

## TAIWAN'S WORKING CLASS

Despite its modern, high-tech cities and a veneer of Western influence, Taiwan is a deeply traditional society. Its people are steeped in idol worship, live in fear of the spirit world and are highly superstitious. The gospel has made little impact in their world. This is particularly true of the working-class majority of whom less than 0.5 percent know Jesus Christ as Lord.

This guide will introduce you to the stories of working-class Taiwanese people, their struggles and fears. It will help you to know how to pray for them so that the light of the gospel will break through into the darkness of their lives.

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# 30 STORIES FROM TAIWAN'S WORKING CLASS

## A PRAYER GUIDE



## TAIWAN PROFILE

A mountainous island, highly industrialized and densely populated.

**POPULATION:** Over 23 million, of which about 16 million are considered “working class.”

**RELIGION:** 70% Chinese religions (Buddhism/Taoism/Confucianism); 25% non-religious; 2% Evangelical Christians

**LANGUAGE:** Mandarin is used in education; however, two thirds speak Taiwanese. Ten percent speak Hakka and two percent speak tribal languages.

**HISTORY:** From 1895-1945 Taiwan was under Japanese control. Within a few years of the end of World War II, when Taiwan was returned to Chinese rule, Chiang Kai Shek, president of the Mainland Chinese Republic, was forced to flee from the communists, and so he arrived in Taiwan. Taiwan became the “Republic of China” and the “Nationalists” (Kuomintang-KMT) always hoped to reconquer the whole of China. Until the 1990s Taiwan was virtually a one-party state governed by those who came with Chiang Kai Shek. In recent years Taiwan has seen greater political freedom with two dominant parties. China continues to insist that Taiwan is part of China but many Taiwanese desire independence.

**CHURCH:** The Presbyterian Church first came to Taiwan over 140 years ago. It is the largest denomination and is Taiwanese speaking. Many other churches and denominations were started in the 1950s, largely among those who came from China with Chiang Kai Shek. These churches are predominantly Mandarin speaking. Good church growth in the 1950s was followed by stagnation. Although church growth improved in the 1990s, Buddhists also increased in numbers. The Tsz Chi Buddhist organization is becoming internationally influential and uses many Christian outreach methods. The church needs maturity in order to stand against materialism, gambling, family breakdown and entrenched ancestor worship. Lay people need to become more active in teaching and evangelism as there is a lack of good pastors. Sadly the church is often perceived to be intellectual and irrelevant. Taiwan is the only Chinese-majority society where spiritual breakthrough is still awaited.

**WORKING CLASS:** The working class is a term used for those with a traditional Taiwanese worldview. They predominantly speak Taiwanese and are much more involved in idolatry, fortune telling and ancestor worship. Although some have a good education, most choose not to read because reading is associated with study, not pleasure. The working class makes up two thirds of the population and includes factory workers, taxi drivers, restaurant and shop workers and small business owners. Overall, less than 0.5 percent of them are Christians, a percentage which is even lower in rural areas.

**MISSIONARIES:** There is approximately one missionary for every 20,000 people in Taiwan. However, as missionaries are often highly educated, they are distanced from working-class people and have to adjust significantly to communicate effectively with them.

## PRAYING WITH A MAP

A map can be a wonderful prayer tool. Each of the cities represents communities of working class people, the majority of whom don't know Jesus.

**Pray for the cities by name. Ask God that whole families and communities will come to hear the gospel and become Christians.**

**Pray that churches will be established.**

**Pray that the current churches will increasingly know how to communicate the gospel simply to those around them.**



## DEAD WOMEN WALKING

BY JENNIFER SU

**A captivating read that takes you on a harrowing journey through the lives of three Taiwanese working-class women entangled in the world of drugs, violence and spirit worship. Mei is one of the three...**

What frightened Mei most was that when her husband, Han, was angry, he exercised absolutely no restraint. With one hand, he would hold her hands behind her back. With the other, he would pound her, punching ruthlessly. Sometimes he beat her for half an hour or more, until he became too tired to lift a fist.

One day Han took Mei to a kind of pub called a jiu-jia.

“Stay and work here today, I'll come back later and get you,” he told her. Then he left.

Mei worked as usual, serving drinks, but one customer wanted more from her. Peeved by the man's insolence, Mei went straight to her manager. But the manager was unrelenting.

“You've already been left here, so you must do it!” he ordered.

Mei was stunned. She refused to believe what the manager was implying. Fuming, she went to the phone and called her husband. But the words coming through the receiver were so unbelievable, so odious, that her mouth froze, unable to respond.

“Just say there, be good and do what they tell you to do,” said the man on the other end of the line. The man who, for a hefty sum, had sold his own wife into prostitution.

**Her life was hopeless and there seemed no way out. Surely even God could not save her!**

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**V**isitors to Taiwan are immediately impressed by its modern energy. Numerous churches are visible. Why then is there a continued need for missionaries and prayer?

Outward appearances can be deceiving. Yes, the Mandarin speaking minority (15%) has many Christians and a great wealth of resources, but the reality is that the majority are working class who are largely un-reached by the gospel. Church growth within this group is slow with only 0.5% Christian. They are separated from their neighbors and colleagues by language, education, culture, prejudices and more. Many working class, especially men, feel uncomfortable and inferior in traditional church situations, making outreach even harder.

We hope this guide will help you grow to love and understand the working class so that you can pray more effectively.

The prayer points are only a starting point. Feel free to use your imagination to place yourself in the situation and pray as the Holy Spirit leads you.

God delights in answering prayer. We believe that God will work through your prayers to save these hurting and neglected people.

We long to see a church that is able to adapt and reach all the peoples of Taiwan. A church that looks past people's outward habits to their empty hearts and introduces them to Jesus who is the answer for all their pain and longings.

