

Asia Harvest



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

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October 2011 - Newsletter #111



Nuggets from the Harvest Field

Standing Firm in a Time of Shaking

From the Frontlines

with Paul & Joy Hattaway

“Now he has promised, ‘Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.’ The words ‘once more’ indicate the removal of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our ‘God is a consuming fire.’” (Hebrews 12:26-29).

Since the Lord Jesus first called us to serve Him in Asia, we have been privileged to be a link between the Church in Asia and Christians around the world. We get to travel to various countries, and meet believers from a myriad of cultures and backgrounds. It has given us a fresh appreciation for the Body of Christ.

Over the last few years many Christians we have met have reported that they are going through a shaking process. The kind of shaking people are experiencing varies from place to place, and from person to person. Many are under pressure financially, through health crises, marital struggles, persecution and discrimination, church splits, etc. People’s moral and ethical integrity is being tested and shaken. Many of our Christian friends in Christchurch, New Zealand, have had their nerves frayed by continual physical shaking with more than 7,500 earthquakes and aftershocks in the past year.

It is not only individual lives that are being shaken. Many churches and ministries have been experiencing a great shaking also. One of the world’s largest mission organizations, which has a history of almost 200 years, has experienced such major financial difficulties in the last few years that they have had to bring hundreds of missionaries home from the field.

We tell you this not to depress you, but hope that if you are experiencing a difficult time in your life, you will realize that God is busy purifying those He loves. He does this for our own good, and for His glory. Jesus is not returning for a messed-up bride. He is returning for a beautiful bride, for the Lord **“gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.”** (Ephesians 5:25-27).

Because we live in a fallen world, much of the time we don't feel too radiant, holy and blameless, but God loves His children so much that He patiently helps us to become all that He intends. A large part of that process is allowing the Holy Spirit to shake our lives. He wants to shake out sinful patterns and thoughts, bad attitudes and practices, false ideas and beliefs. He wants to set us free from both legalism and licentiousness. When the shaking process is complete, we will be better equipped to serve and glorify Him.

Once we heard on the news that a wealthy businessman gave a brand new \$200,000 Ferrari for his son on his 18th birthday. Two hours later the teenager was dead. He had not been trained to receive such a gift and was unable to drive the car with the necessary level of skill and caution. Our Heavenly Father will not bestow His children with certain gifts unless they are equipped to handle them responsibly without disgracing His Name and hurting themselves.

One thing we have realized in our own lives over the years is that hard times and shakings are designed and permitted by the Lord for our own good. When things are comfortable we can easily slip into spiritual complacency. Lives that make a difference are often first tested in the furnace of affliction and difficulty. Times of ease, prosperity and idleness, on the other hand, often lead to sin. When King David chose to commit adultery and murder, Israel was experiencing a time of unparalleled prosperity and success.

The Church in China was feeble and struggling before Communism came to power. Decades of affliction have resulted in a strong and determined Chinese Church today, and there are now approximately 100 million more Christians than before their struggles began. It is not the persecution and shaking in itself that makes us holy. Rather, difficult circumstances drive us to God's Word, and it is the "washing with water through the word" which makes us holy.

Take note of what the Almighty God once told Israel: ***"See, I have refined you, though not as silver. I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another"*** (Isaiah 48:10-11).

The same is true for Christians today. The all-wise God will not let His Name be defamed, and He is shaking the Church. It needs to be shaken so that false believers will either repent or be separated from the flock. In the American 'Bible belt' the divorce rate and the number of unwed teen pregnancies is reportedly now higher than the rest of the country. Recently we read a shocking study into the state of Christianity in America. Researcher David Campbell questioned thousands of Christians throughout the nation and found that **83% of evangelical Protestants agreed that "good people" of other religions will go to heaven.**

Another study in *USA Today* reported that **52% of Christians in the United States believe that eternal life is not exclusively for those who accept Jesus Christ as their Savior.**

From these surveys, it seems that the majority of professing believers no longer think Jesus is required to get into heaven. There seems to be a growing consensus among church-goers that we can make it on our own, and all “good people” will go to heaven. Not only does this directly contradict the Scriptures, it is a direct slap in the face of God, who sent His beloved Son to die on a cross for sinful mankind. If it is possible to get into heaven by being good, then Jesus obviously wasted His time dying such a cruel and painful death for all who have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

The Lord of Lords and King of Kings will not let His Name be defamed in such a disgraceful manner by a backslidden church, and so He is shaking His children all around the world. If you are going through a testing time, you need to realize that your experiences are common, and should be expected. The Bible addresses Christians this way:

“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.... However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ... So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good” (1 Peter 4:12, 16-17, 19).

There are great changes going on in the world. The number of earthquakes, hurricanes and other natural disasters seem to be dramatically increasing. The financial systems of the world are swaying back and forth, causing fear and trepidation in the hearts of millions. At such a time as this, God’s people need to rise up and live godly, uncompromising lives as we walk in His light. The Bible exhorts us to submit to God’s cleansing process so that we may be, ***“an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work”*** (2 Timothy 2:21).

