



January – April 2025

千亿 BILLIONS



People

From one generation to another

Planting gospel seeds

Living between worlds



Places

Faith in the digital age

All God has for me

Challenged and stretched



Participate

From the Philippines to Singapore...and beyond

At the margins in Taiwan

Vast and unexplored territory



世代相傳的信仰

Generations of Faith



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 the people of East Asia.

Billions comes out three times a year and is free for supporters. It started life as *China's Millions* in 1875, the title highlighted the numbers of people without the hope of Christ. In 2000 we changed the name to reflect East Asia's growing population. Today we still want to help all Christians get involved in God's global plan and to pursue every avenue to reach East Asians for Jesus.

編者的話

From the Editor

Psalm 145:4 "One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts."

Throughout the Old Testament, we find passages urging us to pass down the knowledge of God's goodness and faithfulness to future generations, ensuring that they come to know and love Him. This legacy of faith allows each new generation to continue walking in His ways.

I was blessed to grow up in a family where my parents, both believers, brought us to church and Sunday School regularly. Not everyone has this foundation, though, so it's on each of us to not only share the Gospel but also disciple the emerging generations. We're called to encourage them to pursue the life God intends for them.

At times, discipling means stepping into the world of the next generation, engaging with them in spaces where they feel seen and understood. When we consider raising up future missionaries, I see this approach modeled by mission mentors and mobilizers who invest deeply in people's lives to help them find their place in God's mission. So, who in your life, especially from the generations following yours, might you invest in for the sake of God's Kingdom?

Scott Brown

OMF Australia Communications Lead
au.media@omfmail.com

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AU NATIONAL CENTRE

OMF International (AU)

18-20 Oxford St, Epping NSW 2121
PO Box 849, Epping NSW 1710

T (02) 9868 4777

F (02) 9868 5743

au.info@omfmail.com

omf.org/au

STATE CENTRES

NSW

18-20 Oxford St, Epping NSW 2121
PO Box 849, Epping NSW 1710

T (02) 9868 4777

F (02) 9868 5743

nsw@omfmail.com

VIC/TAS

525 Middleborough Road,
Box Hill North VIC 3129
PO Box 199, Box Hill VIC 3128

T (03) 9898 9922

vic@omfmail.com

tas@omfmail.com

QLD/NT

34 Trafalgar Street,
Woolloongabba QLD 4102
PO Box 8207,
Woolloongabba QLD 4102

T (07) 3391 6777

qld@omfmail.com

nt@omfmail.com

WA

Suite 12 & 13, Hulme House,
32 Hulme Court, Myaree WA 6154

T (08) 9240 8312

wa@omfmail.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Design:

Anton Triyanto & Sparks Studio

Editing:

Trix Wilkins & Reuben Grace

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

OMF International

2 Cluny Road, Singapore 259570

T +65 6319 4550

F +65 6472 2398

omf.org

FAITH IN THE DIGITAL AGE: *How Gen Z is Redefining Mission*

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An intergenerational ministry AT THE MARGINS IN TAIWAN

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STRATEGY FOR STUDENTS

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Reaching THE (OLDER) GENERATIONS

With every change comes an opportunity. Even as a relatively young middle-aged dad, I find myself reminiscing about the “good ol’ days.” When life was simpler, cities less crowded and the pace of change seemed slower.

Change is often uncomfortable, unpleasant and unwanted. Yet nostalgia dulls our eyes from seeing the possibilities.

From Genesis to Revelation, Scripture paints a picture of a sovereign God, zealous for his glory, actively involved in the world and desiring all to come to a saving faith in every generation, through every season, across every land (Gen 1:1, Neh 9:6, 1 Tim 2:3-6, 2 Peter 3:9).

Ministries in local and global ministry contexts today develop programs to share the gospel through youth camps, children's holiday programs, parenting courses, English classes, sport competitions, food events, cultural events, community projects...and the list goes on. Many of these activities are focused on children, youth and the family units they belong to.

But are we missing something?

If God so loved the world (John 3:16) and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ (Rom 3:24) and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Rom 10:13), there is hope for all and a need for all to hear

(Rom 10:14-15). These majestic and all-encompassing truths in Scripture shine lights on the places in society we don't naturally look.

Hidden, forgotten, neglected

In every society there are the hidden, the forgotten, the discarded, the neglected. I believe the elderly often fit in this category, and they are growing in numbers.

One way the world is changing is through shifts in age demographics. In June 2020, there were an estimated 4.2 million older Australians (aged 65 and over), comprising 16% of the total population. By 2050, around one quarter of all Australians will be aged 65 years and over.

Further afield, Asia's population is aging faster than any other world region, according to a 2022 report by the U.S. Census Bureau. The number of older Asian people is

expected to nearly triple over the next four decades. A majority of the older population in Asia will be residing in the eastern subregion (491 million).

This trend is even more pronounced in countries like Singapore (forecast 33% over 65 by 2050), South Korea (20% by 2025) and Japan (29.1% in 2022).

What do we make of these enormous generational changes and how do we respond?

If everyone is created in the image of God, then all have immeasurable value regardless of age,

IN JUNE 2020, THERE WERE AN ESTIMATED 4.2 MILLION OLDER AUSTRALIANS (AGED 65 AND OVER), COMPRISING 16% OF THE TOTAL POPULATION. *By 2050, around one quarter of all Australians will be aged 65 years and over.*

health or level of economic productivity.

So how do we love our neighbor and share the good news of Jesus Christ?

In an age of exceptional health care, medical technology and material wealth, our physical needs are usually well catered for, even in old age. Yet there is an epidemic of loneliness, and absence of compassion and genuine care.

The opportunities of change

With every change comes opportunity. Aging populations mean there are workforce shortages, often felt most acutely in areas like aged care.

This creates opportunities for marketplace ministry, as workers gain visas and share the gospel in word and deed. For example, in 2023, Japan's migrant worker numbers hit 2 million—in a country historically very insular and resistant to immigration. Japan's Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare report that of these, 15% are in the service sector, and over half come from China (19.4%), Vietnam (25.3%) and the Philippines (11.1%).

The gospel opportunities are many in local and global mission. Chaplains in aged care facilities, running elderly-focused community events, visitation and care packages/meals are all ways to extend love, care and relationship to the elderly, infirm and isolated.

When I was involved in church planting in Japan, I often cleared the snow from our elderly neighbor's driveway and front door. It was a simple act of service that was greatly appreciated, and lead to a deeper and more meaningful conversation about Jesus and why we were in Japan.

Opportunities certainly abound for truly the harvest is ripe, but the workers are few.

Prayerful persistence in the face of resistance

From a worldly perspective, our elders may seem 'stuck in their ways' or resistant to the gospel. We can be disheartened or dissuaded from serving the older generation. But God's great love, His mighty promises and biblical imperatives must shape our hearts and minds. God is mighty to save, our work for the Lord is not in vain, and we are called to persist in prayer (Luke 18:1).

George Müller was a fantastic example of this prayerful persistence. In November 1844 he began to pray every day for the conversion of five individuals. Eighteen months elapsed before the first of the five was converted. After five years passed, the second came to faith and six years after that the third accepted Christ.

Thirty-six years later, the remaining two were still not converted. He wrote, "But I hope in God, I pray on, and look for the answer. They are not converted yet, but they will be."

Muller prayed for 52 years until his death in 1897 and a few years later (when they would have been old men!) the last two were finally converted!

Let us remain prayerful and faithful in reaching out with the good news of Jesus Christ to all generations using all means available.

Paul Jessop
OMF Australia National Director



PLANTING Gospel Seeds

When we moved to Meishan, a small rural town at the foot of a mountain range in Taiwan, locals were curious—why would anyone choose to live here? We weren't elderly or retiring, and had no relationships ("guan-xi") in the area, they said.

Unsure of what ministry opportunities awaited us, we began at the local elementary school. This gradually led to inviting students and families to our Christmas and Easter outreaches and other events at our Gospel Centre. Through God's grace, we aim to see gospel seeds planted, and disciples growing and multiplying amongst the working-class people here—hoping to reach parents through our children's work. Building relationships with parents is crucial, as it can bring change to entire families.

Through these ministry activities, we've gotten to know students and their families. A simple greeting at the grocery store or night market often leads to deeper relationships. In this small community, we often run into someone we know when we step outside. Ministry at the school has been essential in establishing our credibility—if the school trusts us, the community does too.

More recently, we've also started an evening community playtime outside our Gospel Centre. The friendships formed here have opened doors for deeper conversations about life allowing us to break down assumptions about Christians and

share our faith. Our new friends have also been able to answer our many questions about their own beliefs.

Beginning ministry in a place like Meishan is a long journey, requiring us to make connections and build trust. If we are willing to take the time to do this as we participate in the community, we will be able to plant gospel seeds in their hearts and, God willing, see these grow to maturity. Guan-xi is vital in seeing long-term discipleship take place; until then, with God's grace, we strive to live lives that reflect the joy and hope of Christ to those we are meeting.

Kat Lin
OMF Taiwan



Hear more from Kat and her husband Putao about ministry in Meishan in this video:
go.omf.org/gospelseeds

INVESTING IN YOUNG PEOPLE

As a man in my mid-40s, I still remember and put to practice things others taught me about the Bible when I was a teenager. I pray that this would be true for the young people I work with in Taiwan as well.

