



GO ASIA

MAY-AUG 2023

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



FROM PAUL TO TIMOTHY, TO US

Covering Acts 16:1-5, 2 Timothy 1:3-7, 3:10-17

Yuzo Imamura

Christ promised that we would bear much fruit if we abide in Him (John 15:5). This can be seen in Paul, recognised by Christians as a great preacher due to his zealous evangelism (e.g., Acts 26) and sacrificial life (e.g., 2 Corinthians 11:22-33). However, as he himself states (Philippians 3:12-14; 1 Corinthians 9:19-27), he worked hard at what was in front of him and lived his life like an athlete, striving to be a great competitor for the Gospel. I believe that he never cared about his fame and did not use them as a measure of his life. I think the secret to Paul's way of life, as recorded in the Bible, was to abide in Christ. I believe that is what shaped Timothy and many

other disciples of Christ, who are the fruit.

My wife and I are working in rural Cambodia to plant churches that can stand on their own after we, the missionaries, are gone. Missionaries often do not know what happens after they leave the mission field. Many missionaries leave with fond memories. However, those of us who have hosted missionaries in Japan have witnessed and heard of real problems that occur in churches after missionaries depart.

For instance, church members who are drawn to the missionaries' personalities



and talents may compare them with pastors of their own ethnic group and look down on them. Local pastors cannot resemble missionaries or perform the same deeds, no matter how hard they try. Missionaries may have local church members who respect and have positive feelings toward them, but they also need to consider the local pastors who will remain after their departure. Moreover, missionaries have their own support and do not require financial support from the church. However, the situation is different for local pastors and workers. The church will need to independently support their workers. Therefore, the missionary must make arrangements with the church for this before leaving.

I encountered a similar situation while planting a church in rural Cambodia. There was an instance when church leaders told us that there was no money for transport to evangelize the village. We informed them that transport should be paid for from the offerings given to the church. If there were no funds, we might have

to cover the expenses by ourselves. We had to relearn together from the Bible that evangelism is about sharing the love of Christ. However, during our conversations, we discovered that the previous missionaries had occasionally given money to the ministry as a pure act of love and good intentions. We learned that it was only a few dollars, but it hindered local self-sufficiency and the act of relying solely on God. This instance humbly reminded us that even acts of love by missionaries can hinder the independence of the local church.

Another example is when missionaries minister with resources that are not available locally, the local pastor will have a hard time because he does not have access to those resources. Additionally, if all church members are not firmly connected to Christ but simply have affection for the missionaries, the local pastor will soon face challenges. As such, we try to eliminate as many elements as possible that may hinder self-sufficiency when it comes to proclaiming and preaching Christ and building up the church.



As missionaries, we must learn the humility of Christ. From the beginning, we must be intentional in allowing local Christians to shine in ministry for Christ, not our own ministry. Patiently learning the local language and culture is one of the ways to achieve this.

D.E. Hoste, the second General Director of the China Inland Mission, chose to live to be forgotten. Patrick Fung, our current General Director, aptly describes it as *"Hoste lived to be forgotten because he chose to be 'hidden with Christ in God'"*, (Colossians 3:3). <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2023/february-web-only/dixon-hoste-china-inland-mission-prayer.html>

As missionaries, it is not our names and deeds that leave a lasting impact for Christ in the field, but rather the fragrance of Christ that is passed on to people through us. It would bring me the greatest joy and gratitude if I could leave behind even one true disciple of Christ in my missionary life, as commanded by Jesus Christ.



Legacy is never intentional. We, as disciples of Jesus, make every effort to follow our Lord Jesus Christ, in every aspect of life. Our desire is to be like Jesus. However, we all know from experience that it is challenging. It is not solely our effort, but also the mysterious work of the Holy Spirit. Deep within my heart, what I truly desire is to leave behind His disciple, not my own. I acknowledge that I am not a perfect or the best disciple of Jesus. However, through our humble effort in Christ, we can leave a legacy in Christ.

