



# MISSION CONNECTIONS

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## The Encouraging Wind of God's Spirit

**John McCall**

*Mission co-worker  
serving in Taiwan*

Dear friends,

Often pastors call to invite me to preach and speak in their churches or in other youth or leadership events with the words, “please come and encourage us.” In these uncertain days we all need words of encouragement. But I as return home after visiting these churches, I often find that I have been the one who has been encouraged by the way I see God at work in churches around Taiwan.

A few weekends ago, I was invited by good friends to come to their church to preach at their Palm Sunday service. I preach at this church every year, because as I am leaving, the pastor makes sure to arrange a date for the next year.

When Pastor Hsin-ren and his wife, Fong-jun arrived at the Water Forest Presbyterian Church fourteen years ago, there were 7 elderly folks in worship. Three of them were the elders of the church. Hsin-ren has gifts and vision for youth ministry and Fong-jun has gifts and vision for children's ministry. But there were no children or youth in the church. The seven members probably thought that their new young pastor had come to help them close the church.

But Hsin-ren and Fong-jun began to pray with the three elders that God would do a new thing in their midst. They began to visit the schools in this small farming community and got to know some of the children and youth. They built relationships with them and discovered that many came from dysfunctional families. They quickly discovered that what was missing in their lives was love. So, they began to share God's love with this community. And the children stated coming to church. They began weekday homework classes for the children to come to the church to do their

homework. They cooked meals to feed the children whose parents often returned home late from work. They visited in their homes, which is not easy in rural Taiwan, where parents worship the folk gods and do not want their children being baptized.

But the Holy Spirit began to move and hearts were opened to the good news of the Gospel. This past Sunday morning there were over seventy community children and youth in that church. In the past fourteen years some of these children and youth have become young adults and now they are the lay leaders of the Water Forest Church. They are now nurturing the current children who are coming to the church. They have built a new church building to house all of the daily activities which happen there.

One day I was buying a drink at the 7-11 near the church. The manager asked me what I was doing in Water Forest Village. Few outsiders visit this place. I told her that I was speaking at the Presbyterian Church. She replied, “We all love that church.” I asked her if she was a Christian. She said, “No, but the church loves the children of our community, so we love the church.” A non-Christian store manager becomes a witness for the church.



**A youth taking a donkey to Jesus**



**Children at the church responding to questions about the Scripture of the day.**

All of the children and youth pack into the sanctuary, along with an increasing number of adults, for Sunday worship. After worship, Fong Jun and a young adult set up five learning stations with several other young adults at each station. The stations reinforce the scripture which was used that morning in worship. The children and youth memorize a verse from the scripture and then recite it at one of the stations. Since I preached on Jesus entering Jerusalem on a donkey, they had a large cut-out cardboard donkey which each young person untied and then took to the large cut-out cardboard Jesus. So, Sunday School happens after worship to allow God's Word to enter each heart. Each station was amazingly creative.

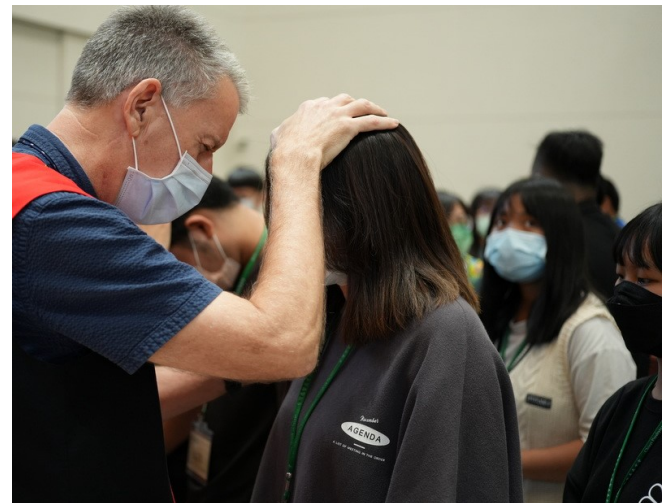
Pastor Hsin-ren not only blesses his own church's children and youth, but also asked me to preach Saturday evening at a presbytery youth event. This

presbytery has not held an all-presbytery youth event for many years, but that evening 180 youth came for the afternoon and evening event. After I preached, I asked each youth to write down what God was calling them to do in their lives, and they brought their cards forward to the front of the church. I had also asked the fifteen pastors from various churches who attended the event to join me up front to pray individually for each young person. As the youth came forward and I looked into their eyes, I saw both a desire to meet God and a desire to be used by God.

It was a wonderful weekend of seeing God at work in my former students, Hsin-ren and Fong-jun and in the lives of so many children and youth.

Thank you for your support and prayers which allow me to serve in this beautiful land.

Gratefully, John McCall



**Praying for a youth at the Presbytery event**

**Please see below for the updated fund**

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*Thank you for your faithful support.*