

Asia Harvest



'Put in the Sickle, for the Harvest has Come!' (Mark 4:29)

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Bibles for China

Are There Enough Bibles in China Today?

From the Frontlines

with Hammie & Alti

This guest editorial was written by Hammie and Alti, dedicated missionaries who work in some of the most remote and dangerous parts of Asia, among unreached people groups with no Gospel witness. They lead a ministry called the K2 Association.

On the video page at our website: www.asiaharvest.org we have a dozen excellent videos made by Hammie and Alti, under the heading 'Hidden Tribes of the Himalayas'.

Many years ago, two brothers in California decided to sell all their belongings and search for gold. After discovering a small strip of gold in the ground at one location, they purchased the surrounding land and constructed a mine to extract as much gold as possible from the ground.

After a few months it looked like there was no more gold to be found. The brothers were discouraged and sold all their equipment and rights to the land for a few hundred dollars. The new owner told the engineer who was working for him to keep on digging in exactly the same spot where the brothers first discovered their gold.

The engineer dug down just a few feet below where the brothers had given up and struck more gold! If the brothers had just a little more perseverance to keep on digging they would have been wealthy beyond their wildest dreams.

In the Christian life, we too can grow discouraged and give up too quickly. Consider these facts from the lives of several great missionary pioneers:

- ♦ William Carey worked and prayed for 7 years in India before he baptized the first believer. Today he is remembered as the “father of missions”.
- ♦ Adoniram Judson worked for 7 years in Burma before he won his first soul for God. He prayed 7 times a day and his prayers shook the country for God.
- ♦ Robert Morrison worked and prayed for 7 years before he saw the first Chinese person saved. Today China has the fastest growing Church in the world.

- ♦ Robert Moffat worked, prayed and waited for 7 years before he experienced the Holy Spirit moving in Africa.

In Asia there is a certain kind of bamboo plant. After planting the seed in the ground, the farmers water and fertilize it for the first year, but nothing happens. They faithfully water and fertilize it for a second year but still nothing happens. They water and fertilize it for a third year but still there is no sign of life. For a fourth year they water and fertilize the ground, yet still nothing happens.

Then, all of a sudden, during the fifth year it grows 30-feet tall in just 60 days!

For four years the farmers do not see anything happen, but they persevere, not becoming discouraged or giving up. Then in the fifth year they are richly rewarded for their patience and hard work.

If the farmers skip a year of watering and fertilizing the ground, the miracle does not happen. For those four years everything takes place underground where the eye cannot see. The seeds are sprouting and forming a solid base, and the roots reach down far into the soil. Those years of preparation are necessary for the amazing growth that occurs in the fifth year.

My dear friend, I know it must be difficult to keep on going when you don't always see the results you would love to see. Don't give up! Keep on doing what God has called you to do. Allow God's Word to encourage you, for it says: ***"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers"*** (Galatians 6:9).

Don't give up like the gold miners in California who grew discouraged by their lack of progress. Keep watering the ground where you planted God's seed, and at the proper time you too will reap a harvest if you persevere.

There will be a breakthrough. There will be a harvest. There will be fruit, and there will be growth in His time. The Almighty God has declared, ***"my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it"*** (Isaiah 55:11).

Cover photo: A hand-copied Chinese Bible. During the 1960s and 70s the Word of God was so scarce in China that Christians often painstakingly copied the Bible by hand so they could read God's Word for themselves.

BIBLES FOR CHINA

Are There Enough Bibles in China Today?

It's hard to believe that it is just two and a half years since our newsletter #92 broke the news that we had passed the milestone of printing and delivering one million Bibles to China's house church Christians.

Thanks to the love of God and His people all around the world, last month we surpassed the three million Bibles mark. Glory to God! At the time of writing this newsletter the Lord has allowed us to put **3,022,783 Bibles into the hands of Chinese believers. It took us 7 years to get to one million, and just 2½ more years to pass three million.**

This exponential growth is amazing because the overwhelming majority of people who give to our work are not wealthy in the eyes of the world. Most of these Bibles have come from an accumulation of gifts from normal folk who work hard and love the Lord Jesus. **Last year the median size donation we received at Asia Harvest was \$63.** These Christians, from many different nations, appreciate the opportunity to help their brothers and sisters in China, even though they will probably never meet except in heaven. To everyone who has prayed for and given to this project, thank you!



