

OTAN

OUTREACH TO ASIA NATIONALS



Their idols are silver and gold,
the work of men's hands.

They have mouths
but they speak not;

Eyes they have,
but they see not.

Psalm 115: 4-5

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Collection of Idols
Nepal

**TRAINING AND RESOURCING
PERSECUTED ASIAN PASTORS
TO REACH THEIR PEOPLE**

A NEW, SAFER WAY TO TRAIN

OTAN Mobile Training Center Van

Things are changing in Southeast Asia—and not for the good of the underground church.

In the last few years, new laws have allowed governments to shut down any unregistered groups, including house churches. Crosses have been taken down, Bibles confiscated, Bibles, and pastors and leaders have been detained or arrested. Facial recognition software has been installed in places of worship.

Recently, new laws regarding espionage have been enacted. They are so broad in scope that it is hard for nationals to even do business with foreigners. Because of this, we're now struggling to find safe places to host trainings with our pastors and leaders. But God has laid it on our hearts to create our own safe place: a **mobile training van!**

A 15-passenger van, similar to the one pictured below, will allow our pastors and leaders to learn together, pray together, and even fellowship together for spiritual and emotional support. The knowledge they gain will help them better know and understand the Bible, develop skills for effective teaching, learn to disciple others, grow in their own spiritual walk, and lead and teach their churches with confidence and proficiency.

The goal for this project is \$50,000, which will include the purchase of the van, tablets/devices on which to conduct trainings, the duplication of teaching materials, the hiring of 2 licensed drivers, and at least 1 year of operating costs.

Our Mobile Training Center van needs to be fully funded by September 2 of this year. Can you help to provide a safe training place for our Asian pastors? Give securely online at otan.org. Choose the "Give" tab, then select "**OTAN MTC Van.**" Or mail a check with the note "**OTAN MTC Van**" to the address on the back page of this newsletter. Thank you!



OTAN Mobile Training Center van

RECONNECTING WITH RUSSIA

Training pastors and wives in an unlikely place



Crowded Russian street

"We can't go into Russia to meet them, so we're going to bring them out to meet us." Al Doomy, OTAN's executive director, is excited to be able to meet with our Russian pastors again. "Between COVID and the current war, it's been more than 2 years since we've seen these faithful brothers and their wives."

Because travel into Russia isn't possible, this summer OTAN's leaders will host 10 Russian pastors and their wives at a location in Southeast Asia for a time of teaching, encouragement, fellowship, and prayer. "They've been so isolated. They need this," Al says.

Apologetics—skills to examine and defend the Christian faith—will be a key topic at this unique, secluded training. "These leaders deal with atheism constantly," Al explains. "Since the war has begun, people are feeling less secure, more afraid, more worried about the future. These pastors are seeing an uptick in interest about Christianity and in people wanting to investigate small group Bible studies held in homes. We want to reinforce foundational biblical principles that will help them address the skepticism and questions they'll encounter."

Joy Doomy, OTAN's director of women's ministries, will be joining her husband Al on the trip. "In the past, the Russian pastors' wives have asked for a focus on marriage, and that will be a big part of what I'll be sharing with these women," she says.

Joy says, "When your husband is a spiritual leader, and he gets discouraged and weighed down, it can be hard to know how to come alongside him and encourage him. Now these leaders are dealing with intensified problems because of the war—fear, loss of loved ones, economic woes, and emotional health issues. It's a lot for these pastors and wives to bear, and women can't keep 'pouring out' without having anything 'pouring back in.'"

"The atmosphere in Russia is oppressive," Al adds. "And eastern Russia is often at the bottom of the list for government attention and help. These people need encouragement. Aside from times of teaching, we just want to come alongside them and refresh them, build them back up."

Would you pray for the safety of everyone traveling to and from SE Asia for this gathering? To help defray some of the costs of this trip, give securely at otan.org and choose "Russia Ministry."

ENTHUSIASTIC LEARNERS IN VIETNAM

Biblical foundations for future growth

Often changing locations for safety, a group of more than 30 young pastors and leaders is currently meeting in Vietnam. Together, they're studying the New Testament on a level that they have never experienced before.

