



SPRING 2023 NEWSLETTER

# VIETNAM



## AN UPDATE FROM JIM AND SUE

Dear Friends,

On our latest trip to Vietnam, we were given a rare opportunity to visit some tribal villages. This was an experience we had been anticipating for a long time. Many of the pastors and their wives at our training come from these tribal villages. For a Westerner to be seen in these villages can draw unwanted attention to the pastors and/or their churches, so we are very careful to protect their security; yet they long for us to see their churches.

The trip was an adventure in itself. Four hours of traveling on bumpy, serpentine roads that clung to steep mountain cliffs and dipped deep into green valleys, with switchback after switchback, reminded us of the command that we are to take the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth. The scenery was breathtaking—mountaintops where we could see for miles and miles, valleys that nestled lakes, forests, and villages. Farms where coffee, coconut, durian and rubber trees, rice paddies, and vegetable patches organized the landscape into regimented patterns.

We first visited the Raglai tribe along the eastern edge, several miles inland from the ocean. It was always a surprise when, just traveling through a remote stretch of woodland, we would come around a bend or over a mountain ridge and find a group of villages strewn across the landscape. I (Sue) often had to remind myself that those pastors and their wives who come to our training in the city travel this crazy distance over these treacherous roads, all to learn more about God's Word so that they can better teach and help their people.

As always, these tribal people were very easy to love. They are humble and appreciative. They have had to exhibit to the suspicious, skeptical, and often antagonistic neighborhood that Christ offers a better way. They exude joy, are very unified, and humbly serve each other and their community. They have been persecuted, sometimes driven from one village to form another, often leaving all their possessions and sometimes their extended family behind. Some pastors throughout the day shared with us how they were driven from their homes for refusing to renounce their faith. They would move to a new area where they would have to begin again, clearing land, building shelters, planting crops, waiting (with little food) for the harvest. The persecution would not just come from the authorities. Often it came from their own people who were fearful of the judgment of their gods or ancestors if they were to allow a new religion to enter their village.

Our time at each church was spent listening to the pastor share his story and the story of his church. We prayed with them, sometimes sang with them, learned what their needs and problems are, gave them words of encouragement, gave candy to the children, and gave lots of hugs. We tried to leave them with the thought that they are not alone, that there are millions of believers across this universe. We encourage them to be faithful to Jesus and His gospel. We told them that we would be sharing their stories so that others could pray for them as well.

At the end of that first day, I was reminded of a lesson I heard from Chuck Swindoll from Moses' burning bush experience. The lesson was entitled, "Any Old Bush Would Do." The point was that it wasn't the bush that was important. God could have used any bush in the whole desert. It was the *God in the bush* that was awe-inspiring. God allowed us to be the bush that burned brightly for Him to bring encouragement to the Raglai people that day. He could have used anyone, but He had allowed us, not because of our talent—limited as it is—our personalities, or our experiences. He used us because we were available and had a passion to serve Him. Any old bush would do!

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**"I FINALLY FEEL LIKE I'M ABLE TO DO THE WORK GOD HAS CALLED ME TO DO."**

### **Vietnam Mobile Bible College graduates 25!**

In February, OTAN's Vietnam Mobile Bible College presented certifications to 25 graduates! Over the last two and a half years, these national students met together online and in person for Bible intensives on subjects like Old and New Testament surveys, biblical doctrine, hermeneutics (biblical interpretation), pastoral care, evangelism, discipleship, missions, church administration, and family counseling. Their level of dedicated work and study is the equivalent of an associate degree.

Each attendee faced ongoing challenges and security risks as they gathered for classes. But because of donors like you, our MBC students could focus on learning and studying without the additional hardship of fees and tuition.

Twelve of our graduates have been ordained and are ready to step up their ministry all across Vietnam. As one graduate said, "I finally feel like I'm able to do the work God has called me to do. I'm more prepared, and I'm so grateful!"

The need for trained national pastors in Vietnam has never been greater or more urgent. In a few months, a new session of Mobile Bible College will begin, and funding is needed now to prepare for and to conduct the next two years of courses for our new students. In addition, we continue to seek out qualified MBC instructors.

If you would like to know more about becoming a Vietnam MBC instructor, email [a.doomy@otan.org](mailto:a.doomy@otan.org). To give a gift of support for MBC, mail a check (address below) with "MBC" in the note line. Or give securely online at OTAN.org. Click on the "Give" tab, then choose "Vietnam Mobile Bible College" in the dropdown menu.

*Your gifts make the launching of these new leaders possible. Thank you for your partnership with us.*



#### **Partner By Giving**

Give securely online at [otan.org](http://otan.org). Help us reach Vietnam when you select "Vietnam Ministry" from the ministry menu.



#### **Partner By Praying**

We're so grateful for our praying partners. Want to learn to more effectively pray for missionaries? Visit [otan.org/pray](http://otan.org/pray).



#### **Partner By Going**

Is God calling you into the mission field? We'd love to talk to you about it! Connect with us at [otan.org/serve](http://otan.org/serve).

## **CONTACT OUTREACH TO ASIA NATIONALS**

The pastors and church workers we partner with are grateful for your prayers and financial support. God is using your investment to further the gospel and strengthen the body of Christ around the world. If you have questions or want to know more about our outreach in Vietnam, we'd love to connect with you.



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