

OTAN

OUTREACH TO ASIA NATIONALS

Before the **mountains** were brought forth,
or ever thou hadst formed the **earth**
and the **world**, even from
everlasting to everlasting,

Thou art **God**.
Psalm 90:2

IN THIS ISSUE:

Teachers Needed in Japan

Myanmar: Land in Need of Hope

New Opportunities in Laos

Reaching Middle East Refugees

Update on Our MTC Van

Why We Give to OTAN

View of Mount Fuji
Fujinomiya, Japan

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

IS GOD CALLING YOU?

Two teaching positions open in Japan

In an Asian nation that enjoys the right to freedom of religion, it's almost hard to believe that evangelical Christians make up less than one half of 1% of the population of Japan. Pastor Tony Haug and the OTAN ministry team in Shimonoseki, Japan, are committed to bringing the good news of the gospel to the Japanese people. And right now, they have 2 positions open for English teachers.

The New Beginning after-school program is seeking a teacher for kindergarteners 3 days per week using the New Beginning Preschool Curriculum in an abbreviated format. This is a Christ-centered curriculum that provides a platform to present the gospel and will meet the needs of Japanese families who want to expose their children to English.

A second position is for a first and second grade English teacher for students who have graduated from the preschool and desire to continue their English studies. Along with conversational English basics, a Bible lesson is presented during these sessions. Students typically attend Japanese school in the mornings and attend a 1 1/2-hour class one day a week after school.

A small monthly salary is provided, and teachers are required to raise an additional \$500 in monthly support to cover the costs of housing, health insurance, and standard living expenses. The teacher for the after-school children's program should have an early childhood or elementary degree or should have kindergarten or elementary teaching experience. Applicants for teaching English classes for New Beginning graduates need to have either a degree in English or an elementary teaching degree. Since classes for both positions would not overlap, qualified applicants could fulfill both job descriptions if agreed upon. Teachers are expected to make a 2-year commitment.

Applicants should be committed Christians with a heart for reaching children (and adults) through language education. Interested? Want to know more? Email Pastor Tony for a complete job description and additional requirements for either the after-school position or for the conversational English position: haugjapan@usa.net.

We've reached our goal and met the matching funds for the MTC van!

\$50,000



HOPE IN A TIME OF FEAR

Educating and training in Myanmar



In 1948, Myanmar (then known as Burma) gained its independence from British rule. The decades following have been peppered with protests, uprisings, and coups—making life very difficult for the people of Myanmar (known as Burmese). In 2021, a coup led by Myanmar's military squelched democratic progress and imprisoned many civilian political leaders.

In the midst of this continuing volatile unrest, OTAN is still striving to carry out our mission to train and resource persecuted pastors. And in the case of Myanmar, the need for secondary education is opening new doors and teaching comprehensive reading skills that will enhance future trainings.

Dr. Thuam Khai, Burmese national and OTAN's Myanmar assistant ministry manager, says, "In many areas, schools have not reopened since COVID and still remain closed because of the civil unrest. Education provides a unique chance to improve the lives of the Burmese people." In a shame and honor culture, our online secondary education classes will help our pastors have a positive influence and be more respected in their communities.

OTAN's focus on biblical education for pastors is at work in Myanmar. Currently, 4 students are training in subjects such as theological studies, church leadership, mission outreach, and church planting. Seven national missionaries in Myanmar are planting churches in Buddhist-influenced areas where sharing the gospel message is unwelcome and dangerous, especially during this military coup.

In an environment of political turmoil and fear where Christians represent only 8% of the population, Dr. Khai says, "These pastoral training students' lives have been changed. Some say, 'I grew up as a Christian, but never experienced this kind of training.' Their lives are being transformed, and they are no longer afraid."

Support OTAN's work in Myanmar by sending a check with the memo "Myanmar Ministry" or give securely online at OTAN.org, click the "Give" tab, then choose "Myanmar Ministry" from the menu.

