

OTAN

OUTREACH TO ASIA NATIONALS



And *GOD MADE* the beast of the earth
after its kind...

And God saw that
IT WAS GOOD.

Genesis 1:25



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**Wild elephants in
Thailand mountains**

TRAINING AND RESOURCING
PERSECUTED ASIAN PASTORS
TO REACH THEIR PEOPLE

NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN CAMBODIA

May's survey trip reveals many open doors

"They were literally shouting out loud with joy and excitement!" During our May survey trip to Cambodia, OTAN's Executive Director Al Doomy taught a group of 46 Cambodian pastors and leaders. Though all of the men had a general understanding of the Bible, only 3 had ever read the book of Jonah, which was Al's subject for one of the lessons. As he taught through the book with them, Al says, "They were so excited! They were like kids who just got a present."

With a population of more than 17 million, Cambodia allows freedom of religion among its people. About 93% of the population identify as Buddhist, about 3% as Christian. As OTAN explores serving in Cambodia, there is no doubt that a great need exists to train and resource pastors in the Banteay Meanchey province.

Among the challenges of maintaining a church and caring for its members, pastors are facing the grim reality of children in desperate need. "Many children in this area have been left behind by parents who have gone to other countries to find work," says Al. "Some have been left with grandparents who hardly have the time or the energy to care for these kids. Others have just been abandoned. One church we attended had 27 adults and 85 children, most of whom had no one but the church to care for them. One of the congregations was able to erect the walls of their church building, but had no roof."

In some of the poorest villages, the church is also the closest thing to a school that children will ever experience. "Some of these pastors also teach math and language," Al adds. "In villages that have a school, churches often provide rice and other food to supplement school meals." Before leaving, OTAN gave a gift of rice to the Cambodian pastors.

Al says, "These leaders are so gifted and creative. They are 'thinking gospel' all of the time. They are always seeking ways to share the love of Jesus."

Pray that God would give OTAN a clear vision for our ministry to Cambodia. Consider asking Him how you might be involved... through praying, giving, or even going.



Children on the steps of a Cambodian stilt house

35 NEW GRADS...AND MORE WAITING!

Vietnam's Mobile Bible College trains leaders



Some of our Vietnamese MBC students

Since 2017, "J" and "S" have been serving as OTAN's Ministry Managers for Vietnam. Each year, they travel into the country, training pastors and leaders as well as pastors' wives and other village women. J is a trainer in OTAN's Mobile Bible College, which is designed to give national pastors and leaders the skills to help them teach and lead their house churches.

This fall, OTAN's Vietnam Mobile Bible College will graduate 35 students, and at least 30 more students are waiting for the next series to begin. J says, "We teach courses like Old and New Testament survey, Bible study methods, discipleship, evangelism, counseling, missions, church administration, and others."

MBC classes meet over a period of 2 to 3 years, and most of the leaders who attend are day laborers. For these pastors, attending classes is a financial sacrifice as well as a sacrifice of time away from their families. They have no paid vacation or personal days. But there are no complaints from the students. J says, "They often tell us how helpful these classes are and how they now feel so much more confident to teach the Scriptures and lead their people. They are always so grateful!"

The graduation ceremony—complete with caps, gowns, and diplomas—is always a highlight. The certificates the graduates receive are more than just a verification of completion. This level of education builds trust and respect within their villages and among their fellow nationals. In addition, Vietnamese nationals are now starting to serve as trainers for MBC classes, which is key to OTAN's goal of reaching nations by equipping nationals.

J says, "Though these people may be many thousands of miles away from us and their cultural practices may be very different, we're all very much the same. We all need Jesus, and these leaders are dedicated to studying the Scriptures and reaching their people with the gospel."

Your gift today helps us continue our Mobile Bible College in Vietnam. Choose "Vietnam Mobile Bible College" from the "Give" page at otan.org, or send a check payable to OTAN, memo line: Vietnam MBC. (address on back page)

THAILAND CREATION CONFERENCE

Thirty-three leaders from 8 Asian nations

Thanks to the generosity of OTAN friends and partners, our Creation Conference brought the story of God's role as Creator to a diverse gathering of Asian pastors. Most of the leaders attending had only been taught the theory of evolution in their school systems and had never heard any scholarly, science-based information about creation.