We pray that one day many of these working class people will be part of the multitude around God's throne saying, "Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!" (Revelation 7:12).

To protect people's identity we have not used their real names or pictures.

More information can be obtained by contacting [taiwaninfo@omf.net](mailto:taiwaninfo@omf.net)



# 1

## AN UNFINISHED STORY

Pray that churches will realize that their outward appearances scare off a good proportion of the population, especially working-class men.

Pray for working-class men that they will have the opportunity to hear the gospel in an accepting environment and one they feel comfortable in.

Pray that Christians will learn to communicate and love those who are different to them.

Pray for those attracted by Jesus but full of fear that their old gods will take revenge. May they discover that Jesus is stronger than any evil powers.



Junior Lee is a construction site worker with many typical working class habits: smoking, chewing betel nut (a mild narcotic that stains the mouth red) and gambling. His Indonesian wife and family have often tried to drag him along to church.

Junior Lee's father became a Christian and died soon after. During the funeral preparations Junior Lee shared some of his thoughts.

"I feel that the Christians at church look down at me. They are dressed up, speak so nicely and avoid me while I am smoking and chewing betel nut. People like me should go to the temple because I can be myself there."

He admitted, "I am very curious why my father changed so much after he trusted Jesus. My father read his Bible every day and so I've started too."

Junior Lee also confessed that although believing in Jesus is good he felt unable to commit himself to Christ. "I tried to ask the god my family has been worshipping for years to leave, but it refused. I dare not stop worshipping it because I am afraid it will harm my family."

## TOO BUSY FOR CHURCH

# 2



**M**rs. Fan worked 12 hours a day, 7 days a week developing photos. How could she ever hear the gospel if she was too busy and tired to come to any church activity?

Mrs. Fan needed someone to GO to her and not just to be invited to COME and hear.

Sharing with Mrs. Fan was a challenge. Sometimes there'd be 10 interruptions in 10 minutes. Chronological Bible storying (CBS), which tells the salvation story from Creation to Jesus, is flexible enough to cope with interruptions. Mrs. Fan loved the stories and would request another whenever she saw her friend. Gone were the days when a gospel conversation had to be initiated.

Storying can be "tailor-made" for every person and aims to help them understand their world and how they can relate to God. The Old Testament foundation was thoroughly laid so that when the story reached Jesus she could recognize Jesus as the promised Savior and see why he had to die.

Mrs. Fan feared her family would reject her if she accepted Jesus but she gladly accepted a Bible.

Her friend moved away. Who else will go and share with her?

Praise God for gospel methods flexible enough to cope with the working schedules of Taiwanese people.

Pray that those who have heard some of the gospel or received literature will be prompted by God to re-think and then be guided to Christians who can share further.

Pray that Taiwanese Christians will realize that many are excluded from opportunities to hear the gospel and that they will devise creative ways to go out and share.

# 3

## FRIENDSHIP EVANGELISM

Praise God that listeners enjoy chronological stories. The stories seem to be an effective way to share with working class people who don't like the thought of "Bible study."

Pray that the gospel will spread naturally along relationship and occupational lines.

Pray for the many who hear some of the gospel and then reject it. People are often spiritually open intermittently for short periods of time.

Pray for working class families to "count the cost" and realize that it is worth it!



**"H**ow can heaven be so big? Isn't it so crowded that people are begging to return to earth and be reincarnated?"

A missionary couple met a mechanic named Ching when their car got a flat tire.

A friendship developed and soon the two families were chatting together weekly. On the weekend they might go fishing or have a barbeque. So many gospel opportunities come from these kind of ordinary and time-consuming friendships.

When the Ching family heard that the missionaries used Bible stories (CBS)\* to teach, they immediately requested a story. The stories relevance to their lives caught their interest. It was easy to ask questions and discuss life issues.

Every time they met, the Chings would ask "Are you ready to tell us the next story?"

Mr. Ching's sister asked if she could hear the stories, too, so the missionary suggested that Mrs. Ching tell her the stories she had missed. Because they are stories, Mrs. Ching can do it. She doesn't need any special training or theology classes.

The Chings brought many people along to hear the stories and then unexpectedly stopped being interested themselves.

Did they suddenly "count the cost" and decide it wasn't for them?

\*See day 2 for more information on CBS

## SCARED OF GHOSTS?

# 4



One Wednesday, during the kids' club, the teacher asked, "Are you afraid of ghosts or spirits?"

Despite needing to look cool in front of classmates, many nodded.

"What do you do to prevent these spirits bothering you?"

One held out her wrist and said, "I wear this amulet."

Another said, "A young boy's urine has protective power!" Surprisingly this turned out to be a real superstition and not just an attempt to make the others laugh.

The Taiwanese live with many fears. They live with an awareness of spirits in every dark place and little shrine, which can harm them and give bad dreams.

The teacher launched into a story of Jesus the Light of the World. He could shine his bright light into the scary places in their lives.

Blank, uncomprehending faces stared back at the teacher. There was no recognition that Jesus is stronger than the spirits. To these children this truth was just a foreign concept.

People's hearts need to be freed by Jesus. Until then they will continue to believe that bits of metal on string or little boys' urine keep the spirits away.

Praise God that Jesus is far more powerful than Satan and his servants.

Pray that this truth will be proclaimed clearly in a way that people can understand.

Pray that Christians will depend on Jesus and not be bound by fears and superstition. May their neighbors see that Jesus can be trusted.

# 5

## SHAKING THE GODS

Praise God that he can make people doubt their idols and then give them opportunities to hear the gospel.

Pray that more people will doubt and test the gods. That they will come to realize that their gods, "can't walk, talk or listen." (Isaiah 44:6-20; 46:6-7)

Pray that Christians will be equipped to reach out to others.



