

# JOURNEY WITH OUR SUPER BRO. - THE CHUANGS IN TAIWAN



Henry, Wendy, Timothy & Theodore

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## 五里霧中(ごりむちゅう /go-ri-mu-chu-u)

If you can read Chinese, you may already have guessed what this Japanese idiom probably means. The direct translation means 5 miles in the fog. We don't know how the Japanese measured 5 miles in ancient times, but it definitely has to be a considerable area. The road ahead and the road behind are clouded with fog, and these days, we often feel we are in a fog. This expression may also describe you during the pandemic. As for us, besides helping our colleagues in Taiwan to start a church plant, we often find ourselves asking God "What other plans do you have for us?" Has God changed our call to do cross-culture ministries? What about our burden to the Japanese? Does God want us to go back to Japan in the foreseeable future? How much of the Japanese language would we still remember by then? Many questions are left unanswered and that give us a feeling like we are in a fog. However, being in the "fog" does not mean standing still, but rather holding onto God's hands tighter, understanding what He wants us to do in Taiwan, and faithfully fulfilling His mission.

Before we came to Chiayi, we knew that God had prepared many things for us: a boarding school for the children, a missionary couple with whom we shared many ministry aspirations, and a decent place to stay in the rural town. (There is also a Christian hospital!) After we came to Chiayi, we discovered that the Lord had prepared for us more abundantly than we thought. He not only prepared everything mentioned above but also supplied three churches in New Taipei City to work with us. The Chiayi Christian Hospital is not only close to us (8 minutes driving distance), but it also gives missionaries various discounts. On top of a clean, decent accommodation, God also touched the relatives and friends around us to provide pots, pans, a dining table and other household items. God has paved the way for us to live and do ministries in Taiwan during this COVID era.

Before coming, we only knew that there was Alishan and the infamous Minxiong haunted house in Chiayi. Our church plant is not on the beautiful Alishan, but in Minxiong, where ghosts and idols worshipping are practiced. This world is a battlefield for spiritual warfare. In the early days of the church, Apostle Paul warned Christians that we must prepare to fight spiritual warfare. The Scripture says, "Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." (Ephesians 6:11-12; NIV)



Map of Taiwan, Chiayi

Since Taiwan has not been affected too much by the pandemic, all regular activities, including church gatherings, continue as usual. For this reason, we jumped into work immediately after the required quarantine. Wendy and I began to work on the church plant with Rev. and Mrs. Lu. Sometimes there are only the two missionary families in the Sunday worships, and sometimes one or two friends would join. Neighbors who worship ancestors and ghosts do not allow their children to enter the church. However, Buddhists are more friendly to us because they feel that Christians positively influence their "dark" community.

This ghost-worshipping practice greatly impacts us. When we were in Japan, we saw Japanese people "fear" ghosts, and here in Taiwan, we see people "respect and honor" ghosts. A 20 something-year-old owner of a motorcycle shop said to me, "You must worship (ghost)! Everyone worships. After several generations of doing it, caring and paying respect for them is a must." Not only do people worship the ghosts, but the local government even used public money to rebuild a historic ghost temple.

Because of the prevalence of ghost worship, we often see people behaving peculiarly comparing to ordinary folks from other parts of the island. Sometimes even local Christians are possessed by ghosts. Recently, Wendy and Mrs. Lu have exorcised a sister. This sister experienced some terrible things in her childhood, so she thought she needed to invite all kinds of "gods" to live in her. After she was baptized, the churches she attended had no relevant teachings in this aspect. Hence, she continued to worship and ask for blessings from the local temples. Recently, the evil spirits in her manifested in our house when we had a spiritual conversation. It openly challenged us and God's authority. The battle is fought, but the war is not over. We are continuing to work with her for a complete deliverance by God.



*Christmas play practice*



*Christmas sharing @ a local elementary school.*

Yes, this area is very unfriendly to Christianity. Moreover, many of the local Christians have very weak understandings of the Word. We have been actively sharing the gospel in the community. For example, we use parent-child English classes to reach parents and children. We hope that through Bible stories and songs, God's love and glory can be revealed to them. In our English conversation class, we also use Bible stories as teaching materials. Our hope is that those who come will not only learn English but also understand God's love for them. In addition to these regular ministries, we also use various seasonal festivals/ breaks to host gatherings and activities. Events such as the

barbecue during the Mid-Autumn Festival, caroling and school performance during Christmas, and children camp during the winter vacation, hoping that the name of Jesus will be lifted in this town.

Although we feel we are in this endless fog and cannot see the road ahead. We believe that we must cling to God and follow Him step by step, and He will certainly lead

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us out of the fog. "The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." (Deuteronomy 31:8; NIV) God's promise has been clearly written in his own words. "Immanuel" has been given to all the disciples who believe in Him and call Him Lord. What we need is to have a stronger faith in Him.

Please continue to remember our family in prayer. Timothy and Theodore are still in their transitions, being away from home and studying in Taichung by themselves. It is our hope and prayer that our kids will continue to experience God's faithfulness and eventually, accept Jesus as their life-long friend and Lord. For those of you who know about his accident, Wendy and I want to thank you for praying for Timothy's surgery and the subsequent rehabilitation. He recovered well and has returned to the basketball court last week.

Finally, let our family also use this opportunity to wish you and your family a blessed 2021. May the Lord continue to provide you with health, peace, and joy. May you continue to sense God's presence anytime, anywhere!



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**"I have made you<sup>1</sup> a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth." Act 13:47**