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MILLIONS

2023 五月一八月 | May - August 2023

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*Along
the
Mekong*





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.

Millions comes out three times a year and is free for supporters. It started life as *China's Millions* in 1875, the title highlighting the numbers of people without the hope of Christ. 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.

Subscribe to get the magazine by email at sno@omfmail.com

編者的話

From the Editor

'This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.' *Matthew 13:23b*

The parable of the sower, the seed and the soils in Matthew 13 has so much to hold onto as we live as followers of Jesus.

Wherever we are sowing the seed, speaking and living out the good news of Jesus, it is often hard work. We face rejection and opposition, just as Jesus did. We see promising starts fade away to nothing, just as Jesus described in his parable. Faithful proclamation of the kingdom can have seasons of disheartening toil, other times one reaps an abundance from what another has sown. The same seed that is snatched away in one instance, bears increasing fruit, fruit that lasts into eternity, in another. People are made alive to the wonders of knowing the Lord. The word of God wells up in them, transforming their character, awakening hope, and overflowing into the lives of others.

Our message of repentance and faith is the same news that Jesus scattered as 'the Word became flesh' and 'dwelt among us.' What confidence we can have, even in the face of trials, that this seed can and will bear fruit.

Chris Watts

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You can now read *Millions*
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新消息

News Updates

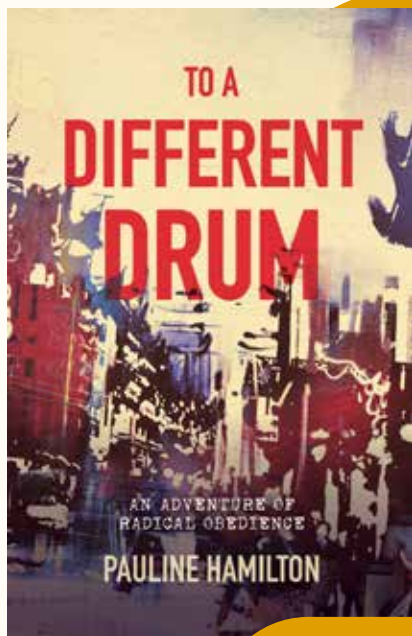
To a Different Drum

In just a few weeks, Pauline Hamilton's life had fallen apart. A crushing medical diagnosis, the loss of a promising relationship and getting kicked out of medical school:

'Now suddenly the opportunity had come to end my anguish. As I was tearing up the road with the accelerator pushed to the floor, familiar landmarks flashing by me, a kind of mad exhilaration possessed me. I had neither the time nor the inclination to reassess things now. I just wanted to reach my destination. Numbing my sense of feeling, I didn't let myself think of Mother as she had looked, calling after me in her fear, or that she had called me "Hon," the family's name of endearment for me.

I was almost at the open mine—just two more turns to make. Suddenly there was a terrific bang and the car careened out of control, nearly flipping over on that narrow gravel road. Somehow reining the shiny convertible to a stop, I got out, saw the skid marks and then spotted the blown-out tire on the left front wheel.

As I stared at the ragged hole in that tire, I didn't hear any heavenly voices, but I knew that God had done this. Right there on that skid-marked mountain road the Spirit of God brought back to my mind things I must have learned many years before in Sunday school. The first words that came to me were, "He cares!" And then, in a marvelous



The book is now available for £8.99 (RRP) from 100ftthose.com or call 03302 233 423.

Use the code OMFDD10 to get 40% off 'To a Different Drum' exclusively for Millions readers.

Get your copy today at go.omf.org/differentdrum



way He continued to show me how much He loved me. I knew the verse He was using, John 3:16, I had learned it as a child. But this time it had my name in it: "God so loved Pauline Hamilton, that if Pauline Hamilton believes in Me, she shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

I began to reason: obviously God cared enough to stop me on that road, stop me from taking my own life—but why? I had turned my back on Him many years before, and refused to give Him any place in my life and my plans. What reason could He have to care about me? But He did, and the realization of that love broke me.

