

East Asia insight

OMF INTERNATIONAL FALL 2004

HARVESTERS FOR THE FIELD

by Angie Mackey with Beth Forshee

Christians can choose to live for their own stories or for God's. This summer two hundred people decided to live for God's story by going on a short-term mission through OMF's Serve Asia Program.

Short-term trips are for people who no longer want to be self-focused in their life choices, but God-focused. We find many people start out by asking, "How does missions fit me and how can my gifts be used?" and when they return from a short-term experience they say, "Where is the need and what can be done to meet that need?" More and more people are becoming interested in missions because they desire to see God worshiped globally.

College students and professionals are "giving up" their

summers to catch God's vision for the nations by teaching English, prayer walking, building relationships and working alongside long-term missionaries. Through these opportunities, foundations are being laid by God to change lives and help people to realize the greatness of his kingdom.

Our goal is not simply to send people out on a short-term basis, but to disciple people for service in God's kingdom whether through praying, giving, mobilizing or going. This year we have seen lives changed with an increased passion to commit to purposeful involvement in East Asia, and we envision an increase in harvesters in the years to come. ■



Missions ruined my life!

A summer missions experience turns life rightside up
by Ruth Hull

You could have asked me any day of the week and I would have assured you that God wasn't calling me to missions. No way! I've always been marginally interested in what God is doing around the world, but I never really considered myself to have a part to play in that. I had this idea that missionaries were either people who had grown up as MKs or people who seemed to have been "called from birth."

I was making plans for my life when God

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Story-telling at the teashop

“How can you evangelize if your Mandarin is so bad,”

Mei Ling’s Christian uncle interrupted as I practiced telling my Bible stories to Mei Ling, a Christian fruit-seller. He also kept correcting my tones, which made it very difficult to concentrate. I agreed that my Mandarin needed to improve, but I challenged him, “Since you are a native speaker, why don’t you evangelize among your own people?” He replied, “Oh, the Taiwanese are too difficult to evangelize and besides, they don’t listen.”

For the past two years, I have been visiting a teashop owned by a single woman, Chin Su. Over cups of tea, she and I have been building a friendship. I have also had the opportunity to pray for her when she was sick, and one time she offered to help correct the text of my chronological Bible story homework. More recently, she has begun to listen to the Bible stories and help me practice them.

There are six Bible stories, beginning with God creating the spirit world to Christ’s death and resurrection. These stories give an overview of God’s plan of redemption. Each Bible story has one or more of these themes running through it: genealogy, sacrifice, promise or prophecy. The first story of Satan’s fall and God’s pre-eminence is an important one for the Chinese as it shows that God is over Satan and demons, and that from the beginning God planned for the Savior to redeem us.

The other day I went to the teashop to buy some tea to take to Mei Ling. I told the shop

owner that I would be back later to tell her the third Bible story.

Mei Ling listened to the story and helped me make them easier to understand. This is when her Christian uncle came to join us and was so hard on my Mandarin abilities. When I left there I was very discouraged. Then I realized that God uses the weak vessels to show his strength. If God chooses to work through me even as I learn the language then I should continue to be faithful to proclaim his word.

Right after that, I went back to the teashop. Besides Chin Su, three of her friends were there. One said, “Chin Su told us that you tell Bible stories. Will you tell us a story?” So I started telling them the first story, and since they were interested, I went on to the second story. Thus I had told them about creation up to Abraham offering up Isaac and God providing the lamb. After several hours of sharing with them, they said they would come back to the teashop again to hear the next story. Chin Su had been busy with customers so she didn’t time to join us. When I was leaving, she said, “But you didn’t tell me the third story! You’ll have to come back another time and tell it to me!”

Since that afternoon, I have had an opportunity to get to know one of Chin Su’s friends better and have been able to share more of the stories and the gospel with her. Through tea drinking, chatting and Bible storying, I pray that Chin Su and her friends may come to know the Savior of these stories. ■

by Michelle Collin,
missionary to
Taiwan

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Mobilization and YOU

How can you have the joy of seeing God glorified in East Asia?

The heart of OMF’s mobilization ministry is not the OMF staff.

It is people like you who advise, support, pray, mobilize and join us in our mission.

With the purpose of raising up workers, prayer and finances to see God glorified in East Asia, our mobilization team needs all types of people in all walks of life, doing all kinds of mobilization.

During their normal busy lives, people may give time as they can, bringing outside perspectives and providing professional insights and advice on finance, risk, organization and management issues.

Some can bring an understanding of mission and Asia. Others may bring local church perspective or provide medical and personnel support. That’s why, in our attempt to effectively encourage others in mission, we not only wish to see people mobilized for East Asia but to mobilize more mobilizers.