On Saturday evenings I join up to twenty youth to meet at the local church my wife Tina and I support in the city of Taichung in central Taiwan. The youth range in age from eleven to twenty and come from various parts of the city. Many attend frequently, unless they have family commitments, are taking classes at a cram school, or are studying for an exam.

Twice a month they participate in fellowship activities, where food and fun, such as board games and bowling, abound. Twice a month also they meet to sing worship songs (via YouTube), listen to a teaching from the Bible, and split into groups to discuss what was taught.

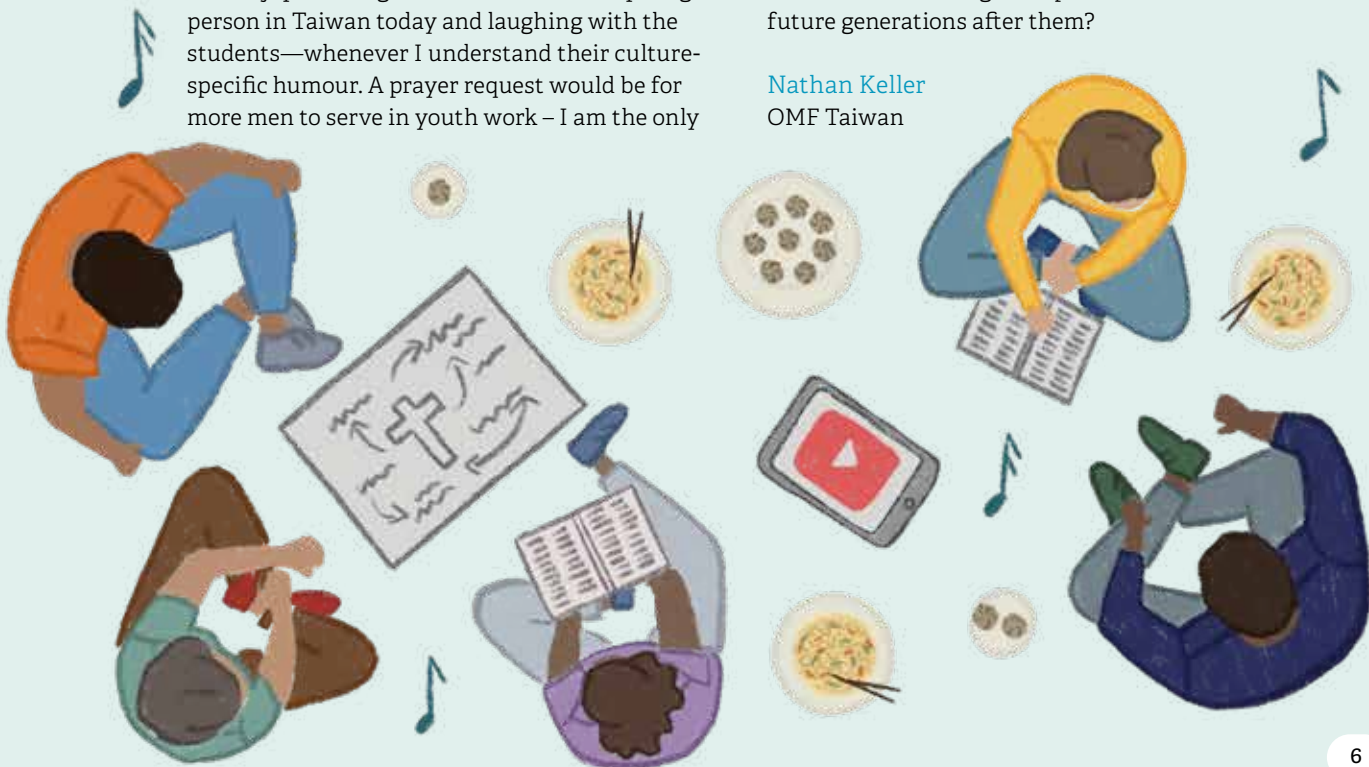
I enjoy learning what it means to be a young person in Taiwan today and laughing with the students—whenever I understand their culture-specific humour. A prayer request would be for more men to serve in youth work – I am the only

man on the team. Having Christian male role models is vital for boys at this key stage in their development into adulthood.

What I enjoy most is the opportunity to teach the Bible, sowing seeds of gospel truth into the hearts of these precious young people. In the past few months, I have been able to teach about the “big picture” of the Bible, what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, and how to share a testimony with others like Paul did in Acts 26.

Will you join me in praying that these seeds of truth will be watered, and that God will produce fruit in the lives of these students, not only in their own lives and among their peers, but also in the future generations after them?

Nathan Keller
OMF Taiwan



FAITH IN THE DIGITAL AGE: *How Gen Z is Redefining Mission*



Born between 1995 and 2010, Generation Z (Gen Z) is already shaping economies and societies, making up around 27% of the global workforce.¹ Digital technology has profoundly influenced their values, communication styles, relationships, and community engagement.²

We asked some members of our Gen Z Mission Steps community, a group focused on equipping and inspiring participants for global mission work, about how digital technology has influenced their lives, highlighting their evolving relationship with technology.

Reflecting on their First Digital Devices and the Early Days of Social Media

Alvina, who grew up with early smartphones, reflects on how social media has transitioned from novelty to necessity: “Creating my Facebook account was a novelty; we spammed each other’s walls and laughed at memes.” She adds that nowadays, “texting on platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp feels just as fulfilling as talking in person.”

Tricia shares a similar journey: “I got my first digital device, an iPod Nano, in Year 3, which I used to listen to music. Later, I created a Facebook account to play games and message friends.” Over the years, she accumulated various devices, including a Nokia phone for emergencies and eventually a Samsung phone for a school trip to Japan.

Jedi recalls having a Nokia phone during the early years of high school, feeling left out as friends with smartphones participated in group chats. “I was always jealous because I couldn’t join due to my limited technology,” Jedi shares. Finally, in Year 9, getting a Samsung smartphone brought immense joy: “I could finally connect with friends online.”

Impact of Digital Technology on their Work, Family and Social Structures

Unlike previous generations, Gen Z’s social structures are often formed online, creating a pluralistic world where work, social, and family life coexist within the same digital space.³ This digital immersion influences their daily activities and interactions, as Alvina highlights: “Nowadays,

1. A. Fell, S. Renton, S. and M. McCrindle, *The Generations Defined*, (McCrindle Research, 2023), P. 11
2. Twenge, Jean M. *iGen: Why Today’s Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy – and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood*. 2017
3. Barna Group. *The Connected Generation Report*. 2019

I use the Google Suite and platforms like Canva collaboratively to plan everything from travel itineraries to Bible studies to work projects to a wedding run sheet.”

Tricia notes that her family primarily communicates through a WhatsApp group, where “my mum shares Bible verses and inspirational quotes, while my dad sends videos and articles on life advice.” She finds that social media helps her “stay in touch with friends” and organize meetups. However, she adds, “While it keeps us connected, it can be frustrating when someone uses their phone during dinner.”

Technology and Spiritual Formation

As digital natives, the rapid transmission of information also shapes their worldview. Alvina notes, “Using Instagram Stories to share spiritual conversations and biblical truths allows me to encourage deeper reflection among my followers.” Tricia adds: “It helps me let friends know when I’m sad or in need of prayer.”

Nevertheless, as we embrace Gen Z’s digital environment, both Alvina and Trish recognise the importance of being responsible stewards of technology, ensuring it does not hinder their spiritual growth. Alvina reflects, “One of the main challenges I face as a Christian living in a digital age is the amount of time I spend online compared to time with God.” Trish echoes this sentiment, noting, “It’s a challenge not to compare myself to others and become jealous.” She recognizes that “sometimes people are different online,” which can lead to confusion and emphasizes the need to be cautious with her words, as “they can be misinterpreted or recorded.” Additionally, she acknowledges the temptation to respond impulsively, drawing on the wisdom of James 1:19, which encourages being “quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.”

In a rapidly changing world, it’s crucial to continually reflect and adapt to the emerging

generational landscapes that shape the future of the Church and mission. To effectively reach Gen

Z for evangelism and mobilization, mission organizations must engage with them in the digital spaces they inhabit.⁴ This also involves building an online presence that aligns with their preference for curating information, fostering

community, and making a positive impact on the world—all while upholding the integrity of the Gospel message.

Scott Brown

OMF Australia Communications Lead

**TO EFFECTIVELY REACH GEN Z
FOR evangelism and
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WITH THEM IN THE DIGITAL SPACES
THEY INHABIT.**

4. “Gen Z and the Church: What We Know So Far.” Barna Research. 2020.



Getting to know our Creatives community series

VAST AND UNEXPLORED TERRITORY

“The mission field of the internet is vast and unexplored territory,” says OMF Creatives team member Melissa Yeung. She’s excited about using her gifts to inspire others to do likewise.

I’ve been blessed to grow up in a Christian home. My parents took me to church every week, so I was very familiar with the Bible. At the time, to me the Bible was just stories and church a place to socialize rather than to worship God.