I crouched down on the road with all the necessary tools beside me to attempt changing the tire, but instead I found myself weeping before the Lord, He speaking to me and I to Him. I didn't know much about prayer then—my praying up to that time had been little more than "Now I lay me down to sleep," or "Lord, give me this or that." Today it was different. Though neither formal nor beautiful, my prayer came from the heart. It ran something

THOUGH NEITHER FORMAL
NOR BEAUTIFUL,
MY PRAYER CAME
from the heart

like this: "God, You win. I've made an awful mess of things. Lord, if You can do anything with this mess, here I am. You take over."

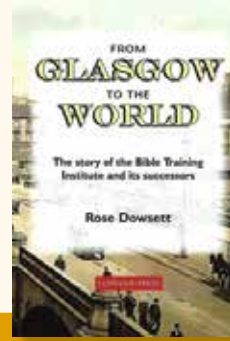
Something happened there on that hot, dusty road that I can't explain scientifically; but it changed my life completely. I wasn't even sure the words that came to my heart were from the Bible—yet I felt they had to be. "Be strong and of good courage," God said to me. "Be not afraid, for I am with you." How I needed those words—and what comfort they brought to my heart!

Letting God take over her life ultimately led Pauline on an adventure lasting over 30 years serving with the China Inland Mission, now OMF International. As a missionary first in China and later in Taiwan, Pauline never lost sight of the God who had promised never to let her go.

To a Different Drum is Pauline's autobiography. First published in 1984, we're pleased to present this new edition from 10Publishing, with an afterword from OMF worker Alex G Smith, completing Pauline's story.

From Glasgow to the World

In this new book, author and former OMF worker Rose Dowsett traces the history of the Bible Training Institute in Glasgow and the global impact of those who studied there. The Bible Training Institute, and in its later forms as Glasgow Bible College and International Christian College, had close links with East Asia. Hundreds of graduates from the Bible college went on to serve with the China Inland Mission and OMF. Rose tells some of these stories, as well as those who served with other organisations or made their mark in other areas, living out a vibrant faith in the Lord Jesus.



*From Glasgow to the World:
The story of the Bible Training Institute
and its successors is available through
Amazon (RRP £14.00): go.omf.org/bti*



Testimony of Dr. Pauline G. Hamilton

WHAT a blessed privilege to be "allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel," and now to be commissioned of Him to carry it to China for Him. I can truly say, "raise the Lord for failure in my medical studies," for it was through the deduction of this bubble of ambition and the understanding of my health that I met regularly for prayer and to study the mission field. This interest in mission continued and grown through the years.

Throughout the past year I was asked again and again, "Why have you never gone to China?" and, "What about China?" until I was forced to look at the need of this field. I prayed very definitely that the Lord would show me His will concerning these things. In answer to my prayer He began to show me more clearly the need of an evangelical presence to the students of China, and continually I learned first-hand more of the great need of the Lord spoke to me through the words of Amos 7:15 and 1 Chronicles 16:24 and showed me engaged and "Go, . . . declare his name among the heathen; his marvellous works among all nations." He would have me to go, yet how this was to be accomplished I could not foresee, for it did not seem possible to pass the physical examinations required. Committing these obstacles to Him I went forward with my application with the assurance that "Faithful is the Lord; he will not allow his promise to fail." By His grace my heart and a new song in my mouth as I set my face to serve Him in China.

I covet your prayers as I go to this needy land that everything His perfect will may be done and "that in a day things he might have the pre-eminence."



TALI HOSPITAL MOVES FORWARD

IN A LETTER to her praying friends, Dr. Jessie McFarlane, Dr. Donald tells of her trip by air from Shanghai to Tali. "I was an angel, riding in a Kummie."

ทำทุกวิถีทาง

GOSPEL

Whatever
IT TAKES

60 million people, 5 countries, one God-given vision. As the Mekong River flows through diverse landscapes, home to around 100 different people groups, so OMF Mekong Minorities exists to see locally driven movements of reproducing churches among all these peoples, obeying Jesus and his Great Commission. Mekong people groups range in size from a few thousand to 20 million people. In most of these groups, Christians are a tiny minority.