Mary grew up in a typical Taiwanese working class family. The "god shelf," containing an idol and the ancestor records, dominated her living room. Every day she would watch her mother make offerings to the idol. Mary wondered if the god her parents worshipped was real. One day while her parents were out of the house Mary plucked up the courage to approach the idol and give it a poke. She was surprised to find that there were no dire consequences during the day.

A few days later, still a little nervous, she picked up the idol and gave it a good shake. Again nothing bad happened as a result. From that time on, though she joined in with the worship out of obedience to her parents, Mary felt sure that the god this idol represented was not real. Years later as a teenager, a neighbor whose living room had no idol shelf, told her about a God who is real and who answers prayer.

Today Mary is married to a Methodist minister and she and her husband regularly tell people about the true God who needs no idol.

## UNUSUAL ADVICE

## 6



**W**hen she was a young student, Pei-San (“Pay-Sarn”) felt that her life was empty. In her desperation she went to a fortune teller. She had to queue for a long time, as the man was famous and had a reputation for being very accurate. Surprisingly he told Pei-San to read the Bible. She did, and became a Christian.

Taiwanese people consult fortune tellers in order to know the future, avoid bad luck, or to work out why life is going wrong. Fortune tellers use many tools including numerical charts or even “reading” the cracks in a heated turtle shell. Fortune tellers can be seen and consulted almost anywhere, in markets, temples and near railway stations. Those who visit fortune tellers are bound further into fear and bondage to Satan.

Another lady consulted a fortune teller every evening to find out where best to place her bed to ensure a good nights sleep. One evening the Feng Shwei expert (specializing in positioning things to gain good luck) told her that if she wanted a meaningful life, she should believe in Jesus. He also cautioned her that Jesus demands wholehearted commitment. She took the “risk” and is now a Christian.

*Praise God that he is so powerful and creative in his methods that he can even work through the enemy’s servants to win people to himself!*

*Pray that influential fortune-tellers will become Christians and share their testimonies.*

*Pray that people will be released from their dependence on Satan’s powers and be content to be in the loving hands of the God who knows and controls the future.*

*Pray that new Christians will obey God’s word and not consult fortune tellers. May their transformed lives be a testimony to other people.*

# 7

## ALL RELIGIONS ARE THE SAME

*Praise God that he is radically different to false gods and gives meaning to life.*

*Praise God he can even use non-Christians to spread the gospel!*

*Pray that businessmen will become Christians and then trust God to protect them and their businesses.*

*Pray that Christian businesses will have a widespread testimony because they don't continue idol worship and that this will make people doubt the efficacy of the idol worship.*

A-Diong\*\* owns a video store. He is more educated than normal working-class guys and loves a good discussion about life and religion. Recently he had an opportunity to hear the gospel through Chronological Bible stories\*. A-Diong is very interested because he has noticed that Christians have a greater purpose in life. He is searching for something more meaningful than just making money.



As the stories have progressed so has A-Diong's understanding of God. Recently, when A-Diong was visiting a friend they got into a conversation about religion. The friend said, "all religions are the same," expressing what is probably the most common response here.

A-Diong immediately jumped in and said, "No, they aren't. A friend has been telling me stories about the Creator God, and it is not the same."

A-Diong is not yet a Christian. One big barrier for him is that he has been fairly prosperous so that he feels a certain loyalty to the gods that he believes have made him that way. Business people make offerings to their god twice a month and fear they will be cursed with bad luck if they do not.

\* See stories 2 & 3

\*\* Placing the "A" in front of a Taiwanese name is a relaxed, friendly usage similar to a nickname. "A" pronounced as in "Ah".

## TOO DIRTY TO GO TO CHURCH

# 8



**A**-Beng has the reputation of being a good guy. Perhaps this is because he and his wife take care of a severely disabled little girl whose mother died in childbirth.

They care for this child as if she were their own.

One day, the little girl was hospitalized. The doctor gave them no hope that her life could be saved. In desperation they first tried traditional worship of the spirits but to no avail. They then told a Christian friend of theirs who went to the hospital and prayed over the little girl. She miraculously recovered.

In response A-Beng and his wife decided to go to church. His wife continued to go, but A-Beng soon dropped out, "I'm too dirty to go to church. I smoke, chew betel nut and use foul language. Those people at the church are high class. I'm just a food stall worker with little education."

However, he is extremely interested in Christianity and had great talks with some Christians who went to his food stall and shared Bible stories\* with him.

\* See stories 2 & 3

Praise God that he is the God who loves the "dirty" and outcast.

Pray that churches will have ministries to reach out to those who feel uncomfortable in traditional services.

Pray that non-Christians will increasingly see the church as relevant. That the church will have a high reputation as a place where people can find answers, love and acceptance.

Pray that Christians will show the working class unconditional love and start to change non-Christians perceptions of the church as a place where they won't fit in.

# 9

## JESUS IS ALIVE!

*Praise God that tea-nights are proving successful in reaching working class men for Christ.*

*Pray for more people to concentrate on winning men to Christ. Without this specific focus, mostly women and children become Christians. When men become Christians usually their families follow!*

*Pray that working class men will come to know Jesus and share him with other men.*

**A**-Dek (“Ah-Deck”) is married with two children. He has casual work operating heavy machinery at a construction site. A-Dek uses foul language, smokes heavily and chews betel nut.



Although some working-class men might be quite open to the gospel it is not easy to gather men like this together to hear about Jesus or be discipled. Even suggesting a Bible study scares most men away. They feel uncomfortable in a traditional church or a female dominated setting.