Over the years as we have had the opportunity to minister in different parts of the world, we have encountered Christians who are confused about the Church in China.

Some have heard that there is now freedom of worship in China, while others are told there is still widespread religious persecution.

Some sources claim there are in excess of 100 million Christians in China, while others claim there are no more than 30 or 40 million.

And perhaps most confusing of all, some claim Bibles are now freely available and are no longer needed in China, while

other organizations claim there is a marked shortage of Scriptures and millions of believers are still without God's Word.

With such conflicting information, it is little wonder many Christians around the world are confused when it comes to China!

Part of the reason for the confusion comes from the deliberate spreading of misinformation. In the last few years there has been a concerted attempt by the Three-Self Patriotic Movement and China Christian Council (the official, state-sanctioned bodies for Christianity in China), to assure the world that Bibles are now freely available in China.

For those not familiar with China, the official state church is permitted to print a certain number of Bibles each year through the Amity Press, located in the city of Nanjing. These Bibles are generally provided to members of the official churches. However, in China approximately 70% of Christians attend unregistered house church fellowships that are not associated with the official churches. It is those tens of millions of believers that Asia Harvest is called to serve.

Officials from China have held press conferences in many nations to promote the stance that Bibles are now freely available in China. They have successfully launched a global offensive via Christian radio, television and magazines to break the

“good news” that China no longer needs Bibles.

During the past year we have received a number of letters and emails from people, asking why we still print Bibles in China. Some have even informed us that we are so out of touch we haven't realized that China is now “awash with Bibles.”

As we and our colleagues travel throughout China, we have never met a house church leader who is not thankful for the work of Amity Press, and indeed the house church believer thank God for every Bible produced over the years, “legal” or not.

However, it simply isn't true that the official Bibles are freely available inside China for all believers. This would be wonderful if it was true, but it is not the case.

Our friend Gary Russell of China Harvest recently gave the following helpful illustration about ministry in China:



CHINA BIBLE MAP



Thanks to the grace of God, and your prayers and support, Asia Harvest has now printed and delivered more than three million full Chinese Bibles to Christians in China since 2001. Our Chinese coworkers provide tremendous, detailed reports, which allow us keep track of every Bible we print and to create this distribution map. On behalf of all the believers in China, thank you and God bless you!

Bibles Delivered by Province:

1 Anhui	301,063
2 Zhejiang	265,822
3 Heilongjiang	265,605
4 Inner Mongolia	224,963
5 Henan	220,340
6 Shandong	196,648
7 Jilin	144,117
8 Shanxi	138,934
9 Jiangsu	113,018
10 Liaoning	110,154
11 Gansu	96,901
12 Xinjiang	90,496
13 Shaanxi	89,833
14 Sichuan	89,529
15 Hubei	89,483
16 Guangxi	84,244
17 Chongqing	82,199
18 Qinghai	73,075
19 Fujian	56,597
20 Hebei	53,647
21 Hainan Island	51,031
22 Jiangxi	45,738
23 Shanghai	34,100
24 Guangdong	29,392
25 Yunnan	28,871
26 Beijing	19,391
27 Hunan	12,119
28 Guizhou	10,078
29 Ningxia	5,393
TOTAL	3,022,783

“China is a waffle, a very, very big waffle—not a pancake. Pancakes tend to have butter and syrup distributed fairly evenly, whereas waffles may have butter in one square, syrup in others, both in others, and neither in others! Ridges between the China squares include mountains, sheer distance, ethnicity, language, generations, local authorities, and other factors. Foreigners commonly make the strategic mistake of biting into a square or two and then extrapolating that situation nationwide, hence so many conflicting reports even by relative experts, who feel they know about China because they have been there and seen it first-hand....

