

Neil and Kelsie Cullers

2nd Generation Missionaries

Taiwan



Date: 06/18

Prayer Letter Update:

I don't even know where to start. A lot has happened these past two months, from graduating BBTI in May, to wrapping up our month-long survey trip in just a few days. I mentioned in our last letter having many questions we would like to see answered from this trip, and praise the Lord, we have been able to learn so much! We were able to visit just about every township area in Ping-Tung, from the city, to sea-side fishing towns, to deep mountain villages. We have an area now that we feel God is leading us to start. It is an exciting step closer! This town is:

- Near a medical university, which means students, the need for more housing, and a growing job market.
- A melting pot of sorts, with Chinese and tribal residents, situated just below the foothills to the high mountains. In fact the name of this area points to a time in history when Han settlers traded ten carts of salt for access to the area.
- Perfectly located to facilitate language and culture learning (Taiwanese and Tribal alike), while centrally located for going west to the big city of Ping-Tung, the county "capital", or as a base for forays north and east into the mountains.

Here are just a scant few of the questions we were able, by God's grace, to answer on this trip:

- **Is it important to learn the Taiwanese dialect, since Mandarin is the official language and most everyone knows it anyway?** YES! If you listen to what many Chinese people speak in Ping-Tung to each other, it is not Mandarin. A man we were able to befriend on this trip from Kaohsiung, my parent's county, said he was told by a businessman (He works in sales) in Ping-Tung, "Why are you speaking to me in Mandarin? Speak to me in our tongue or you won't be doing business here." I think that speaks for itself.
- **Is it really necessary/helpful to learn tribal languages? They are a minority and were made to learn mandarin in their schools long ago.** Again, yes! This is what they speak to each other, not mandarin. I watched some struggle to understand me or phrase what they wanted to say in Mandarin, then throw out a string of tribal tongue to a friend before trying again slower. There has also been a huge resurgence of tribal culture and traditions, including also teaching children in school their language and way of life. People we sat with were only too happy to answer my questions about their history and provide me with simple greetings and such in their language (Paiwan and Rukai tribes).

Winning Souls

Baptizing Converts

Discipling Believers

Establishing New

Testament Churches

Victory Baptist Church

Pastor Clint Caviness
179 Kincaid Dr. Roseburg, OR
97470 (541) 672-9589

Macedonia World
Baptist Missions

4418 Highway 332
Hoschton, GA 30548 <http://mwbm.org>



- **Do Tribal people really live in the mountains? You hear from Han Taiwanese that it's just old people and young children up there, that everyone else comes down and lives in the cities for work.** Some do come down to work, but return on the weekends to their mountain village. For many we spoke to it's quite a trip. Besides, we saw all ages, schools, and plenty working just in their village with no interest to come down. What drives some to seek work down in the cities is the need to eat. They are poor, though their way of life (growing subsistence and hunting) is still very important to them. An adventurous Taiwanese man who helped us immensely get around the county, kept remarking how shocked he was at the villages everywhere up in the mountains, and how eye opening and unexpected things were. Many really do not know what actually happens up there despite having confident opinions.
- **Demographic studies list the Taiwan tribes as "Christian." If you ask anyone about them, they say they are Christian. Why the interest to reach them when there are churches there already?** Interesting. These "studies" are often conducted by lost men who don't know what "Christian" is anyway. Shall we take their word for it, or go see for ourselves? Yes, it was surprising to many times find three churches for a remote village in the middle of nowhere with only a few hundred souls. There is for sure a Catholic church (well, no need to go now, they are reached after all), often a presbyterian church, and then the third church is usually something random, like a cult group, True Jesus Church, or Seventh Day Adventist. We tried to bring up spiritual things wherever we went, and some patiently heard us out, a very few were actually interested, as though they had never heard anything like it before, and many were instantly guarded or uninterested. Just in their faces you can tell there is darkness there, and a generational ritual of "being Christian" while mixing a few phrases and verses in with animistic, witch-doctor religion. There are rituals performed which involve demonic frenzy, animal sacrifice, blood sprinkling and definitely drunkenness. But they're Christian after all, and in the minority, and live in small villages where our efforts would be wasted, so by all means let us pass them by.

Maybe you can tell, but we care about these people, and our interest in reaching them has grown, not waned. We may not be able to truly live and begin up in the high mountains in our first term (language/culture learning first, etc), but we will be praying and going, and continuing to establish relationships that may open a door for us in the future. We see more clearly than ever that it will be very difficult - we are outsiders to a closed group, and any attempt to challenge spiritual beliefs and pride will not be well accepted. We honestly could care less about difficulty, or a less "comfortable" life-style, as though these things actually matter. What does difficulty have to do with obedience? With being soldiers? You get your orders and you do them. Period. Again, thank you for your prayers and support! We will include a few pictures in each prayer letter to highlight our trip.

Expecting Great Things,

Nathaneil and Kelsie Cullers

II Timothy 2:1-4



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Inside the house of a Village-Head. He is a skilled Rukai (tribe name) craftsman, making ceremonial swords, bows, spears, and more. His wife makes braided rope for tying on swords and knives from a type of plant grown in the garden. There were hunting trophies everywhere: wild boar, different types of deer, and mountain goat.



A traditional slate house deep in the mountain village of Wu-Tai, pictured below. It is quite a trip to get here, with roads out currently in repair from typhoons and mudslides. Such work is a never-ending task.



One of many Taiwanese shrines in Ping-Tung County. Wherever Chinese people live, temples abound. Where Tribesman live, there are churches instead.



The village of Wu-Tai. You may recognize it from our presentation and tabletop display. It is the same village, and I am standing very close no doubt to where that photographer took his picture. Note the scarring all over the mountains from rockslides. The mountains of Taiwan are incredibly steep.



LEFT:

Above in our letter, under the question, "Do tribal people really live in the mountains," some of the people we spoke to include these folks here, who travel quite a ways to find construction jobs in the city where they can. The lady on the far left is the "minister" for the church they all attend. In one village not too far from here, the several hundred inhabitants are split between three churches based on what section of town they live in: the highest level goes to one, the middle section goes to another, and the lower level (the town is built on the side of the mountain) goes to the third.