This is a time for every Christian to make a decision about the level of commitment they want to make to God. Those who are content to keep one foot in the world will soon find such a compromised faith impossible to maintain.

For those who don’t want to be mere church-goers, but who desire to know and obey the Lord Jesus more than ever, be encouraged! The Bible says we should ***“...not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal”*** (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

Over the years we have recorded hundreds of testimonies told to us by Christian workers throughout Asia. In the remainder of this newsletter we would like to share a few of these to encourage your faith.

THE MIRACLE MUSHROOMS

As a powerful revival swept across central China in the 1990s, many Christians responded to God's call to preach the Gospel in unreached regions of the country. Two teenage girls from central China travelled to remote Qinghai Province to reach the Buddhist ethnic minorities living there. They had no financial support, no return tickets and no contacts. The whole region was completely devoid of any knowledge of Jesus. After arriving, the duo's hearts were filled with compassion. They tried to share Christ's message, but the local women opposed them and drove them out of their homes. They were forced to sleep wherever they could find shelter: under bushes, in abandoned farm sheds, and the like. They were struggling, their stomachs were empty, and nobody would listen to the good news they desired to share.

One day the two girls heard about an abandoned cave that the locals avoided because they believed it to be haunted by ghosts. The girls saw this as the Lord's provision and prayed against any unclean spirits as they moved into their new home. The girls prayed for many hours with tears in their eyes, asking the Lord to help them. One night they were particularly downcast and hungry. They felt that unless the Lord did a miracle, they would die. They prayed until they fell asleep. In the morning they awoke to find that during the night mushrooms had sprouted right outside the entrance of the cave! They immediately boiled them, thanking God for their nutritious meal.

The next morning they woke to discover more mushrooms had grown up again during the night! This continued every morning for about a year. Even in winter these miraculous mushrooms never failed to appear, poking their heads up through the snow outside the cave entrance. The girls learned how to enjoy mushrooms in every possible way. They boiled them, fried them and steamed them. They always tasted delicious, because they were miraculous provision of God.

Gradually these two young women started to be accepted by the local community. They were able to lead some women to Christ. A small church was established for the first time in the region. After about a year, one of the young women secured a job washing dishes at a local restaurant. The very same day she commenced work the mushrooms stopped appearing outside the cave! For many years now the "haunted" cave has been used as a Bible training centre for new believers. Now hundreds of people have come to Christ in that area.



A "cave church" in China.

THE BURNING TOOTH



Do you know that the country of Vietnam is home to about 150 different tribes and ethnic groups, each one having their own customs and language? Some of these tribes live in extremely remote areas in the mountainous central and northern parts of the country. Some tribes have embraced Christianity, but most remain completely cut off from the Gospel.

One such tribe is the Churu (pronounced “Ju-Ru”) people, who number about 15,000 people. They live in foreboding mountains along Vietnam’s border with Cambodia. For countless centuries the Churu people have lived in spiritual bondage under the power of local shamans, or witch-doctors. A number of years ago we were told the following testimony by a Vietnamese evangelist. The following events were witnessed by many people....

“To reach the Churu people we walked for several days. Many wild animals and leeches inhabit this part of Vietnam. Each time we crossed a river or stream our legs and arms were covered with leeches. After many struggles we finally reached a Churu village.

A number of tribes in the mountains of Vietnam received the Gospel before missionaries were expelled in 1975, but the Churu inhabit such a remote area that missionaries were never able to reach them. Few outsiders had ever visited them, and they remained a completely unreached people group.

Within minutes of arriving in the village a large crowd gathered around us to hear what we had to say. Most Churu people were naked, even though it gets very cold in the mountains. They do not choose to go naked. They are simply so poor they cannot afford to buy or make even a simple cloth.

The witch-doctors among the Churu possess a lot of demonic power. All the villagers live in fear of them. If a witch-doctor places a curse on someone who is not a Christian, that person is sure to die. The people are also kept in poverty because of the evil men. Whenever someone is sick they must consult the witch-doctor, who demands the sacrifice of valuable livestock as offerings to the evil spirits, and as payment for his services.

We started sharing stories of Jesus with the Churu people, as the witch-doctor emerged from his hut and began to listen. We told the people Jesus could set them free from sin and

bondage if they put their trust in Him, and that they did not need to remain under the control of demonic spirits. The witch-doctor began to stir the people up against us and we could see that a major spiritual confrontation was looming. We told the villagers not to be afraid because Jesus is the Living God and that all power and authority in heaven and on earth belongs to Him!

We told them how our God once proved He is the true and Living God by causing fire to fall from heaven on Elijah's sacrifice, while the Baal "witch-doctors" stood by powerless.

The main symbol of the witch-doctor's authority was a huge wild pig's tooth which he wore on a chain around his neck. The tooth had been handed down from generation to generation, and whoever possessed it had the right to lead the community and to mediate between the people and the spirit world.