Here are six ways we seek to see God's kingdom come in the Mekong region:

GO

Our teams use creative strategies to enter hard-to-reach places, connect with local people, learn their heart languages, and seek people of peace who can help the good news of Jesus Christ enter a new community. As we seek those God's Spirit has prepared, we serve them practically, identify ourselves as Christ's followers, and seek to engage in gospel-sharing conversations.

Mekong workers share the gospel in ways that can be readily understood by those hearing it for the first time. But it's also important that local Christians can easily adopt the methods used to share the message. We often introduce the gospel through Bible stories of God's work from Creation to Christ. Where possible we share with households, recognising that God often uses families as the foundation of new churches.

MYANMAR

GOD'S
HEART

The Great Commission in Matthew 28 directs us to make disciples of all nations. We believe that when Jesus said his blood 'is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins' (Matthew 26:38), he intended that many from each people group would receive his forgiveness. What is it going to take to see many people coming to Christ and forming church planting movements among each of the Mekong peoples?

Mekong workers set growing focused prayer as our foremost ministry. Convinced that prayer comes before any movement to Christ, Mekong teams centre themselves around prayer and call others to pray for the peoples of the Mekong region. Many Mekong teams have organized an annual month of prayer for their people groups. Several of these have been running for over a decade and involve thousands of people worldwide.

GUIDE

As new churches become independent and reproduce by planting new churches, we place special value on training leaders. Only by investing authority in leaders from within the people group can we see movements really become indigenous, carrying on far beyond what cross-cultural workers can do themselves and lasting long after they are directly involved.

LAOS

THAILAND

VIETNAM

CAMBODIA

GATHER

As discipleship groups meet, they begin to do the things that churches do, such as prayer and worship, hearing and obeying God's word, fellowship, outreach, giving, baptism and the Lord's Supper, and choosing leaders from within the group. We help these groups to gain an identity as a local body of believers who have the vision and accountability to multiply themselves by going out and planting more churches.

GROW

When people do believe in Christ, discipleship begins, often in groups. Those who cannot read the Bible for themselves can drink in the sustaining food of God's word through oral Bible stories, which they hear, discuss, and practice each week. Goal setting, vision casting, and accountability are built into discipleship groups, so that new Christians not only grow in their faith but also immediately reach out to their own family and friends and disciple them in the same way they are being discipled.

Does this all really work?

Most of the peoples of the Mekong region have very few Christians today for good reasons. The places they live are difficult to reach. The complex mix of cultural identity and minority languages make communication challenging. Pressure from families and authorities creates many hardships for local believers.

Despite these challenges, we are seeing movements to Christ developing in several people groups in different parts of the Mekong region. Local Christians and churches are increasingly partnering with Mekong teams in effectively bringing the good news to those who are waiting to hear. Even the Covid-19 pandemic has helped us find new strategies to reach the hardest-to-reach people. In this issue, you will hear how God is leading Mekong teams and local Christians to answer the question: What is it going to take to see the Mekong peoples reached?

We long to see the Mekong River region become a sea of praise to our heavenly Father, with people streaming to him from all the high mountains and scattered valleys of this vast area. 'For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea' (Habakkuk 2:14). Join us in learning about these precious people groups, praying for the knowledge of God to flow into them, and considering whether God has a role for you in serving Mekong peoples.

Final 58



A key focus for OMF's Mekong Minorities teams is sharing the good news of Jesus with the people groups in the region that no one else is reaching. One team's creativity and determination is now paying off in exciting ways:

A conversation can unexpectedly lead to a defining moment. A new direction becomes clear and a new path emerges. In the Bible, Nehemiah asked about the situation in Jerusalem, responding in prayer and daring action. They are moments in which a sense of urgency calls out 'something has got to change,' and is met with the faith and possibility that asks 'what if...?'