A FAMILY THAT SERVES TOGETHER

— Eng Kiat & Anong

In 1995, Anong and I went to work in Central Thailand in answer to God's call. At that time our eldest daughter, Arunee, was one year old. Our youngest daughter, Sue, was born the following year. Over these past 27 years, we have experienced God's help and faithfulness in many ways. He showed us time and again, that as we obeyed His call, He is faithful and takes care of the concerns close to our hearts.



One concern we had was raising our children to love God and His work. As we obeyed God's call to do church planting in the rural districts of Singburi, we were also deeply convicted that God had called us nurture our children in their relationship with Him.

It is our joy as we recall and share some of the things we have done which have helped us instill faith and spiritual passion in our children:

1) Lead by example. Children learn through observing their parents. So we were very aware that if we want our children to have a strong relationship with God, we also need to have a strong relationship with Him.

2) Spend time talking with them. We spend lots of time talking about our life, our feelings and our values, so that our children know and understand us. In doing so, we noticed that our children opened up and discussed their own feelings and dreams. When Arunee and Sue went to study in Chiang Mai (an eight-hour journey from Singburi), we continued to talk via snail mail, e-mail, WhatsApp and phone calls.

3) Love them unconditionally and sacrificially. We love them with no strings attached. They know there is nothing they can do to lose our love but this does not mean we do not discipline them. It means we do not withhold our love because of something they did or failed to do. Unconditional love also involves sacrifice. We fondly remember catching the overnight bus from the

highway in Singburi just to bring sticky rice and fried chicken for Arunee and Sue during their lunch break at Chiang Mai International School.

4) Help them serve others. Raising our children in a godly way includes helping them serve others. We are called to care for the poor, sick and needy and to bring them the Good News of Jesus Christ. Arunee and Sue enjoyed joining us in ministry – doing visitation work in the villages, giving English tuition to Thai kids or helping with Sunday School teaching.

5) Pray with them. We pray with them about their lives and their concerns. We keep each other updated with our personal and ministry prayer needs through WhatsApp. We encourage them to call out to God in prayer and to be fully dependent on Him.



6) Help them to settle well in their home church. When it was time for Arunee to return to Singapore for her tertiary education, we were in close touch with our home church's youth pastor to ensure she was well taken care of spiritually. Later, her passion for missions was ignited during a mission trip to Chiang Mai with the church youth and young adults team.

7) Allow them to seek the Lord for themselves. The best we can do as parents is to show our children what a good relationship with Christ looks like. They are always assured of our spiritual counsel and fervent prayers at every juncture of their journey. But we have to let them wrestle with God in prayer and respond to God by themselves. Jesus Christ is the Lord of their lives, not us. Sometimes, our children may experience insecurity in their walk with Christ. Our role as parents is to love them even when they are in the midst of these doubts. Talk to them with love to help them work through these doubts.

It has been such a joy to have had Arunee and Sue serving alongside us in the mission field. They have grown up with a sense of joyful duty to the Kingdom of God and its power to transform lives. We are so excited for Arunee as she commences missionary service in Thailand. Great is His faithfulness!



UNTO THE NEW GENERATION

— Arunee, edited by Paul



A passion for Jesus, passing on His love from one generation to the next, this was what moved our newest member and first second generation missionary of OMF Singapore, Arunee. The daughter of Eng Kiat and Anong, she is half-Singaporean & half-Thai. Here is her story:

My exposure to missions started from a young age as a missionary kid. I remember following my parents around in their ministry, having friends in the Thai villages, attending a Thai local school. But I never really thought that I myself would be a missionary. I only realised this much later when I was in my teens.

God used specific instances like mission trips, and helped me to see the spiritual needs in Thailand. It was only after university that I started to take active steps to work towards joining the mission field.

Growing up in Thailand and seeing (my parents) model what missionary life was like, really made an impact on me that it wasn't all glamorous, their simple lifestyle, showed me what it means to serve God in the capacity that you have. God can always use you as you are and I think that played a big role in how I wanted to follow what God had called me to do. So when I told my parents about my interest in missions and missions in Thailand, they weren't too surprised. They were actually very happy and encouraged by that. Thailand has always been a place that touched my heart and I feel I can connect to the Thais quite easily.

