

JOURNEY WITH OUR SUPER BRO.

- THE CHUANGS IN CANADA - OCTOBER 2024



渋谷スクランブル交差点(Shibuya-sukuranburu-kousaten)

The world-famous “Shibuya Scramble Crossing” in Tokyo is one of the busiest and most complicated pedestrian crossings in the world. During rush hour, 3,000 people cross during each green light! If you don’t know your way around or you neglect to pay close attention, this intersection can magically “swallow” you, forcing you to go round and round in circles, and then spit you out even further away from your destination. A few years ago, I (Henry) lost my way here for more than 10 minutes. I walked back and forth at least three times, but I still couldn’t figure out how to get to where I wanted. Eventually, I ended up going back to my starting point to try to find my way again.

That intersection comes to mind when I think of where we are as a family right now. In the spring of 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic just started to break out, the Japanese government locked down its borders, making it impossible for us to return for our second term of mission service there. Since we have both Canadian and Taiwan passports, we requested that our mission, the Christian & Missionary Alliance, redeploy us to Taiwan. The Lord opened that door, and we were “rerouted” to Taiwan temporarily. In the blink of an eye, four years has flown by. Praise God that during that time, He allowed our team to establish the C&MA Chiayi Church located at the foot of Alishan Mountain in Taiwan.



Many people have heard us talk about the principle of efficiency in ministry—because time waits for no one and lives are perishing every minute. We had always believed that in ministry, efficiency is the name of the game. Sending missionaries out requires significant resources. If we take our time and do things slowly, aren't we wasting those resources and letting God and our financial and prayer supporters down? That is how I used to think. But now, I was confronted with the question: Is efficiency really God's first and foremost concern?

To confront our self-centered and worldly way of thinking, God has given us a period of waiting recently. In early June, after Theodore graduated from high school, I took him back to Canada first to settle him for college. Wendy stayed in Taiwan with Timothy to wrap up the last bit of ministry and pack up the house. In July, our whole family was finally able to gather under the same roof again. Returning to Canada and seeing everything that was familiar to us again—our street, house, rooms, furniture—it felt so familiar yet so strange. Apart from our children having grown into adults, and Wendy and I having grown older and fatter, we felt like we had returned to our starting point. Everything had come full circle.



**On our way back to Toronto
Henna Hotel near Haneda Airport**

Added to this was another development that we were not hoping for. Upon returning to Canada, the C&MA leadership had formally informed us that they had no plans to send us back to Japan after our current tenure ends. All along, we had assumed that we would be returning to Japan after finishing our Taiwan chapter and had been preparing ourselves mentally for that. Yet now, just like the time I got lost at the Shibuya Crossing, I feel like we've made a big detour and have come right back to our starting point, with no clear path ahead. How should we proceed? We need direction, Lord!

In July, I decided to take a three-day retreat at Father Henri Nouwen's ministry center near Toronto—to draw closer to God and to listen to His voice. It was a special opportunity for me to spend time reading the Scriptures and praying, as well as to read Father Nouwen's books and listen to his sermons. During my quiet retreat before God, the Holy Spirit gently reminded me of God's character and calling.

He reminded me that what He needs from me is not my work, my time, or even my efficiency. He wants my whole person and a relationship with me! He wants me to trust Him so much that I would be okay with waiting upon His timing. Oh, this is such a challenge for a Type A person like me! But He's teaching me that quietness must be learned not by finding my own way but by giving Him space and time in my life, relying on His guidance, and allowing His strength to be manifested in me. After all, my strength comes from God, and my calling and mission also come from God. Being sensitive to the Holy Spirit's voice and work requires intentional effort to slow down from my own ways. God knows our weaknesses and we don't need to hide them. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11:30, "If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness."



Since then, my mindset has started to change. Because of the change in me, Wendy's heart has also calmed down. Now, instead of standing at the intersection actively trying to figure out the road ahead in our own strength, together we have turned to God to wait upon Him. Isaiah 55:8-9 says: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.'" Our prayer to God now is: "May You be glorified through us. May our decisions be based on Your plans. If You have changed our calling to serve overseas, please reveal it us clearly; if not, please give us the courage to persevere in that direction. Help us to please You and not man. There are many voices in this world, but we only want to hear Your voice, Lord! Please humble us and give us a teachable heart."

Please pray for us. There is still some time before we are officially released by C&MA as International Workers. In the coming months, we will be sharing with the churches that have faithfully supported us, thanking brothers and sisters for journeying along the way with us all these years. Pray that through our sharing, the Holy Spirit will raise up more workers to complete the Great Commission. At the same time, we will continue to seek God's will with the elders and deacons of our home church and our spiritual mentors, asking God to guide our path forward.

Finally, please pray for our family, especially pray for our two boys. Please pray for God to keep them healthy in body, mind, and spirit. Pray that He will guard and guide their hearts so that we as a family can be united and supportive of each other in whatever direction that the Lord has for us.

May the Lord grant us peace that surpasses all understanding as we seek Him together!