One church-planting team is experimenting with a men’s “tea-night” (tea drinking is considered “manly” in Taiwan). Those who come know that there will be discussions about the Bible, indeed, that’s why they come, but the environment is familiar and non-threatening. While drinking tea, eating snacks, and smoking, they listen to a Bible story or even open up the Bible and discuss it.

A-Dek enthusiastically attended tea-nights and eventually it was obvious that he had made a decision to follow Jesus. During a follow-up conversation about Jesus’ death, A-Dek responded “Stop talking about the cross! Jesus is alive! He was only dead three days. He’s alive now, let’s talk about that!”

## NOBODY HOME

# 10



**D**avid is 11. He lives in a tiny two-bedroom flat, together with his father and two older brothers. His mother abandoned the family years ago.

When David gets home from school at around 5pm, there is nobody at home; nobody who helps him with his homework; nobody who listens to him; nobody who asks

how his day was; nobody to cook a meal for him.

Everyday when he gets home he passes a small temple that is on the ground floor of his building. He always stops to pray to the wooden gods asking for protection because he is afraid to walk up the dark staircases to the fifth floor. Sometimes he has nightmares and dreams of terrifying ghosts.

David has been visiting a Christian lady for more than two years and has heard a lot about Jesus. He is not a Christian yet, but he prays to Jesus every morning and evening and knows that Jesus is stronger than the ghosts that chase him in his dreams.

But he is so much longing for help that he also continues to pray to the wooden gods sitting silent on their shelves.

*Praise God that he is stronger than evil spirits.*

*Pray for Taiwanese people to learn that Jesus alone casts out fear and can satisfy us completely. So many try to add Jesus to their list of gods.*

*Pray that Taiwanese young people will experience Jesus' love. So often they are neglected because their parents work such long hours or they come from broken families.*

# 11

## MAIL-ORDER BRIDE

*Praise God that he is sending many people from restricted access nations (Vietnam, Indonesia and China) to hear the gospel in Taiwan.*

*Praise God for the love and concern of churches for these women who are under such stress adjusting to Taiwanese culture.*

*Pray for working-class men and their overseas brides to come to Christ as a result of the love of Christians.*

*Pray for Christian literature to be more available to these overseas brides in their own languages.*



**A** Mr. Gao (“ao” is like the sound of pain, “ow”) owns a small ground floor factory. Like an increasing number of Taiwanese working-class men, he found it

difficult to get married. Many Taiwanese women are better educated than in the past and are choosing their career over marriage. Consequently, more and more working-class men are marrying overseas brides. Currently in Taiwan there are over 80,000 Vietnamese brides.

Five years ago, Mr. Gao married a Vietnamese. She is more educated than most who come as brides to Taiwan. Although she is a Buddhist, she is becoming close friends with a local Taiwanese Christian. Mr. and Mrs. Gao have been very impressed by the love and care they’ve been shown by Christians.

Most of the overseas brides cannot communicate well in Mandarin or Taiwanese. They value assistance in language and cultural learning. A church near the Gaos in Taichung County is reaching out to these overseas women and through them to their families. This ministry is also beginning to soften the hearts of their working-class husbands.

## THE USELESS BASKET

# 12



**M**r. Wong was from the countryside in southern Taiwan. Big city life led him astray and eventually he ended up sleeping on the streets. One day he heard that “The Spring,” a Christian ministry set up to reach out to street sleepers, gave out free tea.

Coming only for tea, he received more than expected when he met Christians who shared the gospel with him.

Mr. Wong eventually became a Christian but previous habits continued to bind him.

One day he shared a dream he’d had. In the dream he saw a cheap basket in the middle of a country road. A car came along and crushed it. Most would have thrown this basket away but he saw Jesus pick up it up and mend it.

This dream not only gave hope to Mr. Wong, but to others too.

The “mending” has been a slow process. It took ten years after his conversion before he had a stable job and a place to live.

Mr. Wong is still a work in progress. Only Jesus would bother to spend the time to mend and use him again.

*Praise God that he doesn't discard the "broken." He can transform and use even the weakest.*

*Praise God that "The Spring" is now totally under Chinese leadership. Other ministries are now following this initial model.*

*Pray for more outreaches to prostitutes and alcoholics to be set up.*

*Pray for those who work with "street sleepers." They need patience, as there are many frustrations and setbacks. More volunteers are always needed.*

*Pray for those who come to Christ from broken backgrounds. There is usually a lifetime of pain and bad habits to deal with.*

# 13

## LET ME SEE MY CHILDREN

*Praise God that he often uses pain to call people to himself.*

*Praise God that he delights to answer his children's prayers and that he can do the impossible.*

*Pray that God will use new Christians to witness and bring their friends and families to the Lord.*

*Pray that families will become Christians and their marriages will be renewed.*

Taiwanese government surveys estimate that 18-35% of husbands beat their wives. This figure is probably conservative because many wouldn't admit to being abused



for fear of reprisal or loss of "face."

Mei-Lan's ("May Larn") husband often beat her but when he pulled out a knife, she knew she must leave. This was not an easy choice to make. Where would she live and what about her children?

In Taiwan, divorce rates are estimated at 25-30% (>double ten years ago). Until 1996 the law entirely supported the husband and he usually took the children. In current practice, the children are often awarded on the basis of who is most able to financially care for them and so many women still lose out.

Mei-Lan had recently started a job in a restaurant and was grateful that her boss, a Christian, allowed her to live above the business.

Mei-Lan's grief prepared her to accept Jesus and friends soon noticed the change in her attitudes and countenance.

Despite her newfound joy, Mei-Lan's heart still ached for her children. She prayed diligently, trusting God to answer.

Sometime later, her mother-in-law unexpectedly telephoned and permitted her to come every Saturday to see her sons.

## SHAME

# 14



**“**The social worker doesn't know, but my father moved back into the house several weeks ago. Mom told us to lie.”

Sue (17) and Julie's (15) father had sexually abused them.

