





# Faith Under Fire: Standing for the Gospel in Laos

In a small village in Laos, three brave men risked their freedom to spread the message of hope. Their mission was simple—distribute Gospel literature to those hungry for truth. However, their faith was tested when local authorities detained them. In this exclusive interview, we hear firsthand from Arlen, Ike, and Jeran about their experiences, challenges, and how their faith carried them through.

## Q1: What happened when you were retained?

**Arlen:** We were stopped in a remote village by officials who spoke no English. They escorted us to the town we had stayed in the previous night, where they searched our vehicle and confiscated our phones. We were escorted to the hotel where we had stayed previously and taken to eat a meal. Upon arriving at the hotel, our money and keys to our rooms were confiscated, and we were escorted to the jail, where we stayed for two nights. We were then escorted to the capitol, where we were held for one night in a hotel, met with the US Ambassador, and were questioned several times by the authorities. On the 3rd day, they deported us out of the country back to Thailand.



Arlen, Ike, and Jeran  
(First day in Laos before being arrested.)

## Q2: How did you feel when you were detained?

**Jeran:** From my personal perspective, the peace of God was overwhelmingly present during that time. I never felt any concern about what was happening. In fact, on that first night when we were put in jail, I remember rejoicing—not to sound boastful, but I was genuinely thankful that I hadn't been beaten before being taken in. It was just a really sweet time with the Lord. There's something profound about suffering for the sake of the Gospel, yet realizing that what I went through was nothing compared to what we read in the New Testament. It was humbling—one of those moments that makes you step back and say, Wow. Spiritually, it was incredibly stretching. For those two days, I had nothing except Him. There were a few interactions and a few questions asked, but for the most part, we spent a lot of time in that cell. And in that solitude, God was more present than ever.

**Arlen:** There were moments of wondering Why now? Why did this have to happen right after we had all the material with us? Yet, even in uncertainty, we saw glimpses of God's hand at work. As the authorities confiscated our Gospel literature, we later realized that when we arrived at the capital, some of the materials were missing. It became clear that some of the officers had kept copies for themselves. That realization shifted our perspective—perhaps God had orchestrated even this, planting seeds of truth among those who had taken our materials. It was a powerful reminder that His plans go beyond what we can see. Even in detainment, we held onto the hope that someone, somewhere, might read those words and come under conviction.

## Q3: What was your experience like while being held in detention?

**Jeran:** It was a cement cell with a hard, unforgiving board to sleep on—nothing comfortable, nothing familiar from my lifestyle. There was absolutely nothing homey about it. But despite that, like I said, they didn't mistreat us. It was actually sweet to just sit there and say, Thank You, Jesus. You know He has you there for a purpose, and you just have to let Him do His work. That said, it was dirty.

**Ike:** Honestly, sleeping on a hardwood floor would have been more comfortable than what we had. The boards they gave us were spaced about half an inch to an inch apart, so no matter how you laid down, you felt it. They did bring us blankets—though they used our own money to buy them—and shoved them through the bars. At least that helped keep the chill off at night and gave a little bit of padding. The first night was especially uncomfortable. There was an outside light that never got turned off, so our cell was always lit. And then there were the lizards. Every hour or two, they would start chirping—really loud—for about 30 seconds before going silent again. That happened all night, so we woke up multiple times. In the morning, they let us out to use the restroom, gave us some bread, and then put us back in the cell.

The next day, they took us out for interrogation. They fed us first, then questioned us for a long time before putting us back in the cell for another night. The following morning, they transported us to the capital, where the questioning continued, but by then, the embassy had gotten involved. That night, they put us up in a comfortable hotel, and the next morning, we returned for more questioning. Eventually, they read us our rights and finalized our deportation. It was a long process, but through it all, God's hand was evident.

## Q4: How did you see God's hand at work during your detention?

**Jeran:** the most significant thing for me was how the officers responded as they went through the materials. Several of them sat with me one-on-one, reading through the books, trying to explain what was "wrong" with them—even though we had a language barrier. I watched as several of them were moved to tears as they finished reading. And that was just wow. That wasn't anything I could have done. That wasn't anything Vision Beyond Borders or anyone else could have orchestrated. That was God at work. Looking back at the entire trip, I truly believe God had us there for those men in that village. I think there was a group of people—hungry for truth—who we would have never intentionally reached out to because of their position of authority. And yet, there they were, with access to the things they were supposed to get rid of. We even saw some of them discreetly smuggle materials into their pockets behind their fellow workers' backs. Just little details like that—things that make me stand in awe. Why would they do that? By all logic, they were there to confiscate and destroy those materials, yet they were hiding them away. That was nothing but God at work.

## Q5: What did you guys do with your time once you were deported back to Thailand?

**Ike:** Once we were deported, the three of us just stood there thinking, Okay... what's next? We had lost much of the supplies we planned to distribute and had another week and a half before our flights home. After praying, we decided to make the most of the time. We bought cheap tickets to Bangkok, where Pat told us they had plenty of tracts to hand out. It felt like God had moved us there for a reason. While other teams had bold, high-risk stories—jumping fences, sneaking tracts—we had spent time in jail. But at the end of the day, it wasn't about the adventure; it was about sharing the Gospel. Over the next several days, we passed out 3,000 to 4,000 tracts. One moment that stood out was meeting a Buddhist man from Myanmar. I handed him a Thai tract, but he couldn't read it. Then, unexpectedly, he started speaking English. Right there, in an alley, I got to share the Gospel with him—something I hadn't expected at all. Looking back, I can see how God closed one door and opened another in Thailand. Maybe we weren't meant to reach those villages, but who else was going to hit the streets of Bangkok? The city is massive, and what we did might seem like just a drop in the ocean—but even a small drop is part of God's plan.



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