A VISION FOR THEIR COUNTRY

New connections and new opportunities in Laos

How does the Holy Spirit work in our lives? Can you help us understand Bible terms like sanctification, adoption, and justification? How can we develop sound church leaders and formulate a plan for handing off leadership to the next generation?

“When we go into these countries, we always want to know what questions our pastors and leaders have. . . what they want to learn. Then we put together sessions based on those questions,” says Arthur, ministry manager for OTAN in Laos. “So in our training in northern Laos in April, we taught on the Holy Spirit, the definitions of biblical terms, and on developing a succession plan for church leadership.”

In Laos, more than 60% of the population is Buddhist. About 3-4 percent of the population is counted as Christian, but that figure often includes religions like Mormonism and Jehovah’s Witnesses. About 2% of the population is evangelical. Though the Lao constitution allows for freedom of religion, sharing the gospel publicly is forbidden and often prosecuted.

Of the 30 pastors who attended in April, 8 were new to OTAN trainings. Most of these men work as day laborers, raising and selling rice, fruit, eggs, or live-stock for a living. Some of the pastors have established “Homes of Hope” in their areas, where young people can live while they learn English, study the Bible, and participate in outreach projects to serve the needs of their own communities.

“In this particular group, the 22 pastors who have been attending trainings for a while serve as men-



Training Lao pastors, April 2024

tors to other pastors in their local areas. Their influence reaches into 94 churches and house churches in northern Laos,” says Arthur.

And their vision for Laos doesn’t stop there. Arthur says, “Many of these pastors are connected with the Lao Evangelical Church organization. They have a goal of reaching 300,000 of their own (Khumu) people with the gospel in the next 10 years. They call it the ‘great harvest’ of the Lao people.”

This fall, OTAN has been invited to extend our trainings into southern Laos. New areas of outreach can also mean new risks. Arthur adds, “We’re investigating that, and we’re moving cautiously.”

Today, would you pray for the Lao pastors who are reaching their country for Christ? Pray also for the possibility of additional trainings in Laos. To support the work in Laos, visit the “Give” page at OTAN.org.

REACHING MIDDLE EAST REFUGEES

Cast out...to be drawn in

“They’ve been scattered so they can hear the gospel.” Dr. B, OTAN’s ministry manager for the Middle East, sees the hand of God bringing light into the darkness of Middle Eastern refugees. “Some have fled from war in Iraq or in Syria. Some flee persecution because they changed their views on religious issues or began to question their faith,” he says.

When Dr. B travels to the Middle East to train and resource pastors, he often meets people in all stages of faith who have been brought along to the trainings. He says, “In one of our conferences with Arab refugees, around 100 people were attending. Many accepted the Lord, 26 were baptized, and more than half of them were Muslim background believers. Many return to start churches in their homes.”

One of the most requested topics among those ministering to refugees is how to answer questions about the Christian faith. In areas where churches are more established, trainings focus on how to study the Bible, how to defend your faith, and how to present the gospel.

In some of these countries, it is forbidden to share the



Refugee camp in the Middle East

good news of the love of Jesus to nationals who practice a different faith. Still, many refugees are coming to know Christ. “A couple who started a new church invited us to train there,” says Dr. B. “I met with them recently during our re-visit to this country, and the husband had planted 11 home churches in his province and nearby provinces!”

Dr. B has many prayer requests for this outreach including that God would raise up a wider network of pastors and for His protection as OTAN reaches into two new provinces in the Middle East.

Support OTAN’s Middle East outreach by sending a check or by giving securely online at otan.org, then choose “Middle East” from the drop-down menu.



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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 WE GIVE TO OTAN

"OTAN provides a much-needed resource to persecuted pastors in Asian countries that allows them to receive biblical, theological, and practical training they otherwise would not receive.

When you combine that training with the fact that these national pastors already understand their culture and speak their native language, OTAN is able to advance the spread of the gospel.

This is why we have chosen to partner deeply with OTAN."

~ Pastor Chad, Heritage Baptist Church, Winchester, VA