

Laos – A Prayer Journey

by Charlotte Woon

An OMF team made their way to Laos in end March for a special project - to walk the ground and pray. Charlotte Woon gives us a glimpse of the team's journey...

After a 2 hour drive in the back of a truck over bumpy, windy, dirt roads, and then a further 45 minute hike through endless streams, jungle and rice paddies, we finally spotted the Kao Bu* village on the side of a mountain.

We were told there was a growing church in this village, but 2 of the leaders had been imprisoned for sharing their faith with others. We decided to make the difficult journey to this community so we could pray for the people there – that the men in jail would be released, that God would strengthen the remaining Christians in this village, and that others would come to know Him through their testimonies.

After finally making it to the village entrance our team of 8 split into pairs. As we walked up the dusty incline, families came out of their huts to stare, children followed us giggling, dogs barked... and we prayed.

None of us had any idea who the Christians in this village were. But when one woman peered out of her home and saw 4 of our team members, her face lit up and she welcomed us into a nearby hut.

Entering the hut we were greeted by other adults and some curious children. We ate together and were able to make some small talk through the language skills of one of our team members.

Eventually we discovered that these people were the Christians of the village and the hut we were sitting in was where they meet for worship. Without knowing or planning it, we had found the church!

By God's grace we were able to pray with these believers and encourage them to hold on to their faith despite the persecution they were facing and their leaders' imprisonment.

This surprise meeting was just one of many times where we were amazed by God's guiding throughout our 5-day Prayer Journey in Laos.



Our team was made up of 8 people - 4 of us were sent from Singapore and 4 were long term workers based in Northern Thailand.

As the name 'Prayer Journey' suggests, the main purpose of our trip was prayer. We were there to pray for the lost, turning the soil of their hearts so the seed of the Gospel could take root.

We were focused specifically on praying for 2 minority people groups – and we spent hours travelling from village to village, walking and praying through as many communities as we could.

In one of these people groups, an indigenous biblical church movement had recently begun and local believers were starting to reach out to other villages (which sometimes resulted in imprisonment like the leaders from the Kao Bu* village in the mountains). The other people group we focused on was still unreached and the vast majority had little opportunity to hear the Gospel.

Before we left for this trip the concept of a 'Prayer Journey' was completely new to



the 4 of us from Singapore – until then we all thought of a short-term mission trip as an opportunity to offer practical help. 'Surely we should be doing something else for these people besides praying!' I thought.

But through this trip, God revealed something to each of us about the huge importance of prayer in building His Kingdom. We visited villages where 5 years ago there were no believers at all – the people lived in fear of the spirits and many were trapped in opium and alcohol addictions. Now 5 years and around 50 prayer walking teams later, entire villages are following Jesus and reaching out to others with the Good News. The effect that prayer had on preparing these villagers' hearts to accept Christ was unmistakable.

When we returned to Singapore, we were amazed to hear that God had already begun answering our prayers: a few days after we left the village in the mountains (where we had unexpectedly met the Christians), the 2 church leaders were released from prison. Praise God!

Although going on this prayer journey meant enduring some nights with bats, rats and cockroaches, inhaling unhealthy amounts of orange dust as we sped along dirt roads in the back of a truck, and eating nothing but plain noodles for five days – it was worth it all for the chance to play a small part in what God is doing among the people of Laos. *OMF*

"No great spiritual awakening has begun anywhere in the world apart from united prayers." ~J. Edwin Orr

* The people group's real name cannot be disclosed for security reasons.

Never Too Late to Serve

by Madeleine

In their late 50s, Ian and Madeleine are OMF Singapore's youngest members, having left to serve in East Asia just recently in March 2010. Experienced and established in the corporate sector, what made them leave the marketplace to the mission field? How did they persevere in their calling despite facing various obstacles? This is their story...

Ian and I met when we were both students in Melbourne in the 1970s. I accepted Christ in 1991 and Ian in 1993. After our baptism, we were active in church ministry at the Wesley Methodist Church in Singapore.

We felt God's call early in our Christian life but only responded to full time service in 2003 after a bible seminar conducted by Bishop Robert Solomon who preached from Isaiah 6 about filling the earth with the glory of the Lord. He also challenged those who had made a commitment to God but were distracted along the way, to recommit themselves to Him. This urged us to surrender our lives to the Lord.