The witch-doctor stepped forward, with a furious look on his face. He took the chain with the pig's tooth from around his neck and angrily shouted, "If your God can make this tooth catch on fire then we will believe in Him, but if it does not catch on fire we will kill all of you right here!"

As you can imagine we prayed very fervently and cried out to the Lord! Hundreds of Churu tribesmen gathered around and watched intently to see what would happen.

After praying for some time, suddenly the pig's tooth burst into flames by itself! The whole village saw it and were amazed. Many believed the message, and dedicated their lives to Jesus Christ.

Today we have a church of more than 300 Churu people. We constantly teach God's Word to them through stories because they are very simple people who struggle to understand concepts except in story form.

God's grace and love is resting upon the Churu Christians. For the first time ever they have joy and peace, and they no longer live under the power of demons. Jesus has set them free! We sent teams of strong young men back into the mountains with clothes and blankets to help our new Churu brothers and sisters.

We praise God that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever!"



THE MAN WITH TWO HEADS

In 1994, in the town of Nanyang in China's Henan Province, an elderly well-known doctor named Chen developed a cancer in the side of his face. The cancer grew to enormous proportions until it looked from a distance as though he had two heads.

The ear on that side of his head moved a considerable distance from its normal position; as fluids congregated and made it balloon out. His appearance was so hideous that people frequently turned away in disgust and horror when he walked down the street. As his condition worsened, Dr. Chen suffered terrible pain and he was unable to sleep.

Dr. Chen and his 12-year-old grandson visited a physician and was plainly told there was nothing that could be done for him. Chen was instructed to go home, set his affairs in order, and prepare to die. The physician gave some poison to the grandson, advising him to slip it into his grandfather's tea so that his life would end 'mercifully'.

Later that afternoon, as the boy walked down the street, he wept uncontrollably for his beloved grandfather. The boy knew he couldn't do what the physician had asked him to do. His intense wailing and desperation caught the attention of people, including a house church evangelist who stopped Dr. Chen's grandson and asked what was wrong. The boy told the story of what had happened earlier in the day. The evangelist told him, "Whatever you do, don't put the poison in your grandfather's tea." He wrote an address on a piece of paper and said, "Please bring your grandfather to this address at seven o'clock."

In intense agony and distress, Dr. Chen and his grandson made their way to the address the evangelist had given them, not knowing what or who they would find there. When they arrived they found a house church meeting in progress, with a preacher sharing the Word of God. Despite Dr. Chen's shocking appearance, the preacher continued his message. After he had concluded, the evangelist laid



his hands on each of Dr. Chen's "heads" and prayed a simple prayer, asking God to heal him.

Dr. Chen returned home that evening with no apparent change in his condition. He fell asleep and woke up thirteen hours later, the first time in three months he had gained any good rest. The next day, however, he still had two "heads" and did not look any better. Chen and his grandson rushed back to the evangelist's house. The preacher told them not to worry, because God had already healed him and it would take a little time for the physical symptoms to reflect the spiritual reality of what had happened.

Dr. Chen's condition gradually improved over the following days. One week later he had been totally healed and his appearance had returned to normal. His ear returned to its normal position and even the stretched skin where his face had ballooned out now looked unscarred.

After Dr. Chen and his grandson became disciples of Jesus Christ, the doctor's conscience was troubled because for years he had deceived people by selling them fake pills which he knew contained no medicinal value. Chen repented, and immediately went to his medical clinic and threw the pills away. He kept the pill bottles, however, and made some new labels which said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be healed!"

Hundreds of people in Nanyang had seen Dr. Chen's condition before and after his healing, and nobody could dispute that a great miracle had taken place. The doctor became a bold evangelist, and by 1996 he had led more than 300 people to faith in the Great Physician.

THANK YOU!



Our previous two newsletters outlined the urgent need for Bibles among the house churches in China. Many people have responded. The total number of Bibles we have printed in China since we started this project is approaching the four million milestone, and each one is a gift of love and sacrifice from Christians around the world.

Some people have expressed shock because they had believed the government's lie that Bibles are now freely available to all Christians in China. One missionary, who has served in China for many years, expressed relief that we so clearly laid out the reality and urgency of the situation in China. Many have labored away for years knowing the reality of the situation in China without hearing the urgent need for Bibles communicated clearly around the world.

Please continue to pray for his ongoing need.

On behalf of your brothers and sisters in China, thank you and God bless you.

CHINA BIBLE PRINTING



Current Total: 3,989,957 Bibles printed and delivered.

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

Asia Harvest is able to print and distribute 230,000 Chinese Bibles per month depending on incoming funds. So far this year we are operating at 32.0% capacity.

ASIAN WORKERS' FUND

Thanks to your support we are currently able to support 494 Asian evangelists working among 141 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: 241,393 Bibles printed in 34 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.**

LIVING MARTYRS' FUND

Because of your partnership we are supporting 704 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 **Living Martyrs Fund** assists pastors and evangelists in China and other Communist nations 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 10,265 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 Tsunamis of Southeast Asia and Japan, 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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