"In the area of Vietnam where we're working, most people have about a middle school level of education. For some of these leaders, this OTAN program is providing a focus on the New Testament that they have never had access to," says Jim, OTAN's Vietnam ministry manager. Most of the current class of students are day-laborers, working manual labor jobs six days a week to provide for their families as well as studying and leading churches. Though some of the current class of students have had a little biblical instruction, most have had none at all.

As OTAN trains and resources more leaders in this restricted country, instructors like Jim have noticed the pastors' growing comfort in the classroom setting and in asking questions. Jim says, "Sometimes students can get a little overwhelmed by the level of knowledge that these courses offer. But this current group is the most interactive and enthusiastic that I've seen. They're more outspoken and interactive. You can see it in their body language and in the questions they ask."

Some of these leaders are currently pastoring or will go on to pastor churches with actual church buildings, depending on the amount of restrictions and enforcement in their regions. Most will pastor small



house churches, which can provide a bit more security and adaptability for their local congregations.

It's not impossible or illegal to obtain a Bible in Vietnam, but other aspects of Christian life—things that most Westerners take for granted—are restricted or even forbidden for Vietnamese Christians. "Christianity is legal in the Vietnamese constitution," Jim explains, "but it's 'legal' as Vietnam defines it. Christians can't share the gospel openly, and they aren't allowed to hold any public evangelism events."

Attending OTAN trainings carries safety and security risks for these pastors. However, as Jim says, "They know Jesus. They know salvation. But they're very enthusiastic and so spiritually driven to learn more so they can be better pastors and shepherds to their own people."

To support these pastors, go to our website: otan.org. Choose the "Give" tab, then choose "Vietnam Pastor Support Team" from the drop-down menu.

NEW LAWS AND NEW TRAININGS

An update on our work in Nepal

More than 80% of the population in Nepal practice the Hindu religion. Others identify as Muslim, and just over 1% of the population is Christian. Gary, OTAN's Nepal ministry manager, says, "New laws endorsed by the legislature have criminalized evangelism. Sharing the gospel has been challenging. On the other hand, false teaching has spread like fire in this land. Biblically sound teaching is more essential than ever before."

In January of this year, OTAN began our first Mobile Bible College training in Nepal. MBC's foundational topics teach Nepali pastors and leaders sound methods of biblical study as well as basic pastoral care and leadership principles.

We're also presenting an advanced program, OTAN Bible Institute (OBI), which offers more in-depth studies. "OBI graduates will receive a certificate from New England Bible College and Seminary. Having a higher level of education will give these pastors a deeper credibility in their communities. It will also allow them to conduct in-country trainings of their own to educate other Nepal nationals, which will help to grow the church in Nepal," Gary says.



OTAN recently partnered in a clean water project to help a Nepali pastor and his church bring drinking water to their village. Digging this new well built trust and respect among villagers, some of whom have become interested in hearing about Jesus.

"The people of Nepal are special," says Gary. "They love the Lord. They love to learn, sing, and dance. Even though they may fear being arrested if caught sharing their faith, they continue to spread the love of Jesus despite the anti-conversion laws that are in place. Pray for them."

Support OTAN's Nepal outreach by mailing a check or by giving securely online at otan.org, then choose "Nepal Ministry."



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Partner By Giving

Give online at otan.org or by check to P.O. Box 2440, Winchester, VA, 22604. Please designate your gift in the memo line.

Want to use the text-to-give option? Text "OTANtraining" and your gift amount to 540-274-5524 (example: OTANtraining 75).



Partner By Praying

If you feel challenged or inspired by this update, would you consider praying for this ministry? We're so grateful for the prayers of our fellow believers.

Want to learn to effectively pray for missionaries and their outreach? Visit otan.org/pray.



Partner By Going

Not everyone is able to go to foreign fields, but every believer can ask themselves the question, "Am I called to go?"

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

WHY I GIVE TO OTAN

Why do I give to OTAN? I give because:

- God wants His glory to be shared with His people.
- Real people hear and turn from their detours.
- The stories are compelling.
- I have been given, and they need.
- God has connected my heart to OTAN.

Is God's glory being shared by your goals? Are people hearing the gospel story and turning from their detours? Are your gifts providing compelling stories? Does someone else need some of what you've been given? Has God connected you to the heart of OTAN? Why not consider giving to OTAN!

~ Deborah S., OTAN partner