I was leading a fairly successful sales team in an insurance company while Ian was in banking, sales, marketing and management before joining me in the insurance industry. Initially, it was a struggle surrendering to God and letting go of the known and familiar. God worked in our hearts and gradually took away the desire for success, material rewards and weaned us away from our attachment to our home and comfortable surroundings. He also provided family care for my elderly mother in Penang and gave us

His peace. God is faithful. We just need to respond and step out in faith.

We proceeded to consult our pastor and church leadership and were advised to equip ourselves at a bible college. We went to Singapore Bible College and did our Master of Arts in Inter Cultural Studies, followed by a vision trip to East Asia in December 2005. At the same time, there was an opportunity for us to serve in our alma mater in the Development Department. After graduation in May 2006, we felt the call then was to serve in Singapore Bible College.

After 3 years, we felt God's call again in 2009. The opportunity came up for us to serve in East Asia. Ian would be involved in Partnership, Mobilisation and Organisation Affairs while I would be involved in Candidature, Member Development and Member Care. **Once we have made the decision, the Lord allowed us to be put through many tests to refine and mould us.**

One major test was the medical clearance. Ian had a cataract operation in April 2009 and developed inflammation

in both eyes which did not go away for more than seven months. It was a time of testing and the lesson learnt was to develop dependency on God, trusting Him though the circumstances were challenging, and waiting for His timing.

In His time, He makes everything beautiful. Many intercessors prayed and God brought 2 Christian doctors to help Ian. His eye condition improved and medical clearance was given. The final confirmation came when our visas were approved. Indeed, the Lord is our help in times of trouble, and our strong tower.

We then started our ministry in December 2009 based in Singapore and subsequently moved on to East Asia in March after the Orientation Course.

While we may not have started full time ministry as early as some of the young missionaries we met at Orientation, we know that God's timing for us to serve is perfect. We are honoured and humbled to be called in whatever season and age, knowing that He is the God whom we put our trust. Let the nations be glad and may the glory of the Lord fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. *OMF*



May - Aug 2010

Go Asia

A missions newsletter by OMF Singapore

Mobilising Singapore for the Urgent Evangelisation of East Asia's Millions

From Single to Mother of Two: 15 Years Mobilising People to the Missions Field

The name "Koh Yong Hong" is familiar to most partners and friends of OMF. Yong Hong has spent 15 years serving faithfully in the OMF Singapore National Office. Just as she has walked with many people in their mission journeys, OMF has journeyed with her for a large part of her life here – from a young single woman to a mother of an 8 year old boy and a 4 year old girl. These days, Yong Hong can be seen running at the Botanic Gardens opposite OMF with her husband Alvin. We find out from Yong Hong what it means to mobilise workers and what keeps her going in running the race for the Lord.

What roles have you undertaken in these 15 years in OMF?

I have undertaken roles in Membercare, Finance, Serve Asia, Chinese/English Publications, and was also once the Receptionist and Director's Personal Assistant. Throughout the 15 years, Mobilisation has been my major scope of work.

What does your role now as the Mobilisation Coordinator involve?

As the Mobilisation Coordinator, my job involves being in touch with individuals and churches to share about OMF's ministry, to develop partnerships and to send workers to the mission fields.

What do you look out for in a person you mobilise for missions? Is there a long-term objective?

I feel that the sincerity and desire in doing God's work is very essential in a person who is considering missions.



Mobilising, Welcoming and Learning.

What is it like to mobilise people in Singapore? Are we 'ready' for the field?

I think it is not so much readiness but willingness - to let God lead and to obey Him.

Mobilising actually requires many dialogues with the individuals and their sending churches, and we need to sense God's heartbeat together and be alert to opportunities.

On top of this, prayer is the key essence as we present field needs and journey with them.

What's the greatest highlight for you as a mobiliser?

Partnerships are the highlight for me. I feel the satisfaction in getting people involved, not as a buyer-seller partnership but as co-ownership. We want to come across as partners in God's ministry, mirroring many parts in the body of Christ.



Yong Hong visiting Janet Mah, a missionary in Cambodia, together with Lindis Szto in 2009. Sending and encouraging missionaries in the field is part of the sustainable partnerships and relationship building that Yong Hong enjoys.