Dan Lowen, OTAN's Operations Manager, was one of several OTAN staff attending the Thailand conference in March. "Our speaker Roland Beard taught from his book *A Study of God's Creation: Filled with Purpose, Direction, and Consequence*. This conference was the first time we used a unique translation device that allowed the pastors to log into a website where within seconds of Roland speaking, his words were translated into each of their languages to read and follow along. Feedback was very positive, especially about the accuracy."

Featured speaker and conference curriculum author Roland Beard said, "I noticed receptivity from the very first presentation which underlined the God-breathed framework for the Bible in Genesis. The theme was well received, and more was added to it in subsequent sessions. One pastor, who had been a practicing geologist, was especially excited to see biblical explanations to questions he had from his field."

Roland says, "Scripture interprets Scripture as a starting point. There is no other reasonable interpretation of the days of creation other than 24-hour period days. (Millions of years) is not reasonable in a physical sense



Asian pastors at Thailand Creation Conference

and denies the plain truth of the Word of God. In the process, it demeans God's power to create. If someone holds God taking 45 million years to go from first life to a modern man, which is not what the Bible says, then God is rendered a powerless experimenter. In truth, He is neither powerless nor an experimenter. I don't leave it there, so I spend much time showing evidence of the Genesis flood, the complexity of life that cannot self-evolve, etc."

Each pastor was given a small plant fossil and an animal fossil to take home with them for further study. "Our hope is that this conference deepened their understanding of the scientific and historical evidence for creation and that they will take this knowledge back to their congregations," says Dan. "My personal hope and prayer is that, because of the conference, these pastors have also built solid connections cross-culturally with their Asian brethren that will last far beyond the conference setting."

FALL TRAINING IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Sponsors are needed for pastors and leaders

"We are focusing on the pastors who are working in the poorest areas in 2 Middle Eastern countries. We are working with people who are ministering in the villages, people who never went to seminary and who have never had any sort of theological education." That's how OTAN'S Middle East Ministry Manager describes the pastors and full-time gospel workers he and the OTAN training team will be teaching on his upcoming fall trip.

"It is a pastors' conference, yes," he says, "but we are asking the pastors to come with their wives. We are trying to teach them methods of personal Bible study. These leaders spend a lot of time with their preaching, but they often don't take care of their own spiritual lives. This is important! So our focus is how to live a Christian life with a strong, personal relationship with God."

Our Middle East Ministry Manager and his wife have been in the US for many years. They often introduce US Arabic speakers to the love of Jesus, and they travel to the Middle East yearly to train national pastors who will reach their own people with the gospel.

Both in the US and in the Middle East, he knows the importance of connecting with people "where they are" and explaining the gospel in words and terms that make sense to the hearer. "We are teaching the gospel and God's love to Arabic speakers, but we have to do this using terminology that fits the people, words that they will understand and grasp."

"We will be teaching from the book of Matthew during our upcoming trip," he continues. "The conference will cost around \$40 per person, but that is very difficult for some. So we ask them to pay only around \$8 out of the \$40, and we try to find sponsors for the remaining costs. In one of the 2 countries, we were planning for 200 people. But we recently discovered that one province alone is sending 120 people. So we have to raise the number of sponsors to 250 for that country. We are always grateful to everyone who sponsors our pastors and full-time gospel workers."

Your gift of \$40 will sponsor one pastor/leader for the fall Middle East conference. Give securely at otan.org, "Give." Choose "Middle East Pastor Training" to help sponsor one or more pastors. Or mail a check payable to OTAN, memo line: Middle East Pastor Training. (address on back page)



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Give online at **otan.org** or by check to **PO 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.



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

We are a small church that has a heart for missions. Our missions budget allows us to support about 10 missionaries. However, through supporting OTAN, we can support **so many more national pastors** to reach their own people. We believe in investing in eternity. Through OTAN's ministry of equipping nationals for the ministry, we can multiply that investment through our missions giving!

It is exciting to read reports from OTAN of how Asian pastors are being equipped for the ministry through solid biblical training and how God is working to grow the church in spite of persecution and opposition. We are thankful to partner with OTAN in this missionary endeavor, looking forward to the day when we get to meet the redeemed of all the nations and walk in the light of the glory of God and of the Lamb together. (Rev 21: 24)

~Pastor Ted & Jenny Aschenbrand Liberty Baptist Church, Reidsville, NC