

Asia Harvest



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

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The Other Side of China
Where Countless Millions Wait to Hear

From the Frontlines

with Paul & Joy Hattaway

“Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear” (Isaiah 65:24).

The Lord Jesus never ceases to amaze us. On page 9 of our recent newsletter (August), we included a page entitled ‘Hidden Treasures’. We briefly mentioned the little-known tribes of the remote Andaman & Nicobar Islands, a string of islands flung across a vast expanse of the Indian Ocean. It was the first time we had ever mentioned those islands publicly. It is so difficult to reach the tribes there that people who even just try to visit them can be imprisoned for ten years or more by the Indian government. It remains to be seen what will happen to anyone who might attempt to proclaim the Gospel there. In our newsletter we asked you to pray, but before most people had even received the newsletter or started to pray, the Lord had already answered! When we realized what our God had done we were so excited we almost fell off our chairs! The very same week that our August newsletter was posted out, the Lord connected us to an indigenous Christian ministry based in the Andaman Islands. They have a plan to reach the people groups that we requested prayer for; including the very same Jarawa tribe we included a picture of in our newsletter. We hope for a long and fruitful partnership with that ministry, for the glory of the Name of Jesus. How true the Scripture at the top of this page is! Even before we call on the Lord He is able and willing to answer.



Now, why would the Almighty God be so interested in reaching those few small tribes stuck away in obscurity? Most believers would say it is because God loves all people and wants them to hear the Gospel. While this is true, we believe the reason why God is so keen to see Jarawa people saved is even greater than this.

If you read our May newsletter you might remember it was called ‘Why Jesus Has Yet to Return’. He has not yet come back to rule and reign over the nations because the work of the Gospel has not yet been completed. This might shock you, but it was never God’s intention that *every person* in the world would be saved. Although on one hand the Bible states that God does ***“not want anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance”*** (2 Peter 3:9), the Lord Jesus bluntly stated, ***“Small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it”*** (Matthew 7:14).

What, then, is so important about the small unreached Jarawa tribe, numbering just a few hundred people, and others like it throughout Asia and around the world?

Friends, we believe the Lord Jesus will not, indeed **cannot** return to this earth as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords until there are true followers of the Living God among the Jarawa people.

Jesus cannot come back until every people group has heard the Gospel, because He directly tied His return to the completion of the Great Commission. He declared, **“And this Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations** [ethnic groups], **and then the end shall come”** (Matthew 24:14).

The Gospel of the kingdom of God has never been preached to the Jarawa people, or the Shompen, or the Onge tribe on those same isolated islands. For two thousand years the Lord has watched and waited for one of His children to share the way of salvation with these people groups, but today there are still no known Jarawa, Shompen or Onge followers of Christ.

This is the heart of God’s plan and purpose today. He is waiting for His disciples to obey what He commanded them to do two millennia ago. Do you ever hear this kind of teaching at your church on Sunday? If not, pray for God to remove the scales from your pastor’s eyes. There is nothing more important to God than this!

There are two main themes running throughout all the Scriptures and human history. The first of course, is Jesus Christ and His sacrifice. The second theme, however, is tragically missed by many preachers and believers. This is the theme of God’s great plan of salvation for every ethnic group in the world. It is a plan first seen in the book of Genesis, with the breakup of the human race at the Tower of Babel. God revealed the start of His master plan of salvation in His covenant with Abraham, **“that all peoples** [ethnic groups] **on earth will be blessed through you”** (Genesis 12:3). This wonderful theme continues throughout the Psalms and prophets, and then into the New Testament, reaching its climax in the final book of the Bible. In Revelation, the Apostle John recorded a remarkable vision of heaven that God permitted him to see. He wrote,

“Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders.... He went and took the scroll from

Cover picture: A young Hui couple on their wedding day. The Hui are Chinese-speaking Muslims, the descendants of merchants and traders who first traveled down the Silk Road from Central Asia to settle in China more than a thousand years ago. Today, only a few hundred of the 15 million Hui people are followers of Jesus Christ. Most have never heard a thorough Gospel message. The heart of God is pained that groups like the Hui have not yet heard of the incredible sacrifice of His beloved Son.



the right hand of him who sat on the throne. And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb....And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:7-6, 8-10).

Two chapters later John recorded a similar awesome vision: *"After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.*

They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb'" (Revelation 7:9-10).

This is incredible! In heaven there will be worshippers around the throne of the Lamb from the Jarawa, Shompen and Onge tribes. God has guaranteed it! Only when every single tribe, ethnic group and language group on earth has heard the Gospel and some have responded, will the harvest be ready to reap and the Lord will call an end to this sorry world system! Only then will the seventh angel sound his trumpet, ***"and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever'"*** (Revelation 11:15).

Hallelujah! Does this excite you?

