

SPRING 2023



thirdmill



INDIA

*Opposition
is Rising*

PLUS: Expanding Our Reach Through
More Than 400 Partnerships

Equipping and Strengthening the Church



A Call to Pray for India

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Opposition is rising day by day.
... [W]e are losing our freedom to
practice our faith.

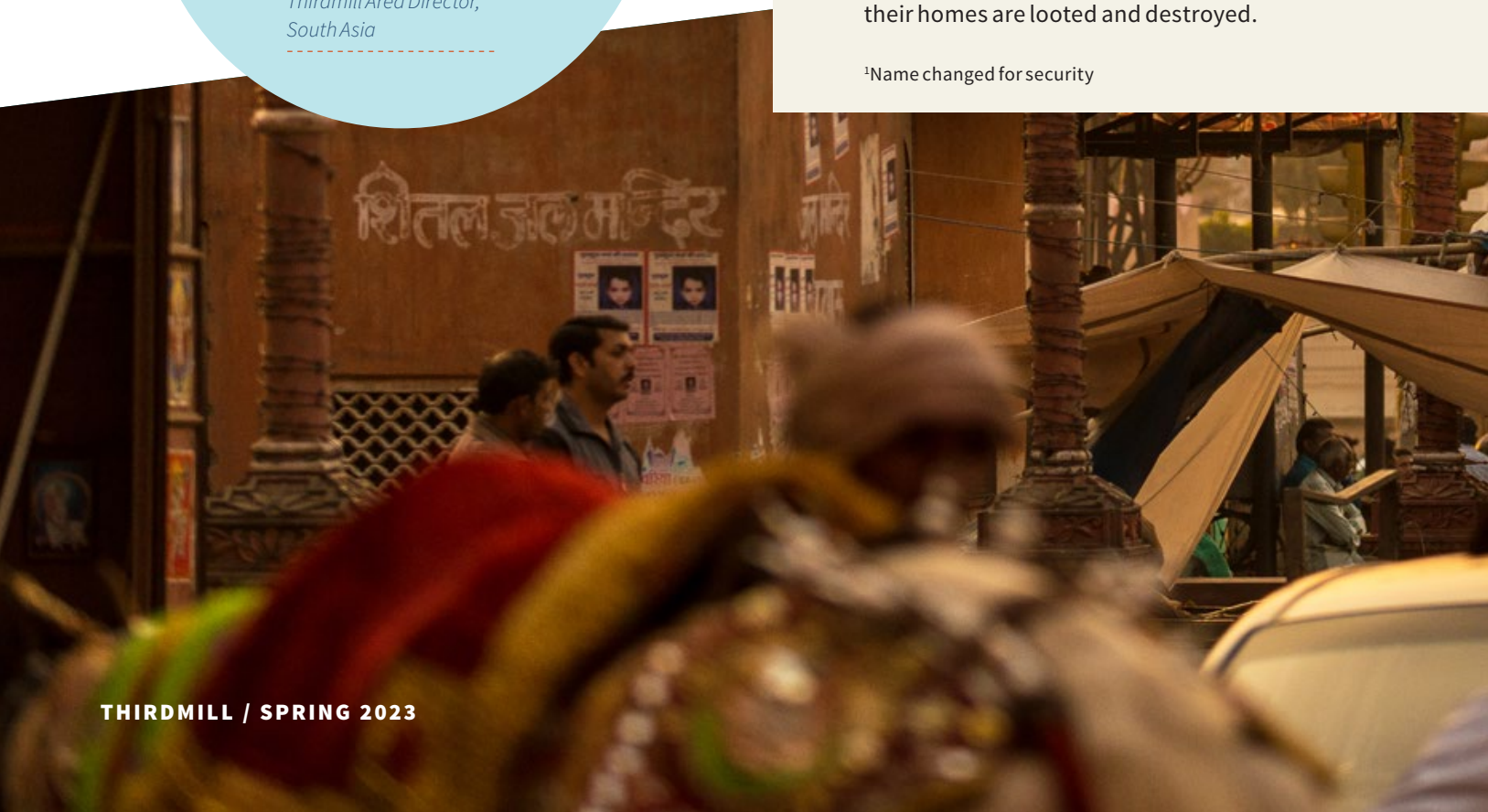
REV. R

*Thirdmill Area Director,
South Asia*

Rev. R¹ is a Thirdmill Area Director in South Asia. He and other Thirdmill area staff are working hard every day to fulfill the hundreds of requests they receive for Thirdmill training. Just as in so many other parts of the world, Christian leaders in this area are desperate for sound biblical and theological instruction. And Thirdmill is making an impact. But Rev. R. has also told us that since he began his work with Thirdmill, just over a year ago, there's been a subtle shift. Security has become more and more necessary. Publicizing training events or other opportunities requires more caution. And beyond this, a growing number of pastors who study Thirdmill, especially in India, are now facing extremely challenging circumstances, including threats and persecution.

In India, religious freedom has been in rapid decline since the election of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party in 2014. A dozen or so states within India have enacted “anti-conversion” laws. Christianity and other non-Hindu religions are considered anti-patriotic because “India is a Hindu nation.” Buoyed by this propaganda, Hindu nationalist groups have begun coercing people to “re-convert” to Hinduism through social pressure and violence. Christians who refuse are beaten with sticks and bricks, while their homes are looted and destroyed.

¹Name changed for security