Julie was worried, “What if others find out about dad?”

As everyone in the family denied the abuse, social services referred the family for Christian counseling. The mother only went twice. Her solution to the problem was to put a lock on the girls' bedroom to prevent more “visits” at night.

It's easy to judge this woman who wants to “save face” and pretend it didn't happen, yet many Taiwanese working-class families lack resources and coping skills to find solutions to such problems. Neither parent had finished elementary school and the father is unemployed. After finding out about the abuse, the pressure on the mother doubled; not only must she worry about money but the children's safety as well. If family members and neighbors find out, the shame would be overwhelming.

Praise God that Christian counseling centers exist and are respected by the government because their “success” rates are higher than government centers.

Pray for abused people to meet Jesus who is the only one who gives true healing.

Pray for more local Christians able to listen and share God's solutions and wisdom.

Pray for Taiwan where social problems such as divorce, sexual abuse, alcoholism and suicide are escalating. For example, suicides have doubled in the past decade and now average 9 a day!

# 15

## ONLY SMILING OUTSIDE

Praise God that there are organizations reaching out to “at-risk” children including Christian orphanages (often the children aren’t orphans, but abandoned or not wanted after a divorce...).

Pray that Christians will love their children and so influence society.

Pray for those who work with “at-risk” children, that they will overflow with Jesus’ love and patience.

Pray that neglected children will experience Jesus’ love before it is too late.



Ricky is 11 years old and does not seem to have any needs. His clothing is new and he’s rather roly-poly and cute, full of talk and backchat.

Appearances can be deceiving. Ricky’s mother has left and he lives with his

grandmother and his unemployed, alcoholic dad.

Ricky is classified by his school to be “at risk”—“at risk” of being a young school dropout, of joining the Triads (gangs), of a life of petty crime or perhaps, even worse.

Ricky may appear normal on superficial acquaintance but he is suffering from neglect. No one cares if he’s done his homework or wants to know even when he’s been good. His teacher has given up on him.

No one knows the hurt in his heart and possibly even Ricky is unaware of it, but he feels it.

The same Ricky who blossoms and smiles when you praise him, is the one whose anger is like a bottle of Coke opened after shaking, messy and explosive.

Ricky just wants to matter to someone.

## IT WON'T HARM ME

# 16



**Y**i-Ping's ("Ee-Ping") classmate showed him some white powder.

"Amphetamine!" Yi-Ping thought, "I'll try it once, it won't harm me." Before long his life was consumed finding money to pay for his habit.

That first time in a detention center was so frightening Yi-Ping swore he'd never touch drugs again. Soon he was back and this time was sent to one of Taiwan's three reformatories where boys stay 18-36 months.

During a Christian program a volunteer's interest was piqued when he overheard Yi-Ping murmur, "prayer is of no use." Yi-Ping knew nothing about Jesus but over time opened up and accepted Christ.

On Parents' Day, Yi-Ping's parents visited from their farm. His father told the Christian volunteer how terrible and useless his son was. Yi-Ping sat head bowed and face burning.

After Yi-Ping's release, his Christian friend tried to link him up with a church. Sadly, the church was unfriendly and no one followed him up. The only ones who seemed to "accept" him were his previous friends, but they were soon leading him astray.

Yi-Ping wrote to his friend: "I'm on the run from the police. I've wasted my parent's love, and your counseling. I deserve to die."

*Praise God that Christians are welcomed into the reformatories and can share the gospel.*

*Pray for the many young people who are enticed into drugs and crime.*

*Pray that parents will come to Christ and learn how to raise their children. Scolding and humiliating children is common.*

*Pray that many young men will meet Jesus and after release find church homes and godly friends.*

*Pray for more volunteers so that all the young people in reformatories can be reached for Jesus.*

# 17

## STUDENTS FOR JESUS

*Praise God that Taiwanese parents are increasingly relaxed about their children's beliefs. Often the fear of opposition is greater than the experience.*

*Pray for Christian students and teachers to be willing to stand up for Jesus at school. That they would also be willing to set up Christian groups at their schools.*

*Pray that Christian fellowships might start in every school in Taiwan. There is progress towards this vision and about one third of high schools now have Christian fellowships.*

*Pray for high-school students to cling to Jesus under the heavy pressures of their study.*



John was struggling with his English homework. His parents owned a roadside drink stand and were too busy and poorly educated to help.

Two English-speaking

customers stopped to buy pearl-tea. They not only helped with the homework but also invited John to English classes at their church.

At the classes John heard about Jesus. He wanted to be a Christian but feared asking his parents for permission to be baptized because the oldest son always has responsibilities in ancestor worship. To his surprise his parents consented.

The following year however, his attendance at church became irregular because of educational pressures.

Taiwanese high school students face intense educational and parental pressure. Education is viewed as the way to future security and parents gain "face" when their children excel. In addition to long school hours (7:30 am-5:00 pm), most students also take extra classes from 6-9 pm. Then they start their homework!

Mei-Ling ("May-Ling") read her Bible every day at school. Another student asked, "What's so interesting?" So Mei-Ling started a Bible reading group for eight non-Christians. She also arranged an evangelistic tea party that attracted 20 classmates to hear her testimony. Many heard about Jesus for the first time.

## A SPECIAL FAMILY

# 18



Praise God that Christians can be “known by their love.” (John 13:35)

Pray that Christians will truly be a “family” and thus attract many who are looking for the love that only God gives.

Pray that Christians will realize the powerful testimony that their actions can have.

Ui-Dek (“Wee-deck”) had had surgery on his arm. The doctor gave strict instructions that he must not move his arm. Unfortunately Ui-Dek also had epilepsy and needed someone to be very alert to protect his arm during his fits.