The situation

One OMF worker, John¹, had already been serving in East Asia for several years when he was challenged to consider that there were still people groups scattered around his country of service which no one was sharing the good news of Jesus with. Worse than that, nobody was attempting to. It had been over 100 years since mission work began in the country. How much longer would it be before someone went to share the gospel with these remaining groups?

The size of the task was not the only obstacle. Christians also face strong opposition to sharing the good news. The people groups in question were largely located in extremely remote villages where they had for centuries followed traditional religions and had deeply rooted rituals of spirit worship. They were group-oriented societies that often disapproved of someone choosing to follow a new path. Though the challenge was immense, John and his team had a strange but unshakeable

THE ANSWER WAS ALL AROUND THE TEAM, *within the church*

confidence that the Lord had brought them this far and had proven that he was able.

The shift

The solution was not in working harder or frantically trying to go to every last part of the country. Instead, the answer was all around the team, within the Church. Though still small and relatively young, there was a growing population of followers of Christ within the country. Why not work to see them raised up, trained and sent out into cross-cultural ministry? Jesus taught us to 'ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers...' (Matthew 9:38). They don't have to be sent out from somewhere on the other side of the world or even from another country nearby. Workers could be national believers willing to engage in cross-cultural ministry.

The discovery

As a small team carried out detailed and systematic surveys, they found that the challenge was larger than initially thought. Their original list included the names of fifty-eight different people groups. With more of the study completed they discovered the exact locations of these groups, but also found that the number of groups in desperate need of someone to share the good news with them had nearly tripled.

The strategy

New workers are recruited through personal referrals. People hear about the opportunities to share Christ with those who have never heard of him before and have their own moment of decision, like Nehemiah, as they pray and consider whether the Lord is calling them to rise up and act.

The next step is a four-month training programme, where people are disciplined more deeply while taking intensive classes on subjects such as the Bible, worldview and cross-cultural

ministry. Afterwards they move to a sending base, from which they are sent out in pairs to the locations where the need is the greatest.

Going from village to village, they introduce people to Jesus until they find someone who is open to the gospel. When a family is eager to learn about him, the national workers will stay to continue establishing them in the faith. Local Christians live with the family for anywhere from six to twelve months. By day they work the soil with their hosts, tending their crops and cultivating their land. By night they gather around the Scriptures, telling stories and teaching, forming them into disciples, gathering them as a church and leading them in worship. Eventually the church is launched to continue as a part of a wider network of Protestant churches.

The status

Today this work includes two full-time training centres where nearly 200 national workers have been trained. Fifty village churches have been formed and of the 158 groups they identified, only three are still awaiting their first encounter with the gospel. The national workers continue to help the churches multiply into surrounding villages.

The faithful body of national workers endures much difficulty in seeing this work carried out. They experience physical hardship and personal threats. Some have been arrested and spent time in jail. Many have walked with fellow Christians undergoing severe persecution. Yet they continue in the confidence that the good hand of our God is upon them and he will see it through (Nehemiah 2:18).

Pray for

- The remaining three people groups to hear and respond to the good news of Jesus
- Lasting fruit from the 155 people groups who now have some gospel witness among them
- Local Christians to persevere in ministry – 'Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.' (Galatians 6:9).

SHAPING THE *culture* OF WORK

Wherever we live, work is a significant part of our lives. Yet many churches – around the world and here in Thailand – virtually ignore it. We worship God and serve in church on weekends but often struggle to see the connection between our faith and work on weekdays. There is no doubt that this is a gap we must bridge. As Christians, how do we live all of our lives, including in our workplaces, in the presence of God?

This is particularly significant in Thailand, where an ageing population and falling birth rate means the economic and social burdens falling on workers are growing exponentially.¹ In my ministry in Northern Thailand, the young people I have met, the stories I have heard and the journeys we have taken together have highlighted for me that the burdens are real and young people long to be better supported in their work.

As I thought more about what it means to be a church in Chiang Rai, I realised this was a significant opportunity. This part of North Thailand has seen more than 150 years of missionary work. Still, only 0.4 per cent are Christians. A growing segment of young adults is asking questions that most Thai churches are not yet answering: integrating faith with lifestyle, work, family and money. To share the good news of Jesus with them, I realised we needed a new approach.

