theological seminary, where I met my wife, Bella. As the only Christian in her family, Bella encountered a lot of resistance for wanting to study at seminary. It was not easy for her.

As a seminary student, I interned with an OMF ministry to youth in a village called Xinghuabu in Zhong-pu Chiayi, where I learned how to tell Bible stories, organise activities, and generally love and serve at-risk youth.

A year later, Bella and I got married and she joined me in interning with the same ministry. We began to minister not only to the youth, but also to their families and others we met in the small village where we lived at the weekends.

Although this work was incredibly challenging, we knew it was exactly the kind of ministry we wanted to be involved in upon graduating seminary. After all, how will these folks hear the gospel otherwise?

Many of our classmates did not understand why we did not pursue being full-time pastors or evangelists in an established church. Our families, especially Bella's, were concerned whether we could support our young family. Nevertheless, we felt that this was the Lord's leading, to remain in Zhong-pu and continue to minister alongside our OMF co-workers.

Recently, we were invited to serve as pastor of a church planted in our area by other OMF co-workers. At the same time, we were exploring another organisation that ministers to rural areas. Although the other organisation offered a lot more stability, we felt the Lord calling us to continue ministering in Zhongpu in partnership with OMF. There is much work yet to be done before leadership of the church is wholly turned over to us. Additionally the new church plant is not yet financially independent, but we are trusting the Lord for his provision.