Normally a patient would have a relative to care for them in hospital but Ui-Dek was a street sleeper and didn’t have any family who cared about him.

A group of Christians decided that they were now Ui-Dek’s family.

Twenty-four hours a day for seven days, the Christians organized a roster of care-givers. They provided meals, did his laundry and anything else he needed. They also prayed and encouraged him.

When Ui-Dek was discharged from hospital the patient in the other bed said, “You are so lucky. I wish I had a family like yours who loved me like these Christians do.”

# 19

## WAS THIS THE DAY?

*Praise God for "Home of Mercy" (established 1999) one of two AIDS hospices in Taiwan. Patients receive more than good care as they also have the opportunity to hear the gospel that can give hope for this life and for the next.*

*Pray for patients in the hospice to accept the Lord as Savior and then live God-honoring and pure lives.*

*Pray for caring Christian volunteers to serve as nurses at the hospice.*

*Pray for finance for maintenance of the hospice.*

*Pray for Christian families willing to adopt/foster HIV/AIDS babies.*

**B**eng-Hok was again at death's door with AIDS related illnesses. For ten years he'd been hearing the gospel. Had time at last run out?



Beng-Hok claimed a Roman Catholic background but said he'd never read the Bible or prayed. After many discussions he asked to be taught how to read the Bible. However soon his health improved and he found reasons not to keep his appointments. Although he claimed to trust Jesus there was no "fruit" in his life. He would often congratulate himself on sinful behavior, for example saying "Good lie!"

During this last illness Beng-Hok asked what heaven was like. The nurse read to him of heaven where there is no more sorrow or suffering or tears. Then she simply explained how to trust Jesus, finishing with 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, (God) is faithful and just and will forgive ... and purify us."

Beng-Hok immediately requested a priest but the nurse said he could confess directly to God. He wanted to write down his sins but was too weak.

However the God who had waited so long to hear the pleas of Beng-Hok's heart didn't require a written list. He can read repentant hearts.

## GRANDPA WU MEETS JESUS

# 20



In 2005 a short-term mission team came to teach English in Wanhwa, Taipei. This area is one of the most socially depressed in the country.

One of the adults who attended the class was Grandpa Wu. He was soon chatting to an older member of the team who had migrated to the U.S. from Taiwan and thus, could communicate effectively.

Grandpa Wu shared his difficulties raising his grandchildren and about his son who was an unemployed school drop-out. Hearing of a God who loved him, Grandpa Wu accepted God's gift of salvation with joy.

As time went on, and the short-term workers left, there was no one to follow up Grandpa Wu. Grandpa knew that Christians go to church and he excitedly arranged to go.

Asked later how it went, Grandpa looked very downcast, "I didn't know what they were talking about! They stood up and sat down and read from this big book full of hard words and they turned pages all over the place."

*Praise God that short-term mission teams can be used to minister to Taiwanese people.*

*Praise God that he does lead Christians to people he has prepared.*

*Pray that the Taiwanese church will realize the need to change their services or have alternatives to suit those who can't cope with traditional churches.*

*Pray that Christians will learn to communicate clearly and simply so that more people feel at home.*

*Pray for the many illiterate, and semi-illiterate, who can't cope with all the reading a traditional church requires and so are cut off from other Christians.*

# 21

## SEARCHING FOR JOY

*Praise God that the Holy Spirit can give discernment and protected Ru-Fong from various cults.*

*Pray for many Taiwanese who are seeking Jesus but are trapped by cults (Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, plus many home grown ones) when they are told, "we are Christians and just one of the different denominations." Pray that they will find true freedom.*

*Pray that churches will use the Bible as their only guide and won't follow unhelpful traditions, which detract from their message and purpose.*



**R**u-Fong ("Roo-Fong") first started seeking the Lord when she heard the joyful singing of Christians near her shop. She had been struggling with depression and drug use for a long time with no relief and longed to experience this joy.

Her journey wasn't easy. First she tried the Jehovah's Witnesses, who are very active in Taiwan, but somehow sensed that she wouldn't find Jesus there. She went to two other groups (including one Protestant church) but could see that they were not following the Bible closely. In desperation she prayed, "God if you are real let me find you."

Finally, she found a small house church and saw them carefully following the Bible. She immediately knew that she'd found what she was searching for.

Since accepting Christ a miracle has obviously been in progress. Her changed life is so dramatic that her young daughter quickly believed. Each week she comes to Bible study with various neighbors and relatives who have seen the change in her.

Ru-Fong is praying that she can start a house church in her community soon.

## DECEIVED BY APPEARANCES

# 22



**M**r. Bai (“buy”) chattered on in excitement about a program he’d seen on the Christian TV channel, “The pastor’s sermon was amazing. Oh I wish I could speak so well and teach God’s word like him”.

Eventually he was asked, “Well, what did the preacher say?”

“Oh, he was talking about heaven. He said that when we go to heaven God will ask us three questions: ‘How much of the Bible have you read?’ ‘How many people have you led to Christ?’ and ‘How much money have you given to the church?’”

There was silence.

“Mr. Bai, is that what the Bible says? Is our salvation dependent on whether we’ve done these three things?”

After some thought, Mr. Bai admitted, “No, the Bible says our salvation is based on what Jesus has done.”

Someone can be very eloquent and still teach error.