The cedar tree

We started a two-pronged gospel engagement strategy. We began with The Living Room Church, a Christ-centred simple church movement, which my wife Kul and I started with three Northern Thai Christians in 2016. In 2020 I founded TonCedar, a non-profit marketplace start-up ecosystem. Our aim is to build churches that help people live out



1. "Ageing Population in Thailand," HelpAge International, last modified October 30, 2019, accessed February 17, 2023, ageingasia.org/ageing-population-thailand



2. You can read more about The Living Room Church on our website: go.omf.org/living-room-church

the calling they have received from God – to live out their discipleship in Christ creatively in their work each day. Here, I want to focus on TonCedar.²

Our name comes from the Thai word, cedar tree (“Ton” meaning tree), inspired by Ezekiel 17:23: ‘On the mountain heights of Israel I will plant it; it will produce branches and bear fruit and become a splendid cedar. Birds of every kind will nest in it; they will find shelter in the shade of its branches.’ We long to be a tree in our community, striving to be strongly rooted in the word of God, branching out and producing fruit in the professional ecosystem of North Thailand, and providing entrepreneurs with a nest and shelter in the shade of our branches.

We began with the TonCedar Fellowship programme, which mentors and supports small businesses to generate long-term, sustainable community impact. As our TonCedar Fellows and their businesses developed, we started Project Samart to create job opportunities for marginalised people by providing salaried work and mentorship from our young entrepreneurs.

Purpose Lab began as a way to reshape conversations around being a Christian in the marketplace, encouraging and equipping local churches to journey with their members as they live for Jesus through their vocation.

Most recently, we launched co:lab space to grow a community for local entrepreneurs. Part of this community includes joining one of the Living Room Church meetings on Thursday evenings for a time of worship and around God’s word, discipling individuals and communities in the workplace.

Glimpses of progress

The impact of these programmes has allowed us to shape work culture in ways that we could have never imagined. One of our TonCedar Fellows, Soonthon from Magpie Farm, dreams of impacting his community in Pangkhon by reviving a sustainable farming model among the new generation, countering the rural-urban migration that often turns villages into ‘ghost towns’.

Another TonCedar Fellow, who is not a Christian, shared, ‘I never thought someone would want to support me without wanting anything in return. The team helped me to see and accomplish many things that I couldn’t have done as a solo business owner, inspiring me to think more deeply about the sustainability of the business and hire a team as well.’

An ongoing journey

As we continue to juggle the various projects, the work ahead remains challenging. Apart from the constant need to fundraise and build capacity and resources, helping people grasp our vision requires patience and faithfulness as well. Yet in all these, we believe that since God planted the vision of TonCedar, he will bring it to completion in his perfect time.

Sam

TonCedar Founder

OMF Mekong Minorities and OMF Singapore

Pray for

- A flourishing community for entrepreneurs in Chiang Rai with our co:lab space
- The TonCedar team as we grow in size and work responsibilities. For a common vision of redemptive work and a culture of faith and prayer
- Strategic partners and donors who will support and launch our work



Sam shares the story of the Living Room Church at go.omf.org/living-room-church

A Concert OF PRAYER

When I attended the OMF Mekong Minorities team annual conference for the first time almost 20 years ago, a colleague introduced to us a newly published prayer guide for a country where sharing of the good news of Jesus Christ is restricted.



One of the events during the conference was a concert of prayer where we would pray for our teams and the people groups that we serve in the Mekong region. We visited different prayer stations, one of which was based around the new prayer guide. There was a copy on the floor, and I felt compelled to kneel down and lay my hand upon it. After the prayer concert, I got my own copy and prayed through it in my daily devotions. At that time, I lived in a different country but faced similar restrictions. The prayer guide not only allowed me to pray in specific ways for that country, but also inspired me to pray for the country where I lived.

