



MISSION CONNECTIONS

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Standing Firm

John McCall

*Mission co-worker
serving in Taiwan*

Dear friends,

I often take the Taiwan High Speed Rail to teach at the seminary in the south or to speak or preach in various places around Taiwan. As one takes the escalator in every High Speed Rail station, an announcement tells those on the escalator to “stand firm.”

Every time I hear this announcement, I think of the African song:

“Stand, Oh, stand firm,
Stand, Oh, Stand firm,
Stand, Oh, Stand firm,
And see what the Lord can do!”

I then think of the many people I meet each week in Taiwan who are standing firm in the Lord. This week, I traveled to the mountains of southern Taiwan to speak at a training event for the leaders of the Lucai Aboriginal Presbyterian and to lead a renewal service at the Maoling Church on Sunday.



Elder Ma standing firm



Lucai Presbytery Elders and Deacons standing firm at the Saturday Training Event

The Lucai people live in villages spread throughout these beautiful high mountains.

The pastor and a church elder met me at the southern-most High Speed Rail station on Friday afternoon, and we drove for about two hours to get their village. Many of the churches here have family worship on Friday evening, and we met at one of the women elders’ homes. We sat outside in front of her home on plastic stools. There were folks of all ages. The pastor led us in singing and then shared from God’s Word. One of the purposes of these family worships is to pray especially for the family who is the host that week. So Elder Ma stood to share about the needs of her family.

As she began to speak, she said how thankful she is to God for the many blessings which she and her family have received. Her eyes sparkled with joy and her deeply lined face told the story of how she has stood firm in following Jesus Christ. She then asked us to pray for grandchildren studying in the city, that they would also stay close to Christ.

The next morning 180 pastors, elders, and deacons poured into the Maoling Church having left very early to drive over high mountains to get to the training. The sanctuary on the second floor was packed, so they also had overflow seating on the first floor.

As I began to speak and looked out over the faces of these church leaders, I saw hunger to grow in Christ. I saw folks who are standing firm in the Lord.

I had spoken at this presbytery's youth event 17 years ago in another village called Hau Cha. I stayed in the home of the family of one of the young men who attended the event. Their beautiful home was made of slate, which is the traditional building material of the Lucai tribe. In 2009, the village of Hau Cha was totally destroyed by a huge typhoon. The home in which I stayed along with all the other homes and the Presbyterian Church were swept away by flood waters. They had to leave their ancient village and move to a new place several hours away, where the government helped them build new houses from wood. The beauty of the original village was decimated.

But I was delighted to learn that this young man is now an elder in his church. He and his wife have two young daughters and are bringing them up in Christ's love. The winds and rain destroyed his



Standing firm 17 years ago with the, then, Hau Cha youth (turned elder) in front of his original slate home



Praying for a baby from the Lucai tribe

home, but he is standing firm in the Lord. He and his wife have opened a restaurant where many tourists flock to eat their food.

Living on the edge of Taiwan's high-tech society is not always easy for the original Taiwanese, who comprise the 17 different tribes of Taiwan's indigenous people. But they continue to stand firm in the Lord. Every time I am with them, I am encouraged by their faith and steadfastness. They have shaped me and continue to teach me how to love God and love one's neighbor.

It is not an easy time in our world to stand firm, but God is with us on the good days and the bad days, giving us the strength, joy and faith to trust.

Thank you for your prayers and support which allow me to stand firm with the dear people of this land.

Gratefully, John

Please see below for the updated fund numbers for supporting John's ministry.

Thank you for reading my letter!

Please consider supporting Presbyterian Mission through my ministry. I am grateful for your prayers, personal communication and financial support.

Gifts may be sent to:

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
P.O. Box 643700
Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700

On the memo line, please write:

"In honor of John McCall -E132192 (individual giving)
"In honor of John McCall—D500115 (congregational giving)
Give online: pcusa.org/john-mccall

For more ways to engage in Presbyterian Mission, please email mission.support@pcusa.org.

Thank you for your faithful support.