How sad that many Christians don't even know this mighty plan of God even exists! How tragic for their own lives and faith. No wonder so many Christians today feel their lives are empty and meaningless. They have never understood God's master plan, nor have they considered how they could invest their lives to help fulfil God's plans. Unfortunately many believers today are asleep and ignorant of God's plans, believing the lie that the Great Commission has already been completed. Many push off their responsibility to some "special" people like missionaries, so that they don't need to worry about such things. Over the years we can't count how many times we have been told, "Brother, there are plenty of lost people right around here for us to be concerned about those people over there."

We thank the Lord Jesus that His kingdom is expanding, and that one by one, the tribes, languages and ethnic groups of the world are gradually hearing about the marvellous plan of salvation that He alone has achieved through His death, burial and resurrection.

Over the years we have shared countless testimonies, even written books, about the amazing things God is doing in China and other parts of Asia. The Body of Christ has grown exponentially in many places, and it has been our great privilege to share some of these events with people. Many have said how their faith was encouraged by reading and hearing these testimonies.

There is a danger in sharing about all the wonderful things God has done, however. The danger is that people can easily slip into a wrong mindset and begin to think, "Well, if God is doing those kinds of things over there in China, they must be far better off than us, because we don't see things like that happening here."

While it is wonderful to hear about the incredible miracles taking place in China, keep in mind that it is a very large country, home to about one person out of five in the world. As a result, when we and our co-workers travel around China we find that most people we meet have either never heard of Jesus, or they have just heard a few surface details about Christianity in general. It is simply not true to say that China is on the verge of becoming a thriving Christian country!

Most estimates for the number of believers in China come in at about 6% or 7% Christian. We thank God for what He has done, but keep in mind this means about

93% of people in China have yet to believe in Jesus.

Interview with Brother Matthew

In the remainder of this newsletter we would like to share the first part of an interview we conducted with Brother Matthew. He is a missionary living in an area of western China that is almost totally devoid of the light of the Gospel. Dozens of distinct unreached ethnic groups inhabit the region where he and his family serve.

Asia Harvest: *Matthew, thanks for taking time to share with us. Can you tell us a little about your background?*

Matthew: I first visited China as an 18-year-old in 2002. I returned in 2003, spending my first full year travelling almost non-stop (120+ cities) and learning Chinese. I married a year later, and we have been living and raising our family among the Muslims and Tibetans of western China ever since.

Asia Harvest: *Please describe the ethnic and cultural makeup in the region where you serve.*



Matthew: As in most of China, the largest cities in our region are predominantly populated by Han Chinese people. However, when you visit the smaller towns and villages, you will find millions of Muslims from a variety of ethnic groups (Hui, Salar, Dongxiang, etc.), and as you climb in altitude, millions more Tibetan Buddhists inhabit a vast expanse of land. The Tibetans are divided into dozens of sub-groups that speak different dialects.

Asia Harvest: Many people have heard about the great revival in many parts of China. What are things like in your area?

Matthew: One nearby region is home to seven different people groups that inhabit several connected valleys along the Yellow River. Even among the Chinese people there, **I have heard of just one Christian couple living in those valleys.**

So to put it bluntly, within a few hundred miles of our home there are many hundreds of mosques, Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, temples and shrines, and countless other traditional Chinese religious sites. Religion is alive and well here, but Christianity barely has any root at all. Not even the Chinese people in this region have been evangelized in any meaningful way.

I have visited a few scattered counties in our province where the Chinese church has spread to various villages. However, the majority of west and northwest China (numbering about 150 million people) has yet to experience revival like many places in central and eastern China.

The spiritual climate here is dire. In one

nearby prefecture inhabited by almost two million people, it is difficult to find even 1,000 baptized believers (most of these being part of one or two fellowships in the largest city). That's a single Christian for every 2,000 people (0.05%). Another nearby county is home to nearly a quarter of a million people, including a variety of Muslim groups. But from what I have personally seen, the Chinese there are just as ignorant of the Gospel as the Muslims are. I have heard of just two tiny groups of believers there, including one solitary lady who is being persecuted by her family, and must travel two hours each way just to attend the nearest church.

Asia Harvest: Please describe for people who live in a "Christian" country what it is like when you speak with people in these areas about Christ.

Matthew: It is something of a cliché to say that all unreached people have "never heard the name of Jesus". Most have at least heard of His Name, just as people in the West have heard something about Mohammed or Buddha. However, it is certainly accurate to say that the vast majority of unreached people have never heard the *Truth* about Jesus!

For example, Muslims believe Jesus was a great prophet who (emphatically!) did not die on a cross. Tibetans assume Jesus was a great spiritual "living Buddha", or a reincarnation of Buddha, who lived an exemplary life in another age and place. Many people are wary of Christianity because they assume all Westerners are Christians, and they associate Christianity with all of the sinfulness that is produced in the West and exported to the rest of the

world.