Joy in persevering prayer

Mekong Minorities teams serve among people groups who are often marginalised. Many live in rural and hard to reach places where education and medical provision are lacking. Sadly their culture and languages are often not respected. Nevertheless, the biggest obstacle keeping them from believing in Jesus Christ is spiritual, and this can only be addressed through prayer. We want to see God's transforming power working among the Mekong people groups through strategic prayer and ministry. I believe it is the power of prayer that has sustained me throughout my years of ministry. Apart from my own prayers, those of our prayer partners are a source of my strength and hope. It is my greatest joy to know God answers prayers, even though it may take many years to realise.

20 years of answered prayer

Since the prayer guide was published 20 years ago, we've heard news of tears and sorrow from Christians in that country. Instead of being discouraged, we continued to pray and asked our prayer partners to pray into those challenging situations. By the grace of God, our teams on the ground press on to reach these people groups.



Specific prayer points, stories and information to help you pray for Mekong Minorities are available at omf.org/uk/mekong

The teams strive to share a vision of locally-led churches that reproduce and plant more churches. Over the last few years, and in answer to the prayers of many supporters around the world, new churches have been planted, Christians have been disciplined and trained and are going on to teach others. We are excited to learn that local Christians are inspired to share the good news of Jesus Christ with their own people group as well as other people groups beyond their borders.

Praying through Scripture for the Mekong

Let the Bible inspire your prayers. Hebrews 5:7 reminds us that 'during the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.' In 1 Timothy 2:1 Paul urges 'that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people.' 'And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.' (Ephesians 6:18)

Please join us in prayer to the one 'who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine ... to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.' (Ephesians 3:20-21)

Please pray for

- The Lord to raise up prayer coordinators to facilitate the composition and distribution of prayer updates through different media channels
- More people to become faithful prayer partners and join our ministries in supporting or frontline roles
- The Holy Spirit to transform the lives of believers as a witness to Christ
- For movements of locally-led churches planting churches among all the people groups of the Mekong region

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LET'S Go

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE IN THE MEKONG REGION

Did you know on the OMF Opportunities website (opportunities.omf.org) you can search over 200 current opportunities to serve with us? Some are just two weeks long, while others are longer-term roles over several years.

We've picked four opportunities to serve in the Mekong region. Perhaps they could fit you or someone you know in your church? Scan the QR codes to find out more about each opportunity, or get in touch with your local Area Representative (details on page 2). If you're considering applying for any of these opportunities, chat to your local church leaders first. After that, we'd be delighted to start a conversation with you about where you might go.

EXPLORE MEKONG



Length: 2 weeks go.omf.org/explore-mekong

On this two-week trip you'll explore Northern Thailand and our ministry among minority people groups. Take the time to pray, learn, and visit our long-term workers. It is an excellent opportunity to deepen your understanding and engage in prayer. Whether or not you're considering longer-term involvement, this trip is perfect for discovering more and deepening your understanding. Typically, this placement is available every summer.



SERVING THIRD CULTURE KIDS

Length: 2 weeks go.omf.org/mekong-reunion

The Mekong Reunion camp is a highlight of the year for many children in the Mekong region whose parents work with OMF. While their parents engage in Bible teaching and strategic planning, the children and young people participate in a special program that helps them grow in their relationship with Jesus and form new friendships. To support the conference, we need a team of approximately 15 kids workers to help run the program.



CHURCH PLANTERS

Length: 3+ years go.omf.org/mekong-church

Come alongside teams of local Christians and cross-cultural workers in the Mekong region to help foster church planting movements. Some teams are based in very remote areas, others in bustling cities. But every team has a passion to share the good news of Jesus with those yet to hear it. Your experience in church planting, evangelism and discipleship or leadership training can encourage existing church planting movements or pioneer movements among new people groups and in new places. Language and culture learning is an essential part of successful long-term ministry in the Mekong.



SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER

Length: 3+ years go.omf.org/mekong-social

Join the OMF team in Northern Thailand and use your social media skills to share the gospel with the Tai Yuan people. After 150 years of gospel work among the Tai Yuan still fewer than 1 per cent are Christians. OMF are exploring a new approach. As a Social Media Manager and Content Developer, you will work with the team to develop a social media strategy that helps Tai Yuan people to hear and respond to the good news of Jesus. This is an exciting chance to make a real difference in people's lives, while also growing in your faith and developing your professional skills.