My life then was quite two-faced—while I seemed like a good person at church, school and in front of my friends, at home I was quite rebellious, selfish and arrogant.

It wasn’t until I was 14, when I attended a RICE rally (a Christian youth evangelistic event), that I understood the gospel for the first time. I felt

so unconditionally loved that Christ would die for me despite my sin. I gave my life to Jesus that night, and a year later got baptized.

Christ changed who I was through transforming the way I thought, lived and loved others in all aspects of my life from church, school, family and friends. Church was no longer a place to just socialize but to feed my thirst to know and experience God more.

I never thought I would be able to use my gifts in media and creativity for ministry. However, having the opportunity to start a podcast and to hear from missionaries how they use their skills and gifts to further God’s kingdom inspires me to do the same!

The mission field of the internet is vast and unexplored territory, and I hope to see how God can use an online platform like a podcast to inspire Christians to start considering full-time ministry with the skills and gifts they have.

Melissa Yeung, NSW



ALL GOD HAS FOR ME

"I know that part of me would shrivel and die if I didn't venture out and experience all that God has for me."
OMF Creatives team member **Lorenzo Ortega** shares his journey in mission—so far.

I first learned about missions when I was six, after hearing the story of Eric Liddell, the Olympic gold medalist who became a missionary in China. His famous quote, "I believe God made me for a purpose, but He also made me fast! And when I run, I feel His pleasure," inspired me to realize that God has uniquely gifted each of us.

While committing fully to missions is a noble calling, I've come to understand that we can serve God through the gifts He's given us, right where we are—not just by going to the mission field. This lesson has shaped my journey and my heart for serving others.

The faith of a godly mother

Growing up, I first came to know Christ through my mom, who lovingly and faithfully taught us about His ways from a very young age.

As a single mother, she faced the daunting challenge of raising us on her own after separating from my dad when I was just three months old. Yet, by God's incredible grace, she found Christ during that difficult season and surrendered her life to Him.

Through her unwavering example, and later through the example of my grandparents who also came to know Christ, I have seen firsthand how a life fully surrendered to God transforms us—changing our hearts, purifying our minds, and shaping our perspectives.

Deepening curiosity and love

From a young age, I've had a deep love for travel and a curiosity to learn about different cultures. Whenever I meet someone from another part of the world, I get lost in their stories and often wonder when it will be my turn to live in a foreign place.

In high school, I attended Faith Academy in Manila, a school for missionary kids. There, I was surrounded by friends who joyfully served alongside their parents in the Philippines. Their love for the people they served left a lasting impression on me, and it was through their example that my own heart for missions began to grow.

Christian community at university

By God's grace, I was given the incredible opportunity to study university in Sydney—something I had never imagined possible. It has



been a true blessing to be part of a campus with a strong Christian community and a ministry that supports international students like myself.

This experience has deepened my heart for missions, particularly for the diaspora community in Sydney. Many are here temporarily for their studies, while others are considering staying long-term.

It has been encouraging to witness how God unites people from all over the world through His Word, creating a global family of Christians.

Discovering and sharing missionary stories

I feel truly blessed to be part of OMF's Creatives Team. We share inspiring missionary stories which impact our readers and viewers, stirring a desire to explore their own calling—whether that's becoming a missionary or finding other ways to serve.

I dream of one day having the opportunity to go to the nations to work and share the gospel, inspired both by the missionaries who have gone before me and by my teachers at Faith Academy who ignited my love for learning and growing in Christ.

Sydney and Australia have been such a gift, offering me countless opportunities and friendships that have helped strengthen my relationship with Christ. I am deeply grateful for all the ways God has worked in my life here.

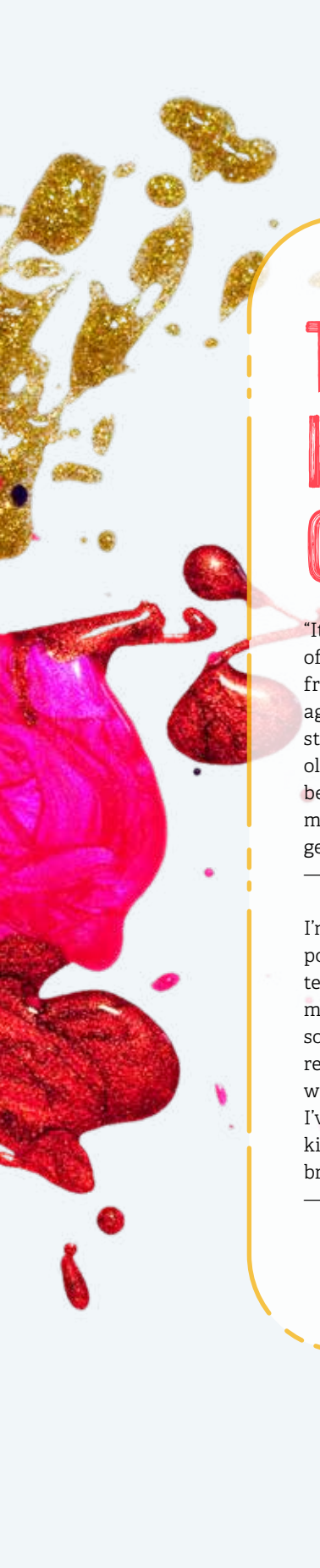
The beautiful story God writes

Exploring the world is still a passion of mine, and I know that part of me would shrivel and die if I didn't venture out and experience all that God has for me. There are so many people to connect with, and my heart is eager to do that.

For now, Australia is the place God has called me, but I know His plans for me could take me anywhere. I look forward to seeing the beautiful story He will continue to write, as He uses us—His people—through the OMF Creatives team to share His love and truth with the world.

Lorenzo Ortega, NSW





THOUGHTS ON INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNITY

“It’s a blessing to have intergenerational churches and it’s a beautiful glimpse of what the church could one day look like in heaven. My church prioritizes friendship and discipleship between generations through having mixed-aged Bible studies where we get to learn and share life together in whatever stage of life or faith journey we are at. I believe it has helped younger and older people learn from each other in ways you wouldn’t get with peers, because they bring a fresh perspective. Serving in ministries that cultivate mixed-aged teams have also helped facilitate conversations between generations and bring more joy to serving.”

—Melissa Yeung

I’m a big believer in the power of storytelling, and I think one of the most powerful ways to witness the gospel in action is through sharing personal testimonies and lived experiences. It would be great if churches could create more opportunities for conversations between different generations. As someone who has attended a church with mostly students, I’ve found it refreshing to hear wisdom from those who are further along in their walk with God—not just in terms of age, but in life experience. At the same time, I’ve appreciated that they also listen to me and value my perspective. These kinds of exchanges really enrich both friendships and discipleship, helping bridge the generational gap in a meaningful way!

—Lorenzo Ortega

Preaching Clubs: IRON SHARPENING IRON, FROM ONE GENERATION TO ANOTHER

*No individual can ever fully grasp the wonder and power of the gospel.
No individual can exclusively know or provide what a disciple needs to grow.
No individual can exclusively know or provide what a congregation needs to grow.
Just as we each need the encouragement of others in our Christian walk, so we need it in our Christian ministry. This is where a small group such as a preaching club (or escuelita or ushirika) can come in.*

*– Langham Preaching Europe & Caribbean Team, Establishing Preaching Clubs,
November 2023, p.5*

Pastor Ino felt he needed to return to his home province to share God's Word—and he sought to do this well. After doing training with Langham Preaching (an international pastoral training organisation OMF partners with in the Philippines), he continued to preach, but with a difference: the training helped him to better connect the Bible with personal stories and preach biblically faithful, engaging sermons. He and his wife also began to use the training to help them study the Bible together, which has enabled them grow as a couple in Christ. Later on, Pastor Ino helped facilitate Langham training himself for other pastors.

Many church leaders, especially from rural areas, have not had the opportunity to study at seminaries or the privilege of receiving much mentoring in biblical teaching preparation. Some have not been able to finish high school, let alone

college or university degrees. In 2017, I invited Langham Preaching to come to the Philippines—and so this ministry began.

Our courses are often run as five-day intensive interactive workshops or over a set of weekends, with daily worship and songs, interactive teaching, personal work (observing the text), group work (exploring the message of the text), feedback (sharing discoveries), model sermons, and evaluating sermons together.

What gives me joy is hearing pastors preach and blessing the church more. To see pastors become more confident to preach, and spending more time in preparing well. It's great to see church leaders grow and get excited again about this important weekly task, and it's amazing to see pastors from across generations serving together to train and equip others.



Inclusive training

Our vision is to work in partnership with local leaders and churches by providing practical training. We welcome church leaders both ordained and lay, involved in teaching capacity, from any denomination. We address topics such as:

- defining biblical preaching
- how to study and understand a Bible passage
- the big story of the Bible
- getting from a Bible text to a sermon
- illustrations and application
- the preacher's character

"It is by prayer and meditation of the Word of God that all of us are learning everyday how to prepare a sermon that is faithful to His Word, relevant to the people, and clear in presentation," said Girle from Samar.

The training doesn't benefit only pastors. One participant shared: "I'm not a preacher, but what I've learned through Langham helps me to tell stories to the kids [in my ministry] much more easily and more effectively."