*Praise God that Taiwan does have plenty of Christian resources. There are good Bible translations, lots of books and both Christian radio and TV.*

*Praise God that Taiwan’s churches do believe that the Bible is God’s word and do try to teach it faithfully.*

*Pray that pastors and teachers will place themselves under the word of God and emphasize that their teaching must always be compared with the Bible.*

*Pray that Bible teachers will be humble so they can admit when they are wrong.*

*Pray that local Christians will know their Bibles and rely on the Holy Spirit for discernment.*

# 23

## THE PUPPET MASTER

*Praise God that Jesus was God come among us.*

*Praise God that He has arranged for non-Christians to be part of the process of getting this puppet project going.*

*Pray that the puppet project may soon be able to go around villages telling people about Jesus. The hope is that local men who are new Christians will be the puppeteers.*



**I** thought the story was going to be about how someone BECAME God,” exclaimed Mr. Lim after listening attentively to the Bible story.

Taiwanese “gods” were mostly men who “became” gods rather than like Jesus who is pre-existent God become man.

The Lim family’s opportunity to hear about God came when a missionary moved next door. Their 6-year-old daughter soon made friends with this intriguing foreigner and one day noticed a couple of little Chinese puppets on the cupboard.

“Do you like puppets? My dad does too, but his are much bigger than yours.”

Mr. Lim owns and makes “Pili” puppets. These popular, traditional puppets are about 50 cm tall and are handmade with wooden, painted faces and colorful clothes.

The missionary thought that these puppets could be used to tell the chronological Bible stories\* in a Taiwanese way.

Mr. Lim volunteered to help out. He listened to the stories and offered many suggestions for the scripts. He also introduced the Christians to a puppet club.

God seems to have arranged this non-Christian to help with the evangelistic project. As Mr. Lim continues to ask questions, may he be the first one who comes to know God personally through the puppet project.

\* See stories 2 & 3

## MENTALLY ILL

# 24

**F**rom childhood Mrs. Hong was abused. She longed for love and someone to trust. As a child she heard about Jesus and said to him: "I need to worship the idols because that's what we do in Taiwan, but actually I like you better!"



Both her marriages were disasters. The first husband was a gambler, the second an alcoholic. She worked in the sex-business and sang and danced in temple processions. Her life became increasingly unbearable and not one of her gods helped. In one dark hour she offered her life to Satan.

No wonder she couldn't sleep. She was labeled mentally ill.

Somehow her name was given to some local Christians. It was weeks before Mrs. Hong answered the phone and then she cursed her callers. Amazingly the Christian women persisted. When they visited they discovered that she hadn't talked to anyone for three months!

The visitors sensed Satan's strong hold over Mrs. Hong and they prayed fervently and persistently because it was obvious Jesus was her ONLY hope.

Slowly Mrs. Hong allowed them to share Bible stories.

A year later Mrs. Hong sensed Jesus saying: "Come home, my child."

She didn't hesitate to accept his invitation.

Praise God for his power to "free the captives." (Isaiah 61:1)

Pray for many who are labeled "mentally ill" but the real problem is bondage to Satan and their past.

Pray that God sends Christians to these people with the news of salvation. Also that Christians will discern the reasons for initial rejections and persist in prayer and love.

Pray for the lonely and depressed that they will meet Jesus through the love of his people.

# 25

## OF COURSE I'M A CHRISTIAN!

Praise God that it is God who saves, through his word.

Pray for the many who believe they are Christians and may even have been baptized but have never understood the gospel. Pray that someone will share with them in a way that they can understand.

Pray that Christians will learn how to truly share about Jesus without resorting to manipulation and pressure. This is the model many have seen.

Pray for pastors who preach week-by-week that they will learn to speak simply and clearly so that people can accept Christ knowing what they're doing.

**M**rs. Yang ("Young") is fifty-eight and was baptized many years ago. She has always hung around the fringes of the church.

She began to express that she didn't have the joy of the other Christians and certainly showed no real hunger for the Bible.

There are many Taiwanese who have been baptized in the past (often after being pressurized or because they want the blessings of being a Christian) but who really don't understand the gospel.

Suspecting that Mrs. Yang wasn't a Christian, her Christian friend suggested that they meet and do Chronological Bible stories\*. Initially Mrs. Yang resisted because she felt these stories would be too simple. However she agreed to listen to one or two. By the second story she said, "I'm not a Christian!"

By the fifth story she was ready to become one. Since her conversion she has read eight books of the Old Testament and the four gospels. She has started praying in public and learning to share her faith. There is still a long way to go (isn't there for everyone!) but God's work is so evident in her life.



\*See stories 2 & 3

## MANIPULATION

# 26

**“**If my wife is baptized I’ll divorce her!”

Mrs. Tan became a Christian after she listened in on a children’s camp. Her husband had also



accompanied her to house church meetings and had even told others they should believe in Jesus.

Why then this sudden opposition?

In Taiwan, it is at baptism that the strongest opposition comes. For non-Christian Chinese, this is seen as the point of no return. Suddenly the family can no longer fool themselves into thinking that this is just a “phase” or that the Christian will continue to worship the ancestors. Pressure becomes intense and many people give in.

Possibly Mr. Tan had been accepting up to this point because he had believed that they could follow both Buddhism and Christianity. Mr. Tan’s mother is involved in the local temple leadership and wields much power in family matters. Previously she had broken up the relationship between another son and a Christian he wanted to marry. The mother also threatened to become sick if Mrs. Tan was baptized.

Mr. Tan wilted under the pressure.

For a while he banned his wife from attending church. After much prayer Mrs. Tan was baptized. Although her husband didn’t divorce her, he no longer has anything to do with Christians.

*Pray for husbands to have the courage to trust Jesus. So often they bow to family pressure.*

*Pray that Christian wives will be a good testimony despite family opposition and manipulation and that their husbands will believe.*

*Pray that Christians won’t compound the above problems by marrying non-Christians.*

*Pray that more evangelism will focus on families so that whole families can believe together instead of just individuals.*

# 27

## RESCUED FROM DARKNESS

Praise God that he can rescue the worst of men.

Pray for those in prison that they might be rescued from their darkness and then share joyfully with those around them.