Over the last three years, nearly 400 incidences of violence against Christians have been documented in one Indian state alone. And the United Christian Forum in Delhi reports that in 2021 there was an 80 percent increase in violence against Christians. Hundreds of families have been driven from their homes and villages, subjected to extreme cold, and deprived of food, clothing and basic necessities.

The police and government are, at best, not helpful and, at worst, working with Hindu nationalists to root out Christianity. There have been incidents reported where India's Central Bureau of Investigation was called in, not to investigate what happened to the victims, but rather to determine how the victims were converted to Christianity and whether or not they were in violation of anti-conversion laws.

Last year, Thirdmill hosted training events in several affected areas, including places like Chhattisgarh, a state in east-central India. Over the past four months, Thirdmill has worked with its local partners in Chhattisgarh to start 28 new Thirdmill learning communities. At least one of

these is located in one of the most severely affected districts. Each learning community is led by an indigenous leader who was trained, either directly or indirectly, by Thirdmill. Unfortunately, some of these leaders are now being persecuted, and the persecutions are becoming less and less isolated.

At Thirdmill, we believe biblical education is more than just for the sake of knowledge. We believe the Bible can equip pastors to stand firm when faced with the choice between violence and recanting their faith. And pastors equipped with a sound knowledge of the Bible can help equip and strengthen their churches to stand firm as well, even after losing their homes, their neighbors, and their families.