Beyond the classroom

Yet a seminar or short course is not enough to truly learn a skill. To learn to preach biblically faithful,

relevant and clear sermons takes time to develop, so we encourage the creation of preaching clubs, which aim to help alumni internalize what they've learned.

While each group is free to decide how to run their group to suit their context, some key features of Langham preaching clubs include:

- A small group of between 4-10 participants
- A facilitator with both preaching and small group experience
- A commitment to meet regularly (at least between 6-10 times a year)
- Participants who are involved in Bible-teaching ministry, such as Sunday preachers, evangelists, those serving in children's, youth or student ministry, home group leaders, and mentors

"The preaching club is a very big help to me," Jeff from Tarlac said. "First, in the area of developing a discipline in my study habit on preparing a message. Second, I learn from observing each member of the group. Their participation and contribution to the study and discussion of the scripture add to my personal learnings."

Dr Iljo de Keijzer with Trix Wilkins

From One Generation to Another: REFLECTIONS ON SERVING IN INTERGENERATIONAL TEAMS

In over 30 years of ministry, Calvin Ma has worked with more than a dozen different teams in Asia and Australia, across generations and cultures. On the year of his 70th birthday, Calvin shares what the Lord has taught him so far about how to serve well across generations.

It's something I've been thinking about, especially since I've reached 70 this year. Reaching this biblical age is a testimony of God's grace and faithfulness in my life.

What should be our focus for our remaining time?

Naturally, our focus turns to the next generation—how to invest in the next generation, how to encourage them, but also how to urge them on, how to help them go further than where they are now.

**WORKING TOGETHER IS NOT
JUST TO KEEP OURSELVES GOING
AND TO COMPLETE CERTAIN
TASKS, it's part of the
gospel witness.**

This whole thought of generation to generation is a very important one in scripture. It is a focus that God has throughout the Bible both in the sense of warning but also in the sense of instruction (Exodus 3:15; Psalm 22:30, 71:18, 78:6, 79:3, 145:4; Joel 1:3; Luke 1:50).

We are to let the next generation hear about God's work and God's words—both His deeds and

His promises are things that we have to pass on. This also includes our life example and our testimony. That thought to me is a very important thought that is at the core of this.

Secondly, we are called to serve shoulder to shoulder with all God's people, across the generations, that all “may call on the name of the Lord.” (Zephaniah 3:9) That also is very important



because we tend to think more of serving with our own peers, but not across generations.

I find these two streams of thinking very helpful - this sense that we are committed to serve together. Though there are many things to overcome and learn in order to relate to each other, these things help us to serve together intergenerationally.

How should we relate to each other? I find it quite helpful to remember that we are in Christ. So I am no longer to serve because of who I am, my role, my identity, my responsibility, my gifting—we are serving in Christ, for Christ. This gives me hope as we are all on a journey and He is here to help us reach our final destination. This causes us to be humble and teachable.

The powerful gospel witness of multigenerational, intercultural and international teams

We have worked with more than some 12 different teams in our time with OMF, including in South Korea, Australia, Northeast Asia, and on the International Leadership Team based in Hong Kong and Singapore. We've been given the privilege to work across different generations and cultures.

We've seen that we need HIS people—people of humility, integrity, and simplicity—in every generation. The witness of a multi-generational, intercultural, international team is so important for the witness of the gospel and for evangelization.

Working together is not just to keep ourselves going and to complete certain tasks, it's part of the gospel witness. We've seen if there are strong, united, loving relationships in a team, it's a beautiful witness. If a team has divisive, argumentative and toxic relationships, it bears a very negative testimony to those we are trying to reach.

Each generation has strengths and weaknesses, but all contribute to the health and strength of the team

We need each other. I've heard people say, "All these old people, we don't need them, we just want energetic and visionary young people who talk the same language," but this cuts away a lot of skills,

wisdom and resources that others have.

And it is the same with those who are older. If they feel they need to hold on to their position or power and don't let the younger generations have any opportunity to evolve or progress in their ministry leadership, that's also very sad.

I found that it's important to remember that all have something to bring to the table, and we all still carry our baggage that we need to work out. We're all still growing in Christ—but also, we can all contribute and strengthen the team.

God is at work in each generation—and teaches us through each generation

When we look at other generations, do we see only their weaknesses? Or do we see their strengths too, and that we can be blessed and encouraged by them? Over the years, when mentoring and coaching, I've learned and received encouragement from our mentees too.

In the last few years, Joyce and I have been involved with the OMF Leaders Developing Leaders program. We have realized firsthand the joy of investing in the life and development of the next generation of OMF leaders. It has been a real privilege for us to spend regular time with younger leaders, getting to know each one as a person, and working with them on their growth and development.

It's been a privilege to share with people what God has done in the past. There is a Chinese saying that you look to the future by looking to the past: the retrospective look helps you visualize God's character through what He has done repeatedly in the past and plan for the future. We hope to encourage others by sharing how God worked even in very difficult situations, how God raised us up to be His workers, how He has kept us thus far.

One important line of teaching in scripture is persevering and resilience. To run the race, we need to persevere (Hebrews 12:1b). This is something that many in our senior generation can offer – life and ministry experiences that they can share, wisdom and insights from the past that inform the future, their faithfulness and resilience through hard times.

We need more people who have ‘retired’ to remain active, to continue in faithfulness and model perseverance to our younger generations, grasping opportunities to contribute and bringing their strengths to the team and to God’s work. Each of us can still be fruitful for the Lord in old age (Psalm 92:14, 15).

Another important teaching in Scripture is being intercultural. This concept is different to multicultural and cross-cultural. In the latter two instances, one’s own culture remains unchanged, even in the presence of other cultures or while crossing into another culture.

Having an intercultural approach means learning about other cultures and actually allowing ourselves to be changed, transformed to be something different—to a culture that is more Christlike. There are aspects of our cultures that need to be transformed by Christ, and aspects from other cultures that speak to us about God that we haven’t appreciated before.

Our younger generations, who tend to be open to new ideas, willing to be flexible and able to think outside the box, can help older generations to approach this well.

It is this intercultural approach that we need to build more, and which needs to be practiced in every team—a team which embraces diversity and whose culture honors God.

Calvin Ma with Trix Wilkins

Resources:

Over My Shoulder by Naomi Reed (Ark House, 2009) – exploring the impact of personalities (MBTI types) on cross-cultural missions

Cross-Cultural Servanthood by Duane Elmer (IVP, 2006) - exploring how to serve effectively in international settings by building strong relationships that honour God

The Generations Project - Bridging Generational Divides in the Singaporean Church by Wei-Hao Ho and Soo-Inn Tan (Graceworks Private Limited, 2023) – fostering a deeper understanding of the world of different generations and exploring life-giving intergenerational relationships



Working well together: 7 tips for intergenerational teams
omf.org/au/working-well-together



FACILITATING INTERGENERATIONAL FRIENDSHIP AND DISCIPLESHIP:

4 tips for churches

01. Create multigenerational and multicultural growth groups and ministry teams

Creating opportunities for different generations to interact, to grow, to serve, to learn how to relate—all these things help. Multigenerational growth groups and ministry teams provide opportunities to interact frequently, so that people can gain confidence on how to reach out to those from a different generation, learn about each other, and learn to serve, give and receive from other generations.

02. Implement a leadership mentoring or discipleship program

A discipleship or leadership mentoring program initiative can be helpful, as often this will be intergenerational. This helps build more personal intentional relationships between different generations—not for monitoring or supervision, but for building into each other's lives.

03. Provide training within a fun context

I recently spoke at a church camp which featured sessions to work on togetherness, both intercultural and intergenerational. This church has five different congregations, many generations and using three different languages. It was very helpful and encouraging. These sessions, activities, games, the laughter—they helped people to open up, to know how to relate to each other, and to appreciate one another. As a result of a conflict, basically due to cultural and generational differences, one congregation was going to walk away before the camp—after the camp, they stayed!

This is something we can do in our church camps or meetings: increase opportunities for groups to interact with each other and to provide training

on how to connect with others of different

generations and cultural background. We all can learn how to listen, how to build friendships, and how to just be a natural witness for Christ.

(The 'Present People' Training by Sport Chaplaincy Australia addresses these issues.)

04. Organize social opportunities for interaction

When I first came to Australia, I attended Swanston Street Church of Christ (now CrossCulture). Being a new Asian student and feeling my English was not so good, I seldom interacted with Australians. The church organized and facilitated host lunches where people had the option of hosting, and we international students had the option of going.

One of the church elders really reached out to us, inviting us for a meal at his home. We wouldn't have reached out to him ourselves; he reached out to us by opening his home. He was someone who loved music like I did (I had been involved in a singing group called Hong Kong Quartet), and he was keen to listen and talk to us, and because of that we all connected. He and his wife became our strong supporters when we joined OMF.

Calvin Ma with Trix Wilkins



STRATEGY FOR STUDENTS

It's often said the students of today are the leaders of tomorrow. It's why OMF has been supporting student ministry in Thailand since the 1960s, a legacy Singaporean OMF worker Cherlyn Oh has been continuing with Thai Christian Students (TCS) since 2016. She has had the joy of seeing students grow in their faith while at university as well as how that time has prepared them to live for Jesus in whatever they do after graduation.