I know of one believer who went to Nanjing to purchase 1,000 legal Bibles for Christians in his home region. He did buy them and headed home—followed by the police. They handcuffed his hands behind his back and suspended him from the ceiling while they interrogated him, demanding to know where all the Christians live and who their leaders are. Foreigners may have seen him buy the Bibles and they may have formed a favorable impression, but they didn’t see him hanging from the ceiling.

I have another friend who, with his own eyes, has seen many thousands of legally printed Bibles in a government confiscation warehouse. Several major covert suppliers of Bibles to the house church networks of China report that all their best efforts combined meet far less than half of specific requests from Chinese churches, often a mere 10% of the present need.

Supplying Bibles inevitably and consistently generates a greater need for even more. In China the Bible has always been a key to conversions. It is common for one Bible to

result in several converts within months as it is shared. I know of one case in the early 1990s where a single Bible resulted in 10,000 conversions within three years!”

For more than 20 years we have served the house church networks in China. They obtain as many Bibles from the government-approved Amity Press as possible, but the amount they are able to source is only a fraction of the size of their need. While we agree there is a reasonable supply of Bibles available in the major provincial capital cities today, most house church Christians live in rural areas of China. The believers in many remote places where our Bibles are distributed, such as in Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang or Gansu, say they have little or no chance of obtaining a Bible from the registered churches. Many Christians live hundreds of miles from the nearest city where the government churches store Bibles, and even when they travel into the city to attempt to buy some they are often turned away, or are only able to get one or two copies when they need hundreds or thousands of copies just to equip the new believers in their area.

Some of the networks we serve need hundreds of thousands of Bibles each year just to nourish their new converts.

Friends with extensive experience in China recently told of a meeting they had with a house church pastor named Brother Shu. He told them, “I used to think that Chinese could get all the Bibles they needed nowadays. But I was humbled to find out I was so deceived! I’ve lived my whole life in the big cities, but then as I began to work more and more in remote rural areas, I found there are many hundreds of

thousands of believers in those places without access to any Bible!”

So far, by the grace of God, we been able to print and deliver over three million Bibles to the house churches of China. **In the first half of this year alone we have provided 255,026 Bibles, yet this is just a fraction of the size of the verified requests that come in to our coworkers in China.** We have requests from leaders of church movements all across China that have experienced explosive growth.

Here is just one letter we have received:

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the West,

Thank you so much for how you have blessed our fellowships by providing Bibles for us. The growth in numbers and in spiritual strength that our fellowships have experienced in recent years is in large part due to our members having the Bible to feed upon daily instead of occasionally. In the past we were very happy to share one Bible for an entire group; some of our groups did not even have any Bible at all and we would borrow from other groups. Many times the group giving up their Bible was giving up their only copy. Thankfully in recent years Bibles have not been as scarce as before, but as the church grows so rapidly it seems that we need even more than we did a few years ago! Just to meet this need within our network alone, 2,138,000 copies are needed and that must be multiplied many times over to meet the current needs of all the house churches in China.

Thank you so much for sharing God's precious Word with us!

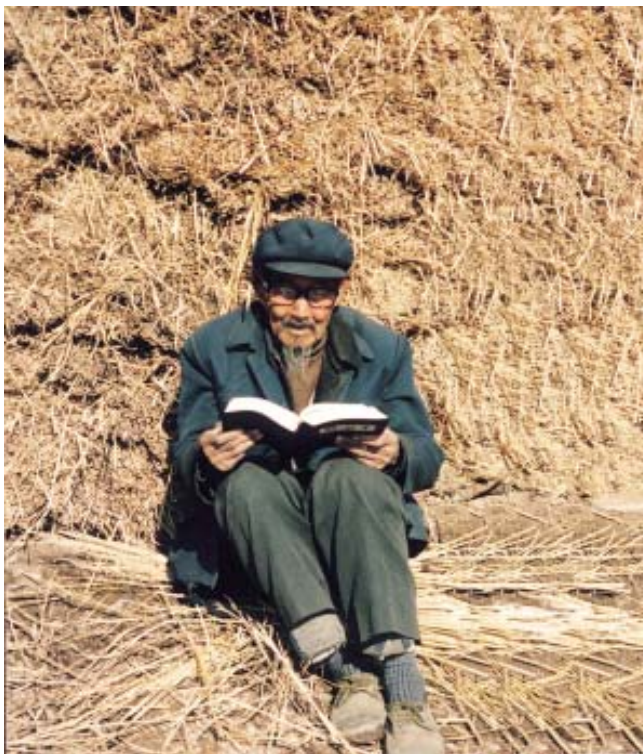
We pray for the day when God's Word will be freely available to all

Christians in China—whether they worship in registered or unregistered churches, and regardless of whether they live in large cities or in remote rural areas.