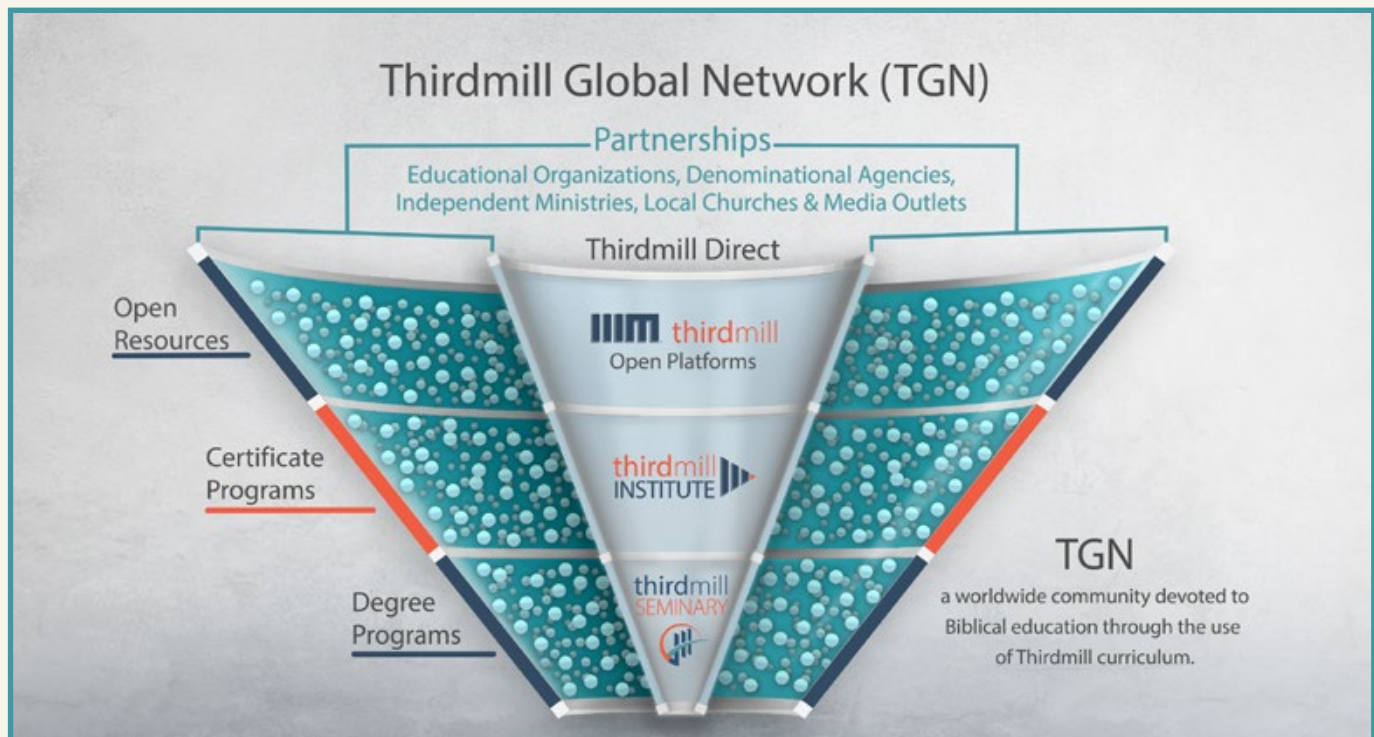
Please pray with us for our brothers and sisters in India. Thirdmill is determined to continue serving our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ, in India and around the world, until every church has a well-trained pastor.



Expanding our Reach through Partnerships

Without partners, Thirdmill would not be able to scratch the surface of our massive vision: **Biblical Education. For the World. For Free.**

In 2021, we formed the Thirdmill Global Network (TGN). This worldwide community is devoted to bringing free biblical education to church leaders in every major region of the world. Our growing number of **global partnerships** with educational organizations, denominational agencies, independent ministries, local churches and media outlets, is expanding our reach exponentially.



Partners in the TGN are local churches, seminaries and educational institutions, denominations, missions boards, or any collective group of Christians that come together to study Thirdmill curriculum in a structured way. Many partners have signed an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding), making them “official” members of the TGN. But it’s hard to keep track of how many organizations now fit the description of “partner” since, exactly as we’d hoped and envisioned, the program is being spread freely from group to group. This kind of organic growth is what we pray for — that as pastors and missionaries and lay leaders find our program helpful in their local communities, they will naturally share it with other communities.

Our partners use our materials in a variety of ways, but here are a few examples:



Last year, we grew from 327 partnerships to 447 — an increase of 37%! And this number continues to expand. Please join us in praising God for the growing number of partners that are using Thirdmill curriculum to strengthen the global church.



Thirdmill Welcomes Brad Downs to the Board

Thirdmill would like to welcome Mr. Brad Downs to our Board of Directors. Brad is the Chief Executive Officer for SRM (Strategic Resource Management), an independent firm that helps financial institutions identify cost savings and new revenue potential in their contractual relationships.

Brad first heard of Thirdmill through a presentation 10 years ago. Then, in 2016, he joined Thirdmill staff on a trip to Cuba to meet with several church leaders. He told us, "I was able to see and hear their incredible passion for learning and teaching the gospel. It was something I will never forget."

According to Brad, he joined the board "because I believe in the mission of **Biblical Education. For the World. For Free.** and want to help Thirdmill achieve its goals in any way I can, and hopefully, my business experience will be of benefit."