Living for Jesus

A dramatic example of this is one of Cherlyn's former colleagues at TCS. After being involved in the Christian Union at university, he went on to work for TCS, then later went into politics and rose to a significant position in the Thai parliament.

Cherlyn recalls: 'he'd always been teaching the Christian students during camps and workshops on a Christian response to the political scene', so when an opportunity arose to get involved in politics, he took it. 'He is really trying to live out what he taught', Cherlyn says, because as a student and later as a TCS Staff Worker he had been challenged to work out 'what it means to really live out your faith in the different sectors of society.'

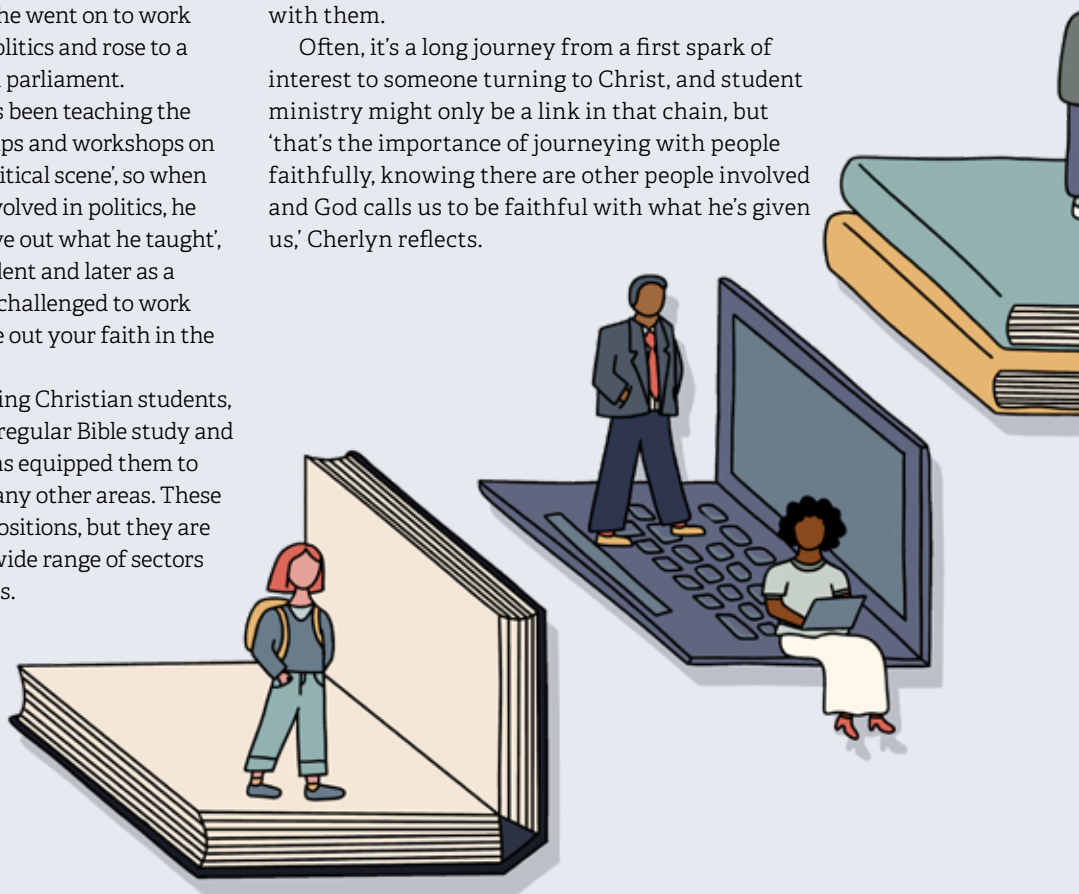
The work of TCS in supporting Christian students, and recent graduates through regular Bible study and discipleship training camps, has equipped them to go and make a difference in many other areas. These may not be such high-profile positions, but they are no less significant, covering a wide range of sectors from physiotherapy to business.

Open to exploring

Student ministry is not only strategic because of the potential impact on society. It also gives people an opportunity to hear about Jesus Christ at a life stage when they are especially open to exploring new things.

Cherlyn and her colleagues at TCS support around 200 Christian students in 20 Christian Unions, encouraging them to reach their fellow students. Though Cherlyn and her colleagues offer support through mentoring, training and helping organise events, they are delighted when students begin to understand they have to be the ones that makes a difference, sharing Christ with their friends and taking responsibility for following up with them.

Often, it's a long journey from a first spark of interest to someone turning to Christ, and student ministry might only be a link in that chain, but 'that's the importance of journeying with people faithfully, knowing there are other people involved and God calls us to be faithful with what he's given us,' Cherlyn reflects.





Facing challenges

A big challenge in student ministry today is responding to mental health issues. Many students, Christian or not, are struggling with their mental health and there are few trained counsellors available. Christian students and TCS workers can be a listening ear, and Thai Christian psychologists and counsellors have been running regular mental health first aid courses to increase awareness of ways to help others.

Another challenge for students is distraction. The diversity of options and experiences at university can 'occupy them so that they don't think too much deeper', Cherlyn comments, missing out on opportunities to hear about Jesus. Christian students are not immune from distraction and a key part of student ministry is encouraging them to keep growing their faith.



Cherlyn

Working together

Cherlyn is excited about the potential for partnership with students around the world. TCS is part of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES), which brings together Christian student organisations from many different countries

In 2024, TCS had the privilege of hosting the IFES East Asia Regional Conference. It was a real encouragement for Thai delegates to see the wider movement they are part of.

Some students are even keeping up the connection with their new friends from other countries through Zoom Bible studies. It is God's word that guides students as they navigate all of life for Christ, reaching their friends and shaping the nation. One of Cherlyn's go-to verses when encouraging students is Ephesians 1:6. She loves to remind them that: 'We have all the resources we need from God the creator and our heavenly father to live out our faith right now in this life.'

Reuben Grace

OMF (UK) Content & Books Coordinator

Please pray for:

- TCS staff to be wise and discerning to know how to journey with students in a way that's relevant in changing times.
- Christian students to have a clear vision for their time at university and how they can make a difference on campus.
- Thai students to come to faith at university and make a difference for Jesus in every area of society.

An intergenerational ministry AT THE MARGINS IN TAIWAN

I've had the unique experience of being involved in multiple, varied ministries. Most come under the umbrella of working with those on the margins of society. I've found that in this ministry, it's often our actions that speak louder than words. Many people look to what we do to see if what we say is backed up by truth.

One of the most impactful ministries for me was working in prisons - first with youth and then adults.

As a new missionary, I joined a team of mainly local Taiwanese Christians visiting a Reform School (a correctional facility for youth) in Taoyuan, near Taipei. Most of the boys were incarcerated for drug-related crimes, theft, violent offenses or fraud. We had relative freedom to mingle with the students and in what we could share—including sharing openly about Christ!

Our team would visit two Saturdays a month, with half the team focused on sharing the gospel with boys aged 16-20 years. Over the years, the class size ranged from 25-70 students. It was an incredible opportunity to share Christ with young men who might not otherwise enter a church.

Working in a team was vital. You could not do this ministry on your own. It helps to debrief with others and share student concerns with trusted colleagues. We help each other, pray together and share responsibilities. Without a team it would be easy to give up under discouragement or doubt.

Ultimately, the Holy Spirit does the difficult transforming work in people's lives.

The impact of changed lives

More than once, a Christian brother visited who had previously been in a gang or spent time in prison, and has since had his life transformed by Christ. These were the stories the young men listened to most intently. They could relate to them in a way we were unable to.

While only a very small percentage of boys were from a church background, many loved to sing and were very happy to sing praises to God. We would then either share a Bible story with a relevant topic or share a testimony on themes such as the love of God, forgiveness and sacrifice.

Not all at the Reform School were interested in the gospel. One or two would make jokes or laugh during prayer. However, most were very respectful and all welcomed visitors, and appreciated the time we spent with them. Almost every time I asked someone how can I pray, he would inevitably reply.

The reality is, most teens or young adults on the outside lead very busy lives. They may not have time or the desire to consider the things of God. At the very least, the boys we visited at the Reform School would regularly hear the gospel and have an opportunity to respond. Their time there is a pivotal time in their lives.





Building trust

For me, the most impactful times were when we could meet one on one. For those who wanted to meet, once trust was built, they were eager to have someone listen to their life story. Their stories were often filled with neglect or violence and for some, spending time in prison is sadly following in the footsteps of other family members.

Three times a year (Chinese New Year, Mother's Day and Mid Autumn Festival), days were set aside for longer family visits.

A few of our team were also permitted to attend. We brought snacks and played

board games with the few students whose family could not visit.

While the teens had classes like a typical school, there was still plenty of time to consider their lives. What better opportunity than this to share the good news of Jesus! I believe even for those who did not claim to follow Christ, their positive memory of Him—and His people—will remain.

Visiting prison

From the time of the pandemic, opportunities to continue ministering at the Reform School dwindled. I enquired with Prison Fellowship, and began visiting a handful of men in adult prison aged between their early 20s to 70s.