It is also misleading to assume that just because people's minds are devoid of knowledge about Christ that they must therefore be "ripe" to hear and believe the Gospel. Rather, people's minds are full of wrong knowledge about the Savior and those strongholds need to be torn down before a proper foundation can be laid. Just because someone might have "heard" of Jesus doesn't mean they have any understanding at all of the meaning of

Creation, the Cross, Resurrection, Judgement, Heaven, or Hell.

Asia Harvest: *Apart from the several unreached Muslim groups you have already mentioned, there are also hundreds of thousands of Tibetan people living in your region. How many churches exist among all the ethnic minority groups in the area where you serve?*

Matthew: Just one! I have heard of some



Tibetan believers who gathered together at a university for a couple of years, but that lasted only until they graduated and moved away from there. There are also rumoured to be a few small Bible studies or cell groups among a couple of the Muslim groups, but no healthy, growing, thriving church yet exists.

We will continue our interview with Brother Matthew in a future newsletter. In the meantime, please pray for his family and for the teeming unevangelized millions who surround them. Pray the Holy Spirit will give them strategies to effectively break through, so that God will bring about a harvest for His kingdom in all of China....



Asia Harvest currently supports indigenous Asian evangelists working among most of the people groups mentioned in this newsletter. If you would like to support them, we invite you to do so through the *Asian Workers' fund*. A prayer card of your worker will be sent to every supporter of this project.

Brother Matthew and his family also need prayer and financial support to help them succeed in the important work the Lord has called them to. If you would like to support them, please add a note "for Brother Matthew" along with your gift and we will gladly send the full amount on to them.



Latest News

For a number of years we have presented six main projects for people to support if they would like to. We have kept the number of projects at a manageable level so that people don't feel overwhelmed with choices. We have not felt the need to change our list of projects simply because they are all vitally strategic, and they cover almost all of the activities we are involved with throughout Asia anyway.

From this month onward, we are changing the names of two of our existing projects, to better reflect the way they have grown over the years:

The Southeast Asia Bible fund has been renamed the **Asian Bible fund**. We have now printed the Word of God in 47 different languages through this project. Most of the languages have been in Southeast Asia, but in recent years we have helped in other needy regions too, such as in North Korea, the Indian Subcontinent, and Central Asia. This change of name better reflects the function of the project today, although the vision remains exactly the same—to provide the Scriptures to people throughout Asia who have no access to God's Word. Please note that one country where the Asian Bible fund doesn't apply to is China, as our **China Bible fund** will continue to operate as a totally separate project.

The second project with a change of name is the Asia Disaster Relief fund, which was first set up in the aftermath of the 2004 Tsunami that devastated much of Asia. This project has been greatly used by God to bring many people into His kingdom. However, instead of waiting for the next major natural disaster to strike somewhere in Asia for this project to come to the foreground each time, we have renamed it the **Persecution & Relief fund**, which accurately reflects the project's function. Over the years we have also used this project to provide emergency aid, both physical and spiritual, to Christian communities and families affected by persecution.



ASIAN WORKERS' FUND

*Thanks to your support we are currently able to support **487** Asian evangelists working among **286** unreached tribes and ethnic groups.*



The **Asian Workers Fund** assists indigenous 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 shepherds should be supported by the flocks they lead. You can help support these dedicated workers for **\$25 per month** each. A prayer card and occasional worker updates are sent to all regular donors of this project.

CHINA BIBLE PRINTING

*Current Total: **7,158,318** Chinese Bibles distributed.*



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 Body of Christ and helping add fuel to the revival in China. **Each full Bible costs just \$1.80 to print and deliver.**

A donor has offered Asia Harvest a "dollar for dollar" matching grant. For a period of time each donation we receive for Bibles will be doubled, so that two Bibles will be printed and delivered instead of one!

ASIAN BIBLE FUND



*Current Total: **334,528** Bibles printed in 47 languages*

Asia contain many ethnic groups where the people are deprived of God's Word; sometimes for decades. The **Asian Bible fund** provides the Scriptures in numerous languages throughout Southeast Asia, North Korea, the Indian subcontinent, and elsewhere.

The one country where the Asian Bible fund doesn't apply to is China, as our China Bible fund functions as a totally separate project. **Each Bible costs \$2.70 to print and deliver through the Asian Bible fund.**

LIVING MARTYRS' FUND

Because of your partnership we are supporting 755 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 Vietnam 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 supporter of this project.

PROJECT SMILE



Your generous support has so far helped bring a smile to the faces of 12,684 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 of **\$60 changes a child's life**. A laminated prayer card of a child helped through Project Smile is sent to all donors.

PERSECUTION & RELIEF FUND



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

Over the years Asia Harvest has provided assistance to the victims of natural disasters that have struck Asia. 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 many people have come to know Jesus Christ. This project also provides physical and spiritual relief to Christian communities and families throughout Asia who have been affected by persecution.



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