In the meantime, we continue to print as many Bibles in partnership with the house churches of China as we have provision for.

Due to our coworkers making every effort to streamline the project and seek out the best prices, each full Chinese Bible costs just \$1.80 to print and deliver. **We invite you to participate in this opportunity to bless and equip the Church in China,** and to help the greatest revival in history continue by providing God's Word to His people.

We know of no other investment in God's kingdom where so little can make such a huge difference in the lives of so many people.



CHINA BIBLE PRINTING



Current Total: 3,022,783 Bibles printed and delivered.

We are partnering with house churches in China in a long-term goal to print Bibles for Christians. We receive countless requests from house church leaders throughout the country, requesting God's Word for their congregations. These Bibles are distributed free of charge to all parts of China, equipping the believers and helping add fuel to the fires of revival that are burning brightly. **Each full Bible costs just \$1.80 to print and deliver.**

ASIAN WORKERS' FUND

Thanks to your gifts we are currently able to support 454 Asian evangelists working among 108 unreached tribes and ethnic groups.



The **Asian Workers Fund** assists church-planting evangelists who are involved in strategic ministry in Asia. These servants of the Lord have committed their whole lives to the Gospel but are hindered by lack of finances. We only support evangelists/missionaries and not pastors, as we believe pastors should be supported by the flocks they shepherd. Please pray about whether you or your church could help support these dedicated workers, at **\$25 per month** each. A prayer card is sent to all regular donors.

SOUTHEAST ASIA BIBLE FUND



Current Total: 167,542 Bibles Printed in 30 languages

The Communist nations of Laos and Vietnam are home to more than 250 different tribes, dozens of which had full Bibles or New Testaments translated into their languages prior to the arrival of Communism in 1975. Since then, these believers have been deprived of Bibles by the authorities. We are also providing God's Word to tribes in Myanmar (Burma), Cambodia, and other Southeast and South Asian nations as the need arises. **Each Bible costs \$2.70 to print and deliver.**

CHINA LIVING MARTYRS' FUND

Because of your partnership we are supporting 676 living martyrs.



"A martyr is a Christian who chooses to suffer death rather than deny Christ or His work... One who sacrifices something very important to further the Kingdom of God and endures great suffering for Christian witness." (The Voice of the Martyrs)

The **China Living Martyrs Fund** assists pastors and evangelists who are unable to work because of injuries or illness caused by persecution. They and their families face extreme poverty and hardship. Through a gift of **\$35 per month** you can help support one of these living martyrs. A prayer card is sent to every regular supporter of this project.

PROJECT SMILE



Your generous gifts have so far helped bring a smile to the faces of 8,420 children in Vietnam.

Project Smile helps children from poor families in Vietnam who were born with disabilities such as cleft palates, cleft lips and club feet, as well as others who need operations for burns, cancerous growths and other conditions. The cost of helping a child varies depending on the kind of surgery required, but each gift received of **\$60** helps a child have a better life. A laminated prayer card of a child helped through Project Smile is sent to all donors.

ASIA DISASTER RELIEF FUND



Transforming lives from ashes to beauty with God's love.

Over the years Asia Harvest has provided relief assistance to the victims of natural disasters such as the earthquake in China and cyclone in Myanmar (Burma); the Tsunami, and a host of other disasters in India, Afghanistan, Vietnam, and elsewhere. In addition to providing aid through medicine, tents, blankets, food and water, rebuilding homes etc., the Christians we partner with take every opportunity to share the Gospel, and thousands of people have come to know Jesus Christ. This long-term fund helps us respond immediately whenever a disaster strikes.



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