Unlike the Reform School, I could only visit in the visitation room, separated by a thick pane of glass, with conversations were restricted to 15 minutes. At first, I questioned the value of this. How can you have meaningful conversations in 15 minutes? Is it a proper use of my time?

However, I discovered that for most of these men, no one else visits them. They're either estranged from family or don't come from Taipei, so any visits are few and far between. They

have menial work assignments in prison and some have years remaining of their sentence. Getting a visit from someone on the outside is like a breath of fresh air and

**WHAT BETTER OPPORTUNITY
THAN THIS** *to share the
good news of Jesus!*

can really make their day.

Like in the Reform School, in adult prison other inmates don't want to hear people share their complaints. So we come with an listening ear, willing to provide attention and convey that they're valued. First and foremost, we offer friendship, pray with them and provide Christian literature.

A bounty from a few

It's not a lot, but God can use our little to accomplish much.

Some of the men are making tentative steps toward Christ, getting involved in Prison Fellowship activities and growing in their knowledge of God. May God continue this good work in prisons and Reform Schools throughout Taiwan.

Will McKelleher

OMF Taiwan alumni

MINISTRY TO THE ELDERLY IN TAIWAN

Many churches have youth pastors, but fewer have someone dedicated to serving older people. Over the last few years, OMF worker Lucy Eastwood has been developing ministry to and with older people in Taiwan. We were keen to find out more.

Why is elderly care a significant need in East Asia?

By 2030 one in six people in countries such as Japan, Korea, China and Taiwan will be over 65, amounting to a mission challenge of more than 300 million people, many of them still needing to hear the good news of Jesus' love for them.

Like other countries in East Asia, Taiwan has had to care for a growing elderly population. As more families live in smaller apartments, the Taiwanese ideal of elderly parents living with their adult children is becoming less common. The number of frail and vulnerable people living alone or in nursing homes are increasing. Many families are also employing foreign caregivers. This has led to over 180,000 Indonesian women coming to Taiwan for three or more years to live with Taiwanese families and care for the elderly.

How have churches been responding to the opportunities to reach older people?

Increasingly churches with growing numbers of elderly members and contacts are partnering with local government to run lunch clubs or activities for the elderly. Others are realising that care homes are also places where the church should be ministering. Many churches are starting daytime meetings for the elderly, aiming to meet both spiritual and social needs.

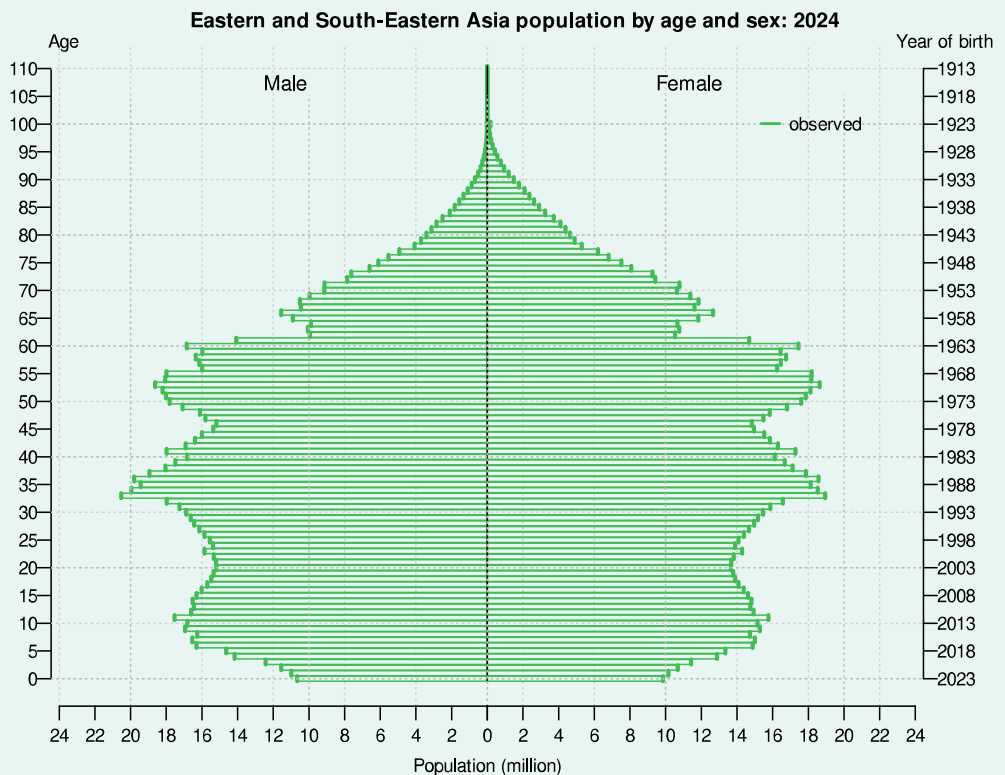
What kind of ministry have you been involved in?

In 2018 I began a part-time Masters degree in social work at Asia University in Taiwan. Through my studies I became involved in a government sponsored advocacy project. I have helped train volunteers to go into care homes where they meet residents who have no relatives to visit them. These volunteers pay attention to each person's physical, spiritual, and social wellbeing. There is an open door for Christians to be involved in this project and the emphasis on spiritual care means many care homes are also open to having churches come and run activities.

In my local church I have encouraged elderly church members to join me in pastoral and evangelistic visits. Not only are older Christians often an untapped resource within the church but being asked to be involved can both improve their sense of self-worth and leads to continued spiritual growth.

I have been teaching part of a course for the Lutheran Seminary which provides training in reaching out to the working-class and marginalized elderly.





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How have you seen God at work?

Mrs Her had never been to school and couldn't read. She made money to raise her five children by working as a spirit medium. When possessed by a spirit she would give advice to those who paid for the service. In her 90s her health broke down and she went to live in the home of her oldest son, confined to the second floor as she couldn't manage stairs. One of her daughters, who was a Christian, asked me to visit Mrs Her. I began to see her regularly, sharing some stories from Genesis and singing Christian songs. Then one day she had a vision. She saw a man who had been tortured and nailed to a wooden cross. She asked me, 'why

would they treat him like that?' That vision led me to tell her about Jesus and, wonderfully, a year later she became a Christian.

What future opportunities and challenges are there for local churches and OMF in this area?

The challenge for the ageing church in Taiwan is to recognise this phenomenon is not a negative thing but a challenge to reconsider how the church should serve those in later years as well as including them in ministry. Everything from approaches to preaching and teaching, making the church a hub of social life for the lonely and vulnerable, improving access and toilet facilities, to methods of outreach, all need to consider the needs of those over 65. The Church in Taiwan needs prayer, creative ideas and input from those around the world with experience in this area. OMF Taiwan would love to have new workers with a vision for reaching Taiwan's precious elderly people.

Lucy (Ma-Tiao) Eastwood

**THE CHURCH IN TAIWAN NEEDS
prayer, creative ideas
and input FROM THOSE
AROUND THE WORLD.**

LEARNING TO BE CONTENT: *30 years with OMF*

Mark & Susan CHAPMAN



What are some of the things you've come to love about the places you've worked and the people you've worked amongst?

Mark and Susan: Over the past 30 years we have lived in many different locations from very remote, isolated places to overcrowded, polluted megacities. In each situation we have found special spaces where fond memories were made.

The different living situations have been part of the different ministry phases that the Lord has led us into. Living and working in the high remote mountains of central Mindanao in the Southern Philippines came with the blessing of fresh air and green surroundings. The cities we lived in did not have these, but there was the blessing of access to all the needed goods and services. Being based in Australia has given us the opportunity for regular times with family, camping in the bush, and walks on the waterfront.

We have learnt to be content in each of these seasons of ministry - maximizing the benefits and minimizing

the impact of the disadvantages.

Of course, the people in these locations are also different. Subsistence farmers who are living one day at a time see the words of scripture through a very different lens than those living in the abundance and bustle of a megacity. We have been enriched by learning to view the word of God afresh through multiple lenses and seeing how He speaks powerfully into each context. We have been privileged to journey with so many people in their discovery and growth of life in Christ.

There has always been openness to spiritual conversations and many opportunities to make Christ known along the way. Being part of an international organization has also meant a richness of relationships as we have served together with people from around the globe. Developing close friendships with people we might never have otherwise met has been a special blessing to us.

What has God taught you during your years of service about Himself and His work?

Mark: That God is always at work (even while we sleep) and that we need to live a life of expectancy that He can do far above anything that we imagined or thought possible.

Another lesson learnt is that God works to his agenda and timetable, not ours. His timing is always spot on, even when we become impatient or discouraged by a lack of results.

Also, God is in the business of using the most unlikely characters to do the most extraordinary things. We may be impressed by someone's skills or abilities in ministry, but God is more impressed by someone's humility, firm faith, and courageous trust.

So, we learned to never underestimate what God can do in and through those that seem to be in the background rather than the limelight.

Susan: One lesson is that He can work miracles, but He can't be commanded to do so. We have seen and experienced God's healing, and yet there are times when He chooses not to heal.