Pray for those who work in prisons that they will persevere in love and truth, proclaiming "freedom to the captives."



Da-Wei ("Dar-Way") was only released from prison because he had life-threatening cancer. Drugs, alcohol and disease had ravaged his health.

Sometime in his past he must have heard about Jesus for one day he knocked on a Christian's door insisting he wanted to know more.

Local Christians were sceptical as Da-Wei had a terrible reputation.

Despite their doubts, one of the Christian men started to meet with him. Every week Da-Wei asked questions hoping to find meaning in his darkness.

Da-Wei's quest was particularly urgent because he expected to die soon. Once he became a Christian, God started his great work of transformation. Aware that time may be short he doesn't want to waste a minute of his life and enthusiastically shares of God's grace to anyone who will listen.

Da-Wei might still have to return to prison but he no longer dreads it. "I can still talk to God there. Also there are other prisoners with whom I can share the hope I now have."

Da-Wei's physical health might be poor but his spiritual health is improving daily.

## A LATE NIGHT TALK

# 28



*Praise God that he overrules and arranges gospel opportunities according to his plans not ours.*

*Pray for Taiwanese Christians with their busy lifestyles. When can they be discipled?*

*Pray for converted workers to live godly lives so that their workmates and bosses might become curious as to why their lives have changed.*

It was 11 pm and a Christian man was waiting to speak to Ming-Ping, a new believer who worked as an employee at a busy tea stand. It looked like being one of those nights of waiting and frustration. Ming-Ping was just too busy.

However, the boss invited the visitor to sit down and began to ask questions. Perhaps he was curious to find out about the changes he'd observed in Ming-Ping.

The Christian had hoped that Ming-Ping might be able to share with his boss but he was too busy and the boss was persistent with his questions! For nearly two hours the boss asked questions and he commented, "This is fun. I really enjoy talking to you in such a relaxed way about this stuff."

Finally at 1 am business calmed down. With some gentle encouragement, Ming-Ping shared his testimony with his boss. Although a little nervous, he spoke about some of his rough past and then he gave all the credit to Jesus for finding him and transforming him. The chat ended with prayer and the boss saying, "Ming-Ping is lucky to have a friend like you."

# 29

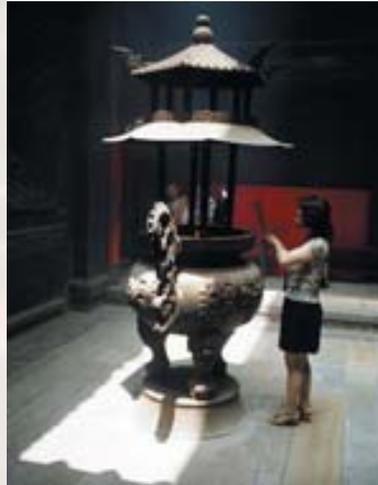
## A DEVOUT BUDDHIST

*Praise God that he is stronger than Satan and our rebellious sinful nature. He is the bondage breaker.*

*Praise God for a church flexible enough to have meetings especially for shop workers and at such late hours.*

*Pray for this ministry to shop and restaurant workers as it continues to grow. May it be used as a model throughout Taiwan.*

*Pray for many people to become Christians through this ministry.*



**F**or 40 years Mrs. Pan was a devout Buddhist. She visited temples, consulted fortune tellers and was even used as a spirit medium. Despite her religious fervor she was increasingly frustrated.

Mr. Pan divorced his wife,

took the three children and left his wife to pay all his gambling debts!

Mrs. Pan started work in a department store. Although her long working hours (12 hours a day, 6 days a week) didn't leave much time for mulling over her problems, sometimes her heart ached over life's meaninglessness.

She heard of Jesus through a Christian magazine. In it was an advertisement for a Christian meeting, held specially at 10 pm so that shop workers could come after work.

The message she heard fascinated her but for six months an intense spiritual battle raged. Every time that Mrs. Pan wanted to accept Christ, voices in her head demanded, "How can you forsake your former gods?"

Strangely her struggles confirmed that Jesus is the true God. The spiritual battles didn't cease at baptism. Past habits of dishonesty and reliance on fortune tellers had to be dealt with. However, "Jesus proved stronger than all my sin and weakness. Now I'm free and life has meaning."

## IS SUICIDE THE ONLY OPTION?

# 30

**B**i-Goan (“Bee-Gwan”) shuddered as she saw the frail old man. Turning her head she noticed the funeral tent for another neighbor.



Everywhere death and pain ... why is the world such a bitter place?

Months of questioning reduced her to a depressed wreck seeking temporary escape in sleeping tablets. She often wondered, “Is suicide the only option?”

Her younger sister brought her to a house church. Bi-Goan kept interrupting with questions. The Christians lovingly answered but it wasn’t enough. The questions echoing in her heart couldn’t be answered easily.

Several Christians tried to follow her up but she was always sleeping. Eventually one Christian saw her outside the family business and seized the opportunity to share the first chronological story.\* Bi-Goan finally heard an explanation for pain that made sense. She began to understand the emptiness in her heart. Her heart had been longing for God.

Normally the chronological stories are told over several weeks but Bi-Goan really needed to hear the good news of the Savior immediately. Hearing of Jesus who came to fill her emptiness and bring hope brought praise to her heart. Oh, this was what she had been longing to hear even if she hadn’t known it!

\* See stories 2 & 3

Praise God that he brings hope to the hopeless and has the answers to all our deepest questions.

Pray for those who are depressed that they might find Jesus before it is too late. A newspaper report said there were 4,000+ suicides in 2005 (an increase of 26% from 2004).

Pray that Christians will learn to “take every thought captive” as Satan strives to convince them of lies. Depression is rife in Taiwan.