I also treasure the personal friendships formed in the course of mobilisation - the mutual encouragement shared and being accountable to one another as we share very personal experiences in our missions and life journeys.

How has being a mobiliser in OMF molded you as a person?

During my school days, I enjoyed public speaking but was more passive and would wait to be 'volunteered'. As a mobiliser now, I have learnt to take the lead, initiate conversations and actively follow-up with people.

In the spiritual aspect, being a mobiliser gives me the constant reminder to be close to God in prayer for all things as I pray alongside with others.

What else would you be doing if you were not in OMF? What made you decide on mobilisation in OMF and persevering in it?

If I were not in OMF, I think I will still be involved in events management as I gain much satisfaction in seeing things done and people satisfied. However, mobilisation allows me to fulfill this aspect as it also involves coordinating many events for God's work.

For me, the Lord's strengthening and my family's support has given me the ease and peace to serve, affirming my desire to continue. As I am a people person, I also treasure the relationships in this ministry.

Can everyone be a mobiliser? What do you think are the key qualities of a mobiliser?

I think anybody can be a mobiliser as long as they have the passion and conviction to share about the needs and ministries in the field with others. It is also important that they are like-minded and believe in the values and ethos of the organisation they work with.

Share with us one significant mobilisation tool that is unique to OMF Singapore.

One of the unique tools would be the STEPS Missions Weekend, which we designed in 2002 to address the common issue of weak follow-ups after large-scale missions conferences. We realised that even after people were being challenged

for missions at such conferences, their conviction may die off without the necessary follow-up and guidance in evaluating and affirming their call.

We recognised this gap and developed STEPS to help small groups of Christians grow further in their mission journeys by facilitating in-depth thinking processes, and mentoring sessions by seasoned missionaries.

People who have gone through STEPS are then channeled to the Missions Interest Group, where they continue to pray, encourage and share with one another to keep their missions journey moving.

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Introducing the work of missionaries and the needs of the field is the ongoing task of a mobiliser.



Volleyball is a fun way for Yong Hong to get to know new missionaries going to the field.

"The STEPS Missions Weekend gave us a wonderful opportunity to explore various issues and challenges in the mission field, and spurred us to pray more earnestly about missions and our future involvement. It provided a platform for us to launch into the next step of missions - serving in Japan as associate missionaries for 2 years, from 2007 to 2009."

Daniel and Joylyn Lau attended the STEPS Mission Weekend in 2005. STEPS is a 2-day stay in programme, conducted twice a year, where participants will attend sharing sessions, discussions and one-to-one mentoring to help them evaluate their missions journey and calling. The next STEPS will be held from 8 - 10 October 2010.



Daniel & Joylyn (3rd & 4th from the left) serving in the house church ministry in Japan

"The Missions Interest Group (MIG) by OMF aims to provide a missional fellowship for Christians across churches, especially those that have been to STEPS. Through fellowship with one another and topical workshops, we hope to help one another think more intentionally about stepping out into cross-cultural mission fields."

I have been involved with the MIG since its beginning in 2007 and appreciate the importance of such a missional community in challenging us to be better prepared for God's mission in life."

Peter Pang helps out at the MIG and is currently studying at Trinity Theological College, preparing to go full-time to the field in Southeast Asia.



Mobilisation Events

With the objective of mobilising potential workers and prayer partners in Singapore for East Asia, OMF Singapore organises regular mobilisation events such as prayer meetings, missions interest groups, weekend mission retreats (STEPS) and short-term mission trips (Serve Asia Programme). Here are what some regulars of these events have to say:

"Going for the monthly OMF Prayer Meetings helps me to understand the work of OMF missionaries in different fields. Praying with other brothers and sisters in Christ for the lost has encouraged me greatly."

Although my past 2 Serve Asia trips to Cambodia have been really short (in comparison to the long term work of the missionaries), I am always encouraged by the selfless love and giving of the missionaries I have met. Through Serve Asia, the Lord has taught me about love, humility and servitude. In my interaction with team members, He has also helped me to see my blind spots and refined me to become more like Christ."