Sometimes the way God works and what He chooses to do doesn't seem to make sense. Often things fall into place when we look back at situations, but this is not always the case. Faith in God is the very practical day-to-day work of obeying Him and doing what He places in our hands - even when we are full of questions.

Another is the importance of a "pass-it-on" mindset. Whatever God is teaching us, He wants us to convey it to others. No Christian is too young in the faith to relay what they are learning. This is God's way of having His treasure shine in and through us as we pass things on. A practical outworking of this lesson was the publication of my book *Life Interrupted: A Reflective Journey*, in which I share insights from research and experience on how to be ready when life turns upside-down.

A recent lesson has been the importance and richness of lament. It is faith in action in difficult times. I have found it so helpful to take time to write out to God my protest, petition, and praise (an outline from theologian and author Carol Bechtel).¹

What are your top three tips for people looking to serve in similar ways?

Mark:

1. Learn to live in trust and dependence upon God right now by putting yourself in situations that stretch you in your reliance on God.
2. Develop solid daily spiritual disciplines now that will carry you and enrich you through the times of testing, trial, discouragement, and disappointment.
3. Always keep the main purpose in sight of seeing people transformed by the power of Holy Spirit. All the other good "mission activities" flow out of lives impacted first and foremost by the gospel of Jesus.

Susan:

1. Walk with Jesus right now and point others to Him. Keep focused on Him and not your goals, be obedient, share what you are learning.

2. Embrace and grow in godly rhythms. Work out routines and rhythms (daily, weekly, periodically, annually) of the inward, outward, and corporate spiritual disciplines. And don't forget celebration, Sabbath, and solitude. These godly rhythms will be the framework enabling you to keep going when life is overwhelming.
3. Invest in a healthy pyramid of care. This is a network of relationships including your relationship with God, peers, a Christian community, those who help you, and professionals who help you. All of these are important, and having a healthy pyramid puts you in a good position to adapt it as your circumstances change through the different seasons of life.

安息主怀

To Glory

We wanted to share with you two testimonies of OMF workers who recently went to be with their Savior, Ethel Marion Howard and Margaret Knight.

“A quiet assurance”:

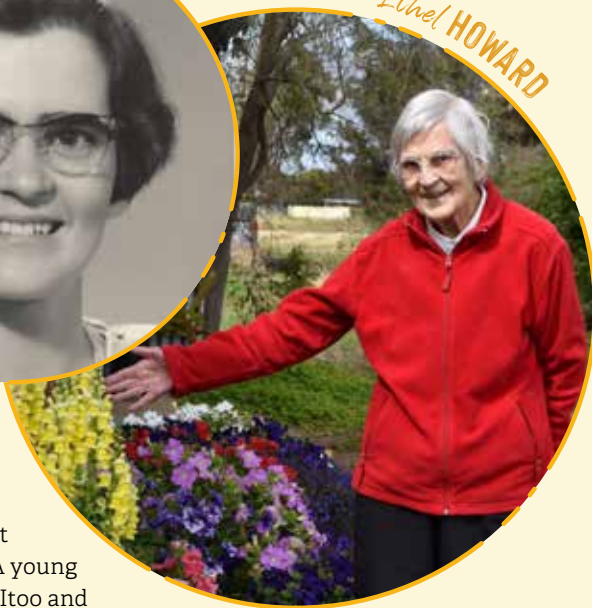
Ethel Marion Howard

“My interest in missionary work began in early childhood,” Ethel wrote in May 1957 in East Asia’s Millions. “I was surrounded by Christian influences, and missionary literature was given a prominent place in the home. I had a simple trust in the Lord and childish dreams in being a missionary.”

During her early teens, Ethel went through “a period of doubt and conflict” from which she emerged surrendering her life to Christ. “At this time I realized the truth of 2 Corinthians 5:15, ‘He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto Him who died for them and rose again.’” She went on to train at Perth Bible Institute, and asked God to reveal His place for her.

“As I prayed, the answer came by a deepening interest in the CIM, resulting in a quiet assurance that the Lord had called me to serve Him in the mission.” Ethel joined OMF in April 1957 to serve in Japan, returning to Australia in June 1975 after 18 years.

Ethel wrote of the first baptisms in Sunagawa, Japan (Dec 1961-Jan 1962, East Asia’s Millions). “Yesterday was a wonderful day here in Sunagawa because through the blessing of God we were



able to have the first baptismal service. A young couple, Mr and Mrs Itoo and two young ladies publicly confessed their faith in the Lord Jesus.”

She also wrote of a new children’s meeting in Kamisunagawa. “The children come to meet us when we arrive on the bus and many of them are very keen about learning their memory verses and remembering the lessons.”

Ethel went to be with the Lord on September 23, 2024. Her memorial service was held on October 21, 2024 at Katanning Baptist Church, Western Australia.



“One step at a time, but keep on stepping:”

Margaret Knight

“‘One step at a time, but keep on stepping,’ sums up my experience of God’s guidance over the years,” Margaret Knight wrote in 1963 in *East Asia’s Millions*, just after joining OMF a year earlier. She went on to serve in Japan for 20 years.

“First came the time in my early teens when I promised the Lord complete rule of my life and undertook to prepare to the best of my ability for missionary work...Throughout these years my missionary interest steadily increased, fanned by missionary literature, the activities of the youth division and prayer meetings.”

In Japan, Margaret taught at Nanae Chefoo School in Hokkaido. She also taught English to a small group of Japanese young people. In 1975, she wrote of the impact of a Christian monthly magazine, which for one Japanese woman at least had prompted the reading of the Bible daily. “All the ladies receive this magazine so we can be encouraged to keep on praying about their response to Christ.”

In 1983, Margaret was appointed to the position of Prayer Secretary for OMF Australia. She served in the Victorian state office, and remained a faithful OMF prayer supporter for the rest of her life.

Margaret went home to be with her beloved Savior on October 18, 2024. Her memorial service was held on October 25, 2024 at the Chapel, The Village Baxter, Victoria.

Archive references courtesy of OMF International Archivist, Ka-Neng Au.



Riaan & Elani Rottier

Returnee Focus – Japan

In 2013, during an unexpected, difficult season of our lives, God convicted us to start the journey towards full-time mission work. He gave us an increasing love and burden for Japan, a culturally rich country where less than 1% of people know and follow Jesus. We learned that, while Japanese in Japan are often resistant to the gospel, they are far more likely to turn to God while they study or work overseas.

Sensing a clear calling to make the most of this movement by the Holy Spirit, we went to Japan for four years to get better equipped to reach Japanese people with the gospel while they are in Australia. We learned from Japanese people who have returned as Christians from overseas and persevered in their faith. We were inspired by their service in Japan, even in difficult circumstances.

Now, we are looking forward to welcoming Japanese people to Australia—loving, reaching and helping disciple them, then connecting them to warm Christian fellowship when they return to Japan.

Yet as we look forward to see God work now and in the future, we have also been struck anew by how relentlessly unsettling missionary life can be! During our current season of transition, Psalm 27:4 is a verse that God has kept bringing across my (Elani's) path again and again, "One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord."

It got me thinking: no matter which country I go to, no matter how many different places I need to live in and get used to, the house and the beauty of the Lord are there to be found. I find it in gathering with His people and worshipping Him in different languages and cultural contexts, and in his intricate handiwork in even the tiniest flowers—wherever I am.

As God's people, we can open our hands and receive God's generous offerings of His consistent character and revelation of beauty, right here and

now.

And after all of this sojourning in this tiny part of our eternal lives, there will be a house with many rooms prepared for us (John 14:2), more beautiful, 'settled' and joyful than we can ever imagine.

Please pray for us and for Japan's people along these lines. May we experience His beauty in the ways He is revealing Himself to us each day.



Pray for the Rottiers and Japan

- Pray for Japanese Christians to thrive in an incredibly tough spiritual environment in Japan, and boldly reach their own people with God's love.
- Pray for sensitivity to the Spirit's leading during our next term, and that He will open doors for Japanese people to hear about Jesus and experience His love.
- Pray that we will grow in our relationships with God and each other, find our joy, identity and comfort in Him, and keep trusting Him.
- Pray for provision of all our practical, emotional and spiritual needs—including mutually encouraging partnerships with churches and individuals.

Mark & Susan Chapman International



This last six-year term has certainly been one packed with new challenges and very stretching situations. Leading through the global pandemic period with so much uncertainty and major interruptions to life has taken us on a roller coaster of highs and lows. We settled into life in Bangkok at the beginning of 2019 for what we thought was going to be the next ten years.

It turned out to be a different story. Getting locked out of Thailand in the early part of 2020 and in community quarantine for eight months in Manila was not in our plans! This was a challenging season, but we soon saw the importance of being available to serve our Philippines colleagues at that time.

Those eight months also proved to be very instrumental in forcing us to reconfigure our ministries. Training, mentoring, coaching, planning, mediation, leadership inductions, conferences, meetings and study - all moved online and continued even when we made it back to Australia.

Over the following year, we waited for the door to open and the right timing to return to life in Bangkok. A cancer diagnosis and multiple treatments for Susan, the wedding of a daughter, caring for a parent after brain surgery and the birth of two grandchildren were part of the ongoing rollercoaster. This eventually led to a decision to remain based in Australia for the foreseeable future.