Brad has a Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Mississippi and an MBA, with an emphasis in Finance, from Millsaps College. He lives in Memphis, TN, with his wife and two daughters.

Introducing our Newest Vice President

We are pleased to announce that Careth Turner has been named Vice President of Design Production. Careth, whose previous roles have included Creative Director and Graphic and Video Designer, has worked at Thirdmill for 17 years.

"We have such talented artists in the Production department," Careth says of her team. "I am always so encouraged by the quality of what we are producing, but also how every team member is so committed to the mission of Thirdmill. I feel like what we have here is very special."



Careth says her favorite project to date was the visual update for our series Building Your Theology. "It focuses on how theology should honor God and further his purpose for our lives. While it was in production, I could see how we were making the content more accessible through the graphics. Knowing that the Holy Spirit uses what we are doing to help people understand the truth of God makes this the best job in the world."

With Careth's talent, enthusiasm, and proven track record, we know she will be a valuable asset to our leadership team, and we are delighted to welcome her to her new role! "I have seen Thirdmill change and grow in such astounding ways over the last 17 years," Careth says. "Our reach around the world and the visual quality of our materials just continues to increase year after year. God has blessed us richly by bringing the right people and the right opportunities to our humble ministry. To God be the glory! He has chosen to do mighty things through our team, and I look forward to serving the kingdom in my new role."

Careth was educated at Covenant College and Savannah College of Art and Design. She and her husband Bill live with their three children in Orlando, FL.

YOUTUBE CHANNELS EXCEED 55,000 SUBSCRIBERS

In 2022, Thirdmill expanded our YouTube channels to include **10** new languages! We are now offering YouTube resources in Amharic, Czech, Farsi, French, Hindi, Indonesian, Romanian, Tamil, Telugu & Thai.



Praise God for the ways He is expanding our reach online!

*Our core languages consist of English, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish.



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For several years **Thirdmill has been our best tool to get closer to God** and fulfill the purpose that God has for us in this nation that so badly needs the Word of God and faithful workers to promote it correctly.

Thank you with all our hearts!!!!

MARIO TRAVIESO

*Iglesia Evangélica Getsemaní,
Cuba*

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I've gone through many of your courses online. I have a four-year MDiv, but I've still learned so much from your videos. ... **You guys have nailed it — there's nothing like this out there!** It's just amazing — like wow!! I'm going to sing your praises to everyone I meet.

This is an exciting time for us as we look to support the schools we're starting in other countries. Thirdmill's curriculum will be key for the development of our future leaders in those locations and for missionaries/teachers/leaders we send to partner with them.

BURT GARWOOD

*Cornerstone Christian School,
Nebraska*

From the Field

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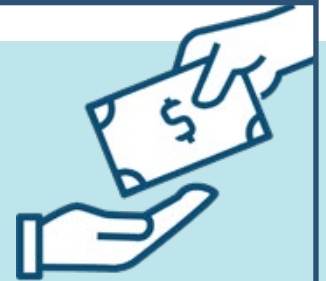
It is a privilege using materials from Thirdmill in Bible Life School of Theology, Lokoja Kogi State. The materials are very rich, eye-opening. Currently, I am using the basic discipleship material as my Sunday school manual. More grace to Thirdmill, and **thank you for reaching out to us** with the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ.

BENJAMIN IBRAHIM

Uganda



Planned Giving



At Thirdmill, we make it a priority to be good stewards of the gifts and resources we receive. There are several ways to give to Thirdmill. One important way is through deferred gifts.

Making a deferred gift to Thirdmill through your will, trust, or by other means, is a great way to establish a legacy and to guarantee that Thirdmill's work of providing Biblical Education. For the World. For Free. continues to flourish.

Should you have questions regarding charitable gift planning, including estate gifts or gifts that provide income, please reach out to Jeremy Ruch, Director of Strategic Relationships, at jruch@thirdmill.org for more information.



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We want to use [your materials] for Russian ministers in Ukraine and Kazakhstan. Please send curriculum.

God bless!!!

PROFESSOR

Seminary in East Asia