LEARNING AMONG THE IU-MIEN

Kei¹ shares his journey from short- to long-term mission:

I am a new OMF worker among Iu-Mien people in Northern Thailand. I arrived in 2021. I first visited them as a Serve Asia worker in 2015. The blessings of that trip went beyond my time in Thailand and continue in my ministry today.

Before

The first time I heard about the Iu-Mien people was when I met an OMF worker who serves among them. I started praying for the Iu-Mien people. Every time I heard updates from the worker when they came back for home assignment, my desire to visit increased. When I was in my last year of seminary, I had the opportunity to visit the Iu-Mien people in Northern Thailand.

During

Mainly I stayed at the Iu-Mien children's hostel and visited several Iu-Mien villages. It was an exciting time to see with my own eyes the peoples, areas, and ministries I had been praying for. Although the OMF worker who had first told me about the Iu-Mien wasn't there, I could connect with Iu-Mien pastors and other Mekong workers. It helped me to get to know the people and what a ministry might look like. At this time, I had many opportunities to share my testimony with others. It reminded me how God had guided me into cross-cultural work. Throughout my Serve Asia placement, I was convinced that God was leading me to serve him long-term.



After

I could now pray for Iu-Mien and Mekong teams more specifically. However, I was still not clear about the country and people group I should go to. For a few years, I served in Japan, my home country, and asked my church and my prayer supporters to pray for guidance about my future. I also asked for advice from the Mekong workers I had met. I prayed for God's guidance by comparing my prayers, experiences, and gifts with the current situation. The most helpful material was the prayer guides for the Mekong. Through prayer, God made clear he was calling me to work with the Iu-Mien people.

Today

As a long-term worker, I look forward to working with Iu-Mien to know God through reading the Bible translated into their language and serving God together. It is a blessing from God that through going out to serve him, both those going out and those sending out are given a new perspective and their prayers grow in faith and expectation.

使得前沿生活成可能

MAKING *Frontier Life* POSSIBLE

Joel & Lydia¹ joined the OMF Mekong Minorities team with one goal – the glory of God expressed through many churches among one of these precious people groups.

But after being detained in 2018, they were no longer welcome to serve among that people. Heartbroken, they and their 12-year-old son, Calvin, left their home of four years to recover and ask God, 'Now what?'

Graciously, the Lord led them to a new location, where local missionaries needed Bible and ministry training to engage the smallest, remotest, and most neglected people groups in the region. Not only were these 15 'nations' unreached, as far as we know before 2018 no person, church, or organization had a plan to bring the gospel to them. Joel's gifts as a Bible teacher and his cross-cultural ministry experience were vital to finishing this task. However, if their son Calvin struggles to grow in the Lord, connect with friends, and succeed in school, the family will never thrive, and may not survive serving cross-culturally for long.

A creative solution

Enter the Modular Study Group. Each month, Calvin and his fellow students study maths, science, and English for three weeks at home followed by a week together in the classroom. At home they prepare assignments, do assessments, write essays, perform experiments, and study under the direction of teachers living in a nearby city. In the classroom week, they go deeper in their



Can you help?

The Modular Study Groups need teachers. We're looking for a science teacher to join one study group this September. Find out more at go.omf.org/msg-opp



studies – and enjoy interacting with each other and their teachers, learn in groups, and study the Bible during chapel time together. The students – who cover high school ages from 12 to 18 – love this learning structure. For them, the study group is a monthly week of fun 'camp' with friends with some schoolwork sprinkled on top. They truly are growing up spiritually, socially, and academically, and their families are finding life on the frontiers to be more possible and sustainable.

From 158 to 3

For nearly four years now, Joel has trained around 80 local missionaries to take the gospel to the hardest places in the country. The number of people groups having never encountered the good news of Jesus is down from 158 to only three, and the Modular Study Group is one factor contributing to this remarkable progress.