Once travel opened up, we were able to return to in-person ministry that was also strongly supported by online interactions. We remain based in Brisbane, with travel to other OMF centers to meet, equip and care for those we lead. Looking back over this term full of unexpected interruptions, we can see how God guided and sustained us along the way. His grace was shown to us even in the most challenging times.



Pray for Mark and our International Leadership team

When I (Mark) joined the International Leadership Team (ILT) in 2018, I was the youngest and most inexperienced on the team. Over the years there has been much change, including a new General Director. Now, I find myself as longest standing member of the ILT that others turn to for help—especially regarding OMF's history! As a team, we are looking at how to best be fit for purpose in our ever-changing world.

- Pray for the Lord's wisdom and guidance as we reconfigure our leadership structure.
- Pray for the Lord to raise up people to serve on the ILT to fill OMF's leadership needs.

Pray for Susan and our International Training & Development team

Our Training and Development team has been through a tumultuous time over the last six years. We designed and launched an online learning platform and were involved in a major IT systems project. We also transferred to a new technology partner and a better online learning platform. Through the pandemic-disrupted years, we supported colleagues in their online interactions, helping people gain new skills and giving opportunities for ongoing development.

- Language and culture learning is a significant part of Training and Development. Pray that our colleagues are equipped for healthy interactions - both interculturally within OMF and cross-culturally with those we serve.
- Pray for the course leaders and facilitation teams of our many in-house courses - that each would prepare colleagues to share the gospel effectively in all its fullness.

Paul & Mary*

J.O. Fraser Center, Thailand

Reflecting on our journey, it's been amazing to see how God has led us step by step. It was during my (Paul) time at Christ College that God first placed a burden on my heart to consider serving Him in Thailand among the Lisu people after visiting the J.O. Fraser Center (JOFC) with one of my pastors back in 2020. JOFC is a discipleship and training center which seeks to train local Christians to know Christ more deeply and share the gospel with others.

Although we were presented with ministry opportunities in Australia, our hearts were not at peace with them. By God's grace, our family was provided with a chance to visit JOFC in 2022. It was this trip that consolidated our sense that God was calling us to serve Him there. Throughout this journey, the pastors and elders of our church have been immensely supportive in providing wisdom, discipleship and guidance regarding our calling to JOFC.

I (Paul) am excited to live in community with the Christians at JOFC and to see how God will grow our family and the people we'll invest in. I look forward to seeing young Christians mature in their faith and become faithful leaders in their churches and communities. Mary is eager to invest in the women, and start a mother's group onsite. We are both looking forward to living and working in the same place and homeschooling our children together.

Our family has a lot of transitions ahead. We're expecting our third child in early 2025—such a joy, but also an added challenge as we juggle moving overseas, language learning, and settling our children into new routines. Through it all, our hope is that God would be glorified as we embrace this



season of growth. We're eager to see how He will use this time to deepen our dependence on Him and fan into flame our zeal for making Him known.

*Names changed for privacy and security purposes



Pray for Paul, Mary and their family

- Pray for Paul, Mary and their family
- Pray for the health and safe arrival of their third child in early 2025.
- 2025 will bring many changes—a new baby, moving homes, and language learning. Pray that their family will adjust well and find rhythms that will enable them to thrive.
- Pray for patience and grace as they navigate the pressures and challenges of transition. May their hearts burn for the gospel and for discipling His people in their new context.

FROM ENMITY TO AMITY

Book Review: *The Generations Project* by Wei-Hao Ho and Soo-Inn Tan



Why is it so hard for us to work with other generations, even among Christians? Trying to talk to each other and serve together seems a minefield. It can feel a lot easier to simply find people from our own generation who think, talk and work like us. Yet when that's all we do, it doesn't feel quite right—like God intended something even better.

The Generations Project is a beautifully presented book for people who are genuinely curious and want to understand other generations to love them better—and work with them, not against them.

There's a great phrase in the preface that sums up the aim of this thoughtful publication from Graceworks in Singapore, “from enmity to amity.” Authors Wei-Hao Ho and Soo-Inn Tan's offerings

help us pursue this kind of relationship between Christians of different generations—one that reflects the barrier-breaking gospel of Christ.

Despite the plethora of research behind its content and its biblical and academic rigor, *the Generations Project* is an easy read—though it doesn't offer easy solutions. Ho and Tan don't offer a quick “how-to,” but they do offer real-life stories and suggest questions to ask that lead to considered and context-appropriate decision-making, such as, “Have we structured our church [or ministry] in such a way that makes sense to people of different generations?”

One of the most valuable aspects of the book is the way in which readers can take the ideas and methods explored in the book and apply them in their own context. It features helpful charts, quotes, summary graphics, appendices for intergenerational mentoring and interview guides for conducting research. Ethnographic findings into each generation are well-organized and easy to find for reference.

“The generations together can help give a more comprehensive picture of God and life,” write Ho and Tan. May the Lord use *The Generations Project*—and other research that flows from it—to deepen understanding, love and teamwork between younger and older generations within the global Church, making our witness more complete so that more may come to Christ!

[Trix Wilkins](#)

OMF Australia Content Writer & Editor



GENERATIONS OF REVELATIONS, GENERATIONS OF COVENANT

It is truly amazing how God revealed Himself to His creation. This revelation came with a special gift: God's chosen people could have a covenantal relationship with their everlasting God.

From the beginning of creation, the fall in Genesis and the rescue in Exodus, God's loving grace and salvation are overarching themes. It is God's intention to establish covenantal relationships with mankind, and extend it to all generations.

A covenant for all generations

An important aspect of God's character is demonstrated through Scripture: God is the Lord of history, present and future. He is thus the Lord of every generation.

In Genesis, the rainbow became the sign of His covenant. "And God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant I am making...a covenant for all generations to come.'" (Genesis 9:12). Later, God established His covenant not just with Abraham but with all his descendants. "I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you." (Genesis 17:7)

God revealed and introduced Himself to Moses in the book of Exodus. He revealed His divine name, and reiterated His connection with Israel's patriarchs, so that Moses would realize He was the God his ancestors had been worshipping for generations. "Say to the Israelites, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you. This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation.'" (Exodus 3:15).

These are but a few of the many verses

throughout His Word that describe God's perspective on all generations.

Part of God's purpose

God is weaving together stories of people from each generation into His eternal purposes. He sees and shapes our lives within the context of His Kingdom. His purpose is definitely greater than any individual—and He graciously invites us to be part of His plan.

As Christians, we get to see our lives and our world through the lens of God's purpose, and we all have a chance to take part in His Kingdom work.

Miraculous partnerships between and across generations

When God calls someone to become a missionary, it is never an easy journey. There are many hurdles, things that seem important to give up, loves to leave behind.

God in His grace sends partners from all around the world and all walks of life to journey with missionaries—members of His Body who want to be part of His purpose.

It is because of such partnerships that we get to see generations of Christians becoming missionaries—and generations of people turning to Christ.

It is a privilege for us at OMF to witness how God delivers His miracles through His people from different generations. I truly believe this is the work of God, and pray that He will continue to encourage and bless our work through the Holy Spirit. Amen!

Edwin Lee

OMF Australia Finance Manager

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AGEING ASIA

The Bible is full of stories of people meeting with God at all stages in life. From the young boy Samuel in the Old Testament, to Anna and Simeon, older people who welcomed the baby Jesus in later life.

Increasingly in East Asia today, there are rapidly ageing populations. This creates opportunities and challenges for churches to respond to, bringing hope and help in Jesus' name. We've collected together some statistics to highlight the scale of population change in Asia today.

China

254M PEOPLE
60+ IN 2019

Ageing across Asia:

Asia's population 65 years and over is projected to triple between 2020 and 2060, from 414 million in 2020 to 1.2 billion by 2060.*

By 2060, one in eight people in the world will be an Asian person aged over 60.*

*These figures include East and Southeast Asia and India. For all data references, see omf.org/uk/billions.

South Korea

HAS THE
WORLD'S
LOWEST FERTILITY
RATE

Japan

13%

of the work
force in Japan
are aged 65+

Taiwan

20%

of the population will be 65+ in 2025. This is projected to be 41% by 2050, which would make Taiwan one of the world's oldest countries.

Serve Asia

VISION TRIP

Vietnam



Heart for Asia.
Hope for Billions.

Visit and pray for the beautiful Southeast Asian country of Vietnam. Meet cross-cultural workers, experience various on-the-ground ministries and serve local communities.

Join a short-term team led by an experienced cross-cultural worker. Serve with people who are keen followers of Christ, flexible, adaptable and teachable—but most importantly, have a heart for prayer and to see nations reached with the gospel.

About your team leader

Sally's heart is to see every generation actively engaged in mission—anywhere and everywhere. She's served for 13 years in East Asia in various roles, including reaching out to and discipling marginalized students in one of the region's poorest areas.

Date: July 1-13, 2025

Estimated Cost: ± AUD \$1,380 per person (excluding flights, travel insurance, visa)

1-13 JUL
2025



Register your interest by 14 Feb 2025.
Contact au.serveasia@omfmail.com.