

March 2024

MARSHALL MUSINGS



Tell us the story about how you became missionaries

Wendy grew up in a large Presbyterian church in Toowoomba, that many missionaries visited. So she grew up thinking that becoming a missionary was something that any Christian might do. She chose to do Occupational Therapy at UQ as she thought it might be helpful on the mission field. Then, halfway through her degree God challenged her about whether she was still thinking about mission. So she went on a short study tour to Indonesia with OMF at the end of the third year of her degree.

David grew up in Central Queensland, and became a Christian through attending a church youth group when he was about 15. At university there was solid Christian teaching, and the idea that Christians all serve where God wants them was one that came easily to his thinking. On a one-off visit to another church, a guest speaker there sowed the idea of a short trip to Indonesia to learn more about mission. After his first year of working as

a teacher he went on the same mission trip as Wendy (and met her there). He became more convinced that mission was in his future.

When we got together three years after the Indonesia tour we both agreed while we were dating that we were okay with wherever God called us to serve him, be that within Australia or overseas. After we got married, as we continued to seek God's will for our future, we went to a missions conference at Tamborine Mountain in 1998 called International Outlook.

There we were challenged by the speaker about whether what we were doing now was completely essential: could others do what we were doing? Was there any good reason for us not to go? We concluded we had no good reason not to go, so started applying to OMF that very weekend, never expecting that they would accept us, or that we'd be writing this prayer letter 25 years later.

David was passionate about

teaching missionary kids, but neither of us had a country we felt God was leading us to. OMF helped with that by narrowing it down to countries where there were missionary schools and then by our health, ruling out cities with high pollution because we both have asthma. So we ended up heading for Japan, even though we'd never been there.

In November 2000 we left Australia for our first 3½ years in Japan. At the time Callum was 18 months old. Those early years were very challenging, with more than two years full-time language learning, then, because neither of the two schools OMF had relationships with needed a maths teacher, we worked in a church plant for 18 months.

But somehow God helped us day-by-day through it all. During language school, Doug was born in a Japanese hospital. God blessed us with Jamie during our first home assignment before we went back to Japan in 2005 for David to work at the Christian Academy in Japan.



Everyone is going to Japan...

The Australian Ambassador to Japan said, "2023 was a record-breaking year for travel by Australians to Japan." There are many reasons, including a weak yen and low inflation, meaning it's "cheap" for Australians at present. "Australians' interest in Japan goes well beyond price. Proximity, safety, the convenient high-speed rail network, and attractions that appeal to everyone from kids, teenagers, retirees, foodies, skiers, hikers and bikers have put it high on travel bucket lists." (Australian Financial Review, Jan 24, 2024)

It disturbs us that many Christians who visit Japan for holidays never see the hidden pain in Japan. *Beneath the Surface* prayer guide that OMF and Pioneers published in 2020 covered many topics that are unseen by most tourists, but which Christians in Japan would like us to pray about. Topics such as struggling churches, aging church, self-reliance and materialism, mental and emotional health, family life, workplace pressure, personal evangelism, and Christianity in rural areas. We still have a few copies of this booklet for sale, if you'd like to pray more deeply for Japan. Or you can order a booklet or e-version here: www.japanprayerguide.com/

Question corner

Plans for 2024

Barring something unexpected, our plans for 2024 at this point are that we (David and Wendy) will return to Japan in early July. In March we will attend OMF's national conference in Sydney and to visit a supporting church in Canberra. After that we plan to take two months of long service leave (see our calendar on pg 2).

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On the home front

Prayer points

- That our support would remain 100% throughout 2024.
- For strength, wisdom, and resilience.
- For Doug and Jamie as they adjust to living independently from us. For Jamie in these early weeks of uni.
- For jobs for Jamie and Doug.
- For Doug's Centrelink and NDIS applications to be completely processed.
- That Doug would be able to get his driver's licence soon.
- For David and Wendy as we adjust to this major change in our family.
- That each of our boys will continue to mature and know God better. That they would each know God's will for their next steps.
- That we would have good conversations at our conferences in March and also with the folk we visit in Canberra.
- For travelling mercies during our long service leave and that we will be able to switch off from work-related stuff.
- That in all we do, think, and say, we would glorify God.
- For good health.

Praise points

- That God has provided accommodation for both Doug and Jamie (including a third housemate for Jamie).
- For God's continual leading as we continue to move through significant transition.
- Our financial support is good.
- For many opportunities to talk to people about mission.

Coming up...

March

3 David preaching at Grace Christian Church, Redbank Plains (our home church)

16-18 National OMF Australia conference (Sydney)

19-20 OMF Australia home staff conference

21-25 Canberra: one supporting church and some individual supporters

Long service leave 25 March to 25 May

Thank you for praying. We're excited to tell you that during February both **Doug** and **Jamie** have moved out of home into their own places. **Jamie** is sharing a house close to UQ with two other Christian guys. **Doug** is living in a studio apartment (a converted garage) which is attached to the home of a young Christian couple. It's a huge change for all of us and we're thankful for your prayers during this transition.

Jamie started uni (Human Movement and Nutrition Sciences) only two days after he moved, so he's been on a steep learning curve.

A couple of admin errors (not ours) meant that **Doug** got notification a few days before he moved that he still had more than a dozen driving hours to complete before he could book a test, so we've been working on that. He's also on a steep learning curve as he figures out budgeting, cooking evening meals, etc. Centrelink has started providing some assistance. He's still waiting on the NDIS application.

David and Wendy have spent a lot of time sourcing stuff for the guys (Jamie and his housemates had to set up the whole house, Doug's place was largely furnished) as well as moving them. We've enjoyed seeing our sons continue to prioritise hanging out as a family on Sunday afternoons, something we started via video calls during the pandemic. We spoke at two church services as well as Brisbane School of Theology and OMF's Mission Steps, and visited Japanese Christian Fellowship. We also started worked on planning our eight-week motorhome trip (leaving mid-March).

Thank you for your continuing prayers!

*In Christ,
David and
Wendy*

Photos:
(above) Jamie's house and Doug's private verandah,
(left) moving days,
(right) beautiful Robelle Domain near our house.