One of the things that was part of being a missionary kid was having to think about a different education option, which meant that I had to stay in the dorm away from where my parents were serving. I was six years old when I first went to the dorm. So being separated from my parents at such a young age was a big struggle. I didn't really know how to process the emotions that came with that until much later. The constant goodbyes and having to only see my parents three to four times a year for all of my childhood was something that our family still feels is painful.



It was only until I was in Singapore Bible College, where we, as part of the programme, had to go through counselling. That brought me to grieve the many losses that I had as a child. It was a very long process, but God's grace pulled us through. He always brought people around us who would care for us and journey with us. The many other missionary kids that I met at the dorm really helped because they were also going through the same thing. Until today, I'm still very connected with them. So I'm really grateful for the friendships that God has given to me, despite not being with my parents, even as I was growing up.

As I head back out to the field, I really am looking forward to just building relationships with the Thais to help them see that they can find true hope and love in Christ. Just being with them speaking in Thai, eating Thai food, and getting to journey with them, especially those from broken homes, so that they can see where to find everlasting hope and love.

My prayer is to daily commune with God because it's easy to let ministry and doing God's work get in the way of your own personal relationship with God. Pray for me as I start my long-term ministry in the Ang Thong Province in Central Thailand.



SERVING LONG, SERVING WELL

— Jimmy, Accounts & Admin Executive



Jimmy, at 70 years old this year, is one of our longest-serving staffs at OMF Singapore, serving since 2001. With God at the foremost and centre of his life, Jimmy committed to serve the Lord as long as he is able to. Herein, he shares his reflections to the future workers of the Lord:

Before I joined OMF, I was serving full-time in my previous church. I did quite a few things but at one season of serving in church, missions was one thing that stood out and excited me. As I sought the Lord, I felt led to serve Him in missions.

During that time, I had been on mission trips to the Philippines, Thailand, and even Kazakhstan. At first, I thought I wanted to go as a full-time missionary, so when OMF had an opening, I applied to them. But somehow along the process, the Lord led me through a different route, serving in a support role rather than a missionary in the field. I obeyed, and I've since stayed on from early February 2001 until now.

While each role has its challenges, I thank the Lord that by His grace, and the training I have in accounting, He gave me His strength, the enjoyment and determination to go on doing all that I need to do. In the course of work, anything can happen personally or interpersonally such as discouragement or a loss of focus. Before I came into full-time work, I always asked the Lord for a

Scripture that affirms the calling, and He gave me one verse in 1 Corinthians 15:58, "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain." Thus, this verse has been my anchor throughout my time serving in church and even now, serving in OMF Singapore, so that when I face such things, I go back to the Word and pray: God, You called me here. Give me this assurance that as I serve You, my labour in You is fruitful. This is how I carry on faithfully as He leads me step by step, in the fullness of His grace.

As the Accounts & Admin Executive in OMF all these years, one thing I realised was that not all missionaries are finance-savvy. They are committed to serve the communities in their field of work so, many of them may not know how finances work. Even if they know something about it, it is not entirely clear to them, and that is where my colleague and I come in to guide and help them, manage and take care of the details so that they can focus on their ministerial work. And that is a joy to have in serving.

So whether you serve in church or in a missions organisation, know that it is a calling. It is not just any job, but a ministry, and ministry has people from different backgrounds. You will face circumstances and situations that are beyond your control. Sometimes, people matters and conflicts will arise, simply because we are dealing with people. That is why you need God's Word to strengthen, to encourage you, to know the purpose for your calling and work to be done, and to see God's hand in the moment and in your life. I encourage you to do the same as you consider serving Him.



As paintbrushes bring colour to the canvas, one would notice the many artworks that Ling Zi, our Serve Asia Coordinator for OMF Singapore office does for events, calendars, a planner and bags over the years. To paint God's creation is one way she speaks the Gospel to the community, especially in one exposure trip to Taiwan. Candidly, she shares her experience with us:

ART THAT SPEAKS THE GOSPEL

— Ling Zi, edited by Paul



Art has a place in missions. It is my prayer to give God the glory using my art form in watercolour, portraits, calligraphy and embroidery and to display His overwhelming love, comfort, joy and healing to others. Before my trip to Taiwan, I wasn't too sure how to go about it, but during my trip, I got to experience and envision what it is like to pursue cross cultural ministry with OMF on the field as a missional artist. This trip however, wasn't necessarily using art as a way to proclaim the Gospel; it's more of us using art as a way, a connection or a bridge to build relationships with the local people and open up new ways for conversation about life and art.