Here are some ways you can get involved:

- Work with regional OMF mobilizers in organizing local events (action-team member)
- Lead short-term teams to East Asia
- Be a member or leader of a prayer group

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- Consult in areas of expertise (finance, education, counseling, communications, marketing etc)
- Advocate for OMF in your church or area
- Mobilize more mobilizers (get others to help)
- Provide housing and hospitality for OMF workers when they travel
- Intern with OMF's mobilization team
- Volunteer at an OMF office

- Counsel or provide medical help for home assignees and workers on the field
- Take a Perspectives course, offered in many churches, which will help you understand God's global purposes and your part in it

Contact Mark Bradley at mbradley@omf.org or 1-800-422-5330 to learn more about how you can get involved with the mobilization team. ■

You as advocates are the heart of our mobilization ministry for East Asia

G O D A T W O R K I N E A S T A S I A

To all generations in Cambodia

Most of the Christians in Cambodia are from the younger generation. However, in Kratie Province it is quite the opposite for some reason. We tried various outreaches, but nothing seemed to work. Then we tried prayer. We called upon our prayer partners to intercede for the youth, and later a special group of young believers in the church met every night to pray. Today this group leads 40 youth and meets every Thursday for Bible teaching, fun and fellowship. On Sundays, there are now nearly as many youth as older people meeting together to worship the Lord.

A summer worker's bold question

Testimony of a new believer: "The pastor at the summer camp challenged us, through a series of short messages, to 'rethink how we're living our lives.' I had gone to Christian kindergarten and believed the Bible stories, and at children's camp my friends and I indicated faith in Jesus. In high school I had no contact with church. But it all changed when a summer worker at the camp asked me directly, 'Do you want to be a Christian or not?' After the camp, I could say from my heart that I wanted to be a Christian. Since my decision, I've enjoyed church and my values have changed. I used to be concerned about money, clothes, music and magazines, but now I want to think more about what God wants me to do with my life."

Radio and TV in Japan

On the northern island of Hokkaido, Japan, Christian radio is reaching people like tractor, truck and taxi drivers who are unlikely to find it easy to attend church. Hokkaido has a population of about 5.7 million people. Church attendance is less than 11,000 in 391 Protestant churches. In this context, TV and radio evangelism are vital. An average of 57,000 listen to the Light of the World radio broadcasts on Sunday mornings at 6:20 a.m. Lifeline, a Christian TV program, has an audience of up to 170,000. One woman, who had contact with other religions like Jehovah's Witnesses before she saw Lifeline, said, "This is the real thing!" She started to attend church, and although still not baptized, is one of the most faithful in attending church.

The mutton man reads the Book

In an unreached people group in China, there is a man who runs a mutton shop that a friend of mine frequents. Through several conversations, the mutton man found out that my friend is a follower of Jesus. The man then asked him for a copy of the Bible. Now the man is telling all his customers about the Bible stories he has read. Some of his customers have in turn asked for their own copies of the Bible. Pray that the mutton man will put his faith in the Lord and continue to share with his customers.

Exploring Christianity

Jack was visiting a factory in China for two weeks and began a conversation with one of the local managers, Li. "What do you do in the evenings?" asked Li. There was a long pause. "I read my Bible," said Jack. He explained why it was important to him and prayed that this fleeting opportunity wouldn't be wasted. Not long after, it was Jack's turn to welcome Li to Britain for a two-year training program. Soon Li began to attend church with Jack and wanted to join a "Christianity Explored" class. He enrolled a second time to gain more understanding. Having made a commitment to Christ and being baptized, he took the class for a third and fourth time, the last time serving as the interpreter for other Mainland Chinese who had started going to the church. He now intends to take the course back to China and run it himself.

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turned my whole life upside down and sent me spinning in a direction I never would have imagined. There were no magical words and no compelling stories that caused me to pause; it was the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to me.

This is what I wrote in my journal: "Last week represented a monumental change in my life. I realized that all my plans and goals for my life were *my* plans and goals, not God's. I realized my life is not my own and that life is not about me. I knew there are millions of unreached people in the world and that I could change that."

Throughout the rest of the semester, God continued to change me, to build my passion for missions and to ruin me for everything except his perfect will.

I had never been overseas before, but this summer I went on a short-term trip to Southeast Asia. It was only for two weeks, but they were the most meaningful weeks of my life. I've never had such an assurance that I was exactly in the place God wanted me. I saw village after village of people who had never been able to openly sing, pray or share Jesus. I expected it to be different and to be life changing, but I had not expected that I would love it! I realized I don't even want the boring "American dream"

life I had planned.

Since my return, people ask, "Will you go back?" and I say absolutely. I don't know what God has planned for me, but I am sure I'm not going to spend most of my life on this side of the world and I am so excited about that! ■

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**For more stories visit
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PUBLISHED BY OMF INTERNATIONAL
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Design/Layout: Patrice Nelson
Photography: Kevin Morris; OMF staff

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as the China Inland Mission**
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