Yvonne Ng is a Biology teacher and she worships at Eternal Life Baptist Church. Apart from coming regularly for OPMs (every 2nd Tuesday of the month) and going through 2 Serve Asia trips with OMF, she is also an ex-STEPPER and attends the Missions Interest Group.



Yvonne having fun with a little girl during her Serve Asia trip to Cambodia

"The Japan Prayer Cell is a group of like-minded people from various churches, connected by a common passion/interest in Japan with the common purpose to pray for God's work in Japan and His workers serving there."

We find it very encouraging to see Christians from different churches coming together, journeying with the missionaries in Japan, and with each other by interceding together."

Timothy and Yew Ya are from Woodlands Evangelical Free Church and attend the Japan Prayer Cell every 1st Tuesday of the month. Yew Ya is the coordinator of this group. Apart from Japan, there are Missions Prayer Cells for regions/countries such as Tibet, Taiwan and Philippines.



Timothy & Yewya (standing left) in March's prayer cell, which was also attended by new missionaries to Japan.

To find out more about OMF Singapore's mobilisation events, or to participate, log on to www.omf.org/sg or call 6510 3130 to enquire.

If you represent your church leadership or missions committee, and would like to find out more about possible partnerships with OMF, email us at sg-cmob@omf.net for a copy of our newest corporate folder. OMF



Serve in the GAP

Are you 19 - 25? How about a GAP Programme with Serve Asia?

You are waiting to enter tertiary education. You have completed National Service. You are passionate about missions and you have 1 to 11 months of free time.

Male or female, here's your chance to gain an in-depth experience of what God is doing in another part of the world. Join the Gap Programme with Serve Asia by OMF Singapore and serve alongside long-term missionaries in East Asia!

What's A Gap?

A Gap is taking time out of studies to do something different. It need not be a whole year, some people take just a few months. In Singapore, the available Gap-times are pre and post National Service (for males), or before / after tertiary education. Some universities and polytechnics also have a few months of vacations.

Purpose

We desire to see our young people become global believers with a heart for missions by purposefully nurturing them through cross-cultural mission participation at an early age.

Why go?

- Be part of God's Kingdom work in East Asia and experience God's amazing interventions

- Live and serve alongside seasoned missionaries, and let God transform your life

- Have invaluable opportunities to build friendships and interact with people of different cultures - learn another language and develop new skills

- Use your unique skills e.g. teaching, sports, IT, building, medical etc in communities

- Know yourself and God's plan for your life better

Once you settle into subsequent responsibilities in life, you may never have opportunities to take time off for something like this. Participating in the Gap Programme is definitely an enriching experience. Don't miss it!

Go Where and Do What?

- **Church planting:** be part of the house-church planting and campus outreach in Tokyo

- **Minority groups:** work amongst the Shan, Mien or Akha people

- **Student work:** teach English in schools and youth centres in Central Thailand

- **Urban outreach:** minister to the working class in Wanhua, Taipei

- **Community development:** participate in community projects in Bangkok's urban poor

- **Youth work:** serve in a youth centre in East Asia or be a part of the medical rehabilitation team

- **Others:** ministry in Cambodia, Malaysia and Indonesia

Preparation

- **Training:** We will prepare you with pre-departure training provided by our staff and missionaries.

- **Mentorship:** you will also receive field supervision and mentoring throughout the programme

- **Follow-up:** we will work closely with your sending church for accountability. Upon your return, we will journey with you to integrate your experiences into God's bigger plan for your life and His Church.

Finance

Gap Programme is fully self-funded and we will work out the budget for you in advance.

Application

You may send your enquiries or applications to: sg-serveasia@omf.net or contact us at 6510 3125.

Even if you are not in the age range of 19 - 25, you can still participate in our ongoing Serve Asia Programme, serving in short-term trips of 2 weeks and above. OMF

Take F.L.I.G.H.T

Missions Conference for Students and Young Working Adults

To mobilise more young people in Singapore for missions in East Asia, a one-day missions conference was organised, specially targeted at students and young working adults between 18 - 35, with the GAP Programme as a special feature.

Held on Saturday 29 May 2010, with Mr Shoichiro Sugaya, Home Director of OMF Japan as the plenary speaker, the conference also comprised of 6 interactive workshops covering topics on evaluating one's missions journey, church planting, partnership development, cross cultural outreach and creative ministries. OMF