This trip showed me how to use art as a way to witness for Christ, to provide us the creative access to do outreach with people in the communities. In seeing how art can help us naturally enter into the dialogue within the local culture, it

allows our Gospel to be contextualised, seen and heard in a new way. It is also an opportunity for short-term workers like us to partner and support our locally-based long-term missionaries. By using art as an approach to do missions, it opens up new doors for our missionaries to reach out to the people in the communities.

The personal highlight for me was the Gospel outreach in the communities through 'live' painting. It was an amazing experience for me to paint portraits of the local Taiwanese people at the night markets and just seeing the huge smiles on their faces when they received back their artwork. It was super rewarding. It's something I've never done before, out of my comfort zone doing this 'live' portrait. But it was something very meaningful because I got to see people as an image of God; we are all made beautifully and wonderfully in His eyes.

So to me, it's more than just a painting, it's really about telling people's stories through art. Painting for them, capturing people's expressions like their personality, even the colours of the clothes they're wearing or the posture, recording every little detail. So I hope to capture as much as I can, putting in much care and attention in how I paint them. I truly see that as an honour to paint and present it in a way that glorifies God.

This trip to Taiwan serves as a reinforcement and inspiration for me to keep doing the things that I love. I realised that God is the very source of creativity and what a privilege it is to be given the opportunity to co-create with Him. This intersection between the arts and missions is something I hope to continue exploring.

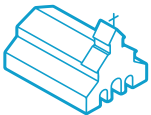
I just want to encourage all of you who are creatives that God has a plan for you. I hope you know that we are absolutely essential in doing in what He is doing around the world, the fact that He uses us to bring forth His beauty and to share the Gospel in creative ways! So I pray that you will continue to move along with God and have the courage to pursue the dreams and desires He has placed on your hearts.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MISSIONS

With holiday makers kicking travel plans into high gear, so are the vast opportunities now to go overseas on missions, and what more to make a difference across communities of East Asia's peoples! OMF Singapore has plenty of opportunities for you in various East Asian countries such as Taiwan, Thailand, Japan, and the Philippines, and various vocations to use your skills to empower and encourage others! Check out some of these opportunities here:



Art & Mission – Thailand: A great opportunity to use a short or medium-term art project to engage with local people and spend time cross-cultural workers. Living and working among the local community will help you better understand them and their needs.



Church Planting – Mekong Region, Philippines, Taiwan, Japan: More people are needed to join existing church planting teams, to help start new teams, or to assist local churches. The greatest need is for more workers who are willing to befriend and love locals and serve their spiritual and physical needs.



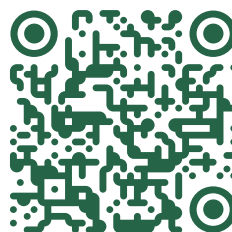
Supporting Third Culture Kids (TCKs) – Thailand, Japan: TCKs are the children of our cross-cultural workers and our vision for them is that they will thrive, understand and value their TCK experience, grow in faith and be all that God wants them to be. Be part of the support team that helps us to fulfil that vision!



Discipleship – Vietnam, Japan, South East Asia, Diaspora Communities: God has given OMF the incredible privilege of being able to touch East Asian peoples in many strategic places in the world. We seek to see East Asians come to Christ, be discipled in Christ and trained to reach out to others in making disciples of Christ.



Orientation Course (OC) KidZone Coordinator – Singapore: The KidZone Coordinator looks after the well-being of the KidZone workers' team and the children of families who are participating in the OC in Singapore.



For more information on these opportunities, email us at sg.serveasia@omfmail.com, or scan the QR Code to find out more opportunities!

If you have any inquiries or would like more information, get in touch with us at **6510 3130** or sno@omfmail.com and we will contact you shortly!