

OMF TAIWAN

Reaching Taiwan's working class

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Facts

Taiwan is a small but strategic island near the south-eastern coast of China. Its people are mostly ethnic Chinese whose ancestors migrated at various times over the last 300 years.

The Taiwan of today is a wealthy, technologically advanced urban society. Most people live in one of Taiwan's overcrowded cities. There is a small church established amongst Taiwan's middle class which is increasingly affluent and cosmopolitan.

However, most of Taiwan's people can be considered working class. They are laborers, drivers, shop-workers, farmers, hairdressers, and small-business owners. Although they may not be outwardly poor, they tend to be less educated and are often plagued by family and social problems. Taiwan has one of the highest divorce rates in Asia.

The working class generally speak Taiwanese, in contrast to those with higher social status, who often favor Mandarin. The working class are traditional in their approach to life, and most are entrenched in Chinese folk religions – a blend of Taoism, Buddhism and Confucian thinking.

Needs

Taiwan's 23 million people are extremely religious, worshiping a pantheon of gods, spirits and ancestors. Only 2% know Jesus and worship the one true God.

Less than 0.5% of Taiwan's 15 million working class people are Christians. (That's one-third of the percentage of Christians in Iraq.) The rest are heavily bound by idolatry and superstition.

In south-central Taiwan, the area marked on the map, most townships (clusters of 15–20 villages with populations of about 25,000 people) have only one or two struggling churches – if they have any at all. On average only 0.1% are Christians. In scores of villages, you would be hard pressed to find one Christian witness.

Taiwan has a much lower percentage of Christians than China does and a wide open door for gospel work, yet very few people are taking the opportunity to bring the good news to this massive group of unreached people – Taiwan's 15 million working class.

Actions

OMF missionaries are seeking to establish churches amongst the working class and to help kick-start a church planting movement that will sweep through Taiwan.

We currently have church planting teams in the towns of Chiayi and Hengchun and plan to start teams in other unreached areas of southern Taiwan when God sends us co-workers.

In Taipei we have planted "midnight" churches amongst service industry personnel (shop assistants, restaurant workers, etc) and hope to multiply this in other places.

Our other working class ministries include: outreach in the slums of Taipei; reaching poor and dysfunctional families; and caring for the homeless, prostitutes, AIDS victims, juvenile delinquents and orphans.

It is exciting to see God at work and yet there is so much more to be done. We are urgently praying for God to send us at least **twenty new colleagues in the next five years** so that we can start new outreach teams in two more towns, and expand our current ministries.





A Place for You?

Ministry to the working class is challenging, but greatly rewarding. We are looking for people who are **passionate, adventurous** and **creative. Smart, energetic** people who can offer fresh perspectives. But most of all, people who **love people**.

We welcome those with a wide range of gifts and talents so that we can work together synergistically to build Christian communities amongst the working class. In the future, we hope to have a range of:

Personal evangelists – “People” people who can enter into the lives of the working class by simply hanging out with them. There is a particular demand for male evangelists.

Thinkers – insightful people who can consider how to share the gospel and start churches which are both biblical and suited to the working class world.

Children’s workers – ministering to kids and teenagers often opens the door to sharing the gospel with working class families.

Student workers – many university students come from working class backgrounds. Student work can be a way to help them take the gospel back into their communities.

Counselors, social workers, musicians, etc – special gifts and training can be a great benefit in sharing the gospel holistically and practically.



Ministry Opportunities	
Working class church planting	Enthusiastic, creative people to form new teams in unreached townships. Teams need evangelists, disciplers, theologians, children’s & youth workers.
Children and family outreach	After-school activities for “at-risk” kids. There are opportunities for ministry to both the kids and to their dysfunctional families – often victims of social injustice.
Shop-worker outreach	Ministry to service industry personnel, takes place late at night after the stores and restaurants close. It needs those who can evangelize and disciple these people. This ministry has been very successful in Taipei, so we hope to duplicate it in other areas.
Prostitute outreach	A new outreach to prostitutes needs female missionaries who can befriend and help hurting women find freedom in the gospel.
Missionary Interns	Interns join our ministry teams for one to two years. We train them, incorporate them into our teams, and help them process long-term possibilities.
Guest home hosts	A couple to manage Oasis, OMF’s retreat center. A place of spiritual renewal for many missionaries.
Support staff	MK teachers, finance & media personnel.

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