

# Asia Harvest



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

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## God's Greatest Missionary

# From the Frontlines

with Paul & Joy Hattaway

*“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:12).*

**“The greatest missionary is the Bible in the Mother tongue. It never needs a furlough, and is never considered a foreigner.”**

— Cameron Townsend, Founder of Wycliffe Bible Translators

Providing God’s Word to the Body of Christ in Asia has been the cornerstone of Asia Harvest’s ministry since we started more than 25 years ago. We still remember how nervous we felt the very first time we approached the x-ray scanner at the Chinese border with a heavy suitcase full of Bibles. God graciously allowed us to get all the Bibles through that day, but on dozens of subsequent occasions we were “caught” and our Bibles confiscated.

Back in those days (in the late 1980s) we sat spellbound as stories were relayed from remote corners of China about the dramatic and desperate need for God’s Word. One report emerged from the mountains of southwest China. A Chinese missionary had visited a remote valley where there was rumored to be a small number of churches. After two days of hiking through the mountains, he was nearing a village when he came across a distraught man on the trail. The man looked like he hadn’t slept for days, and was mumbling to himself.

Alarmed, the missionary asked the man what was wrong and if he could help his state of mind. After calming him down, the upset man said, “I am a Christian, but I am lost and going to hell. I have not heard the audible voice of God, and today is the third day since I became a Christian. I was on my way to throw myself off a cliff at the top of the mountain when you met me.”

The missionary asked the man to take him to his village so he could meet the other believers in the church to hopefully get to the source of the misunderstanding. After much discussion, the missionary discovered the problem....

None of the Christians living in that valley had ever seen a complete Bible. Instead, somehow **they had come into possession of a single page of the Scriptures, and that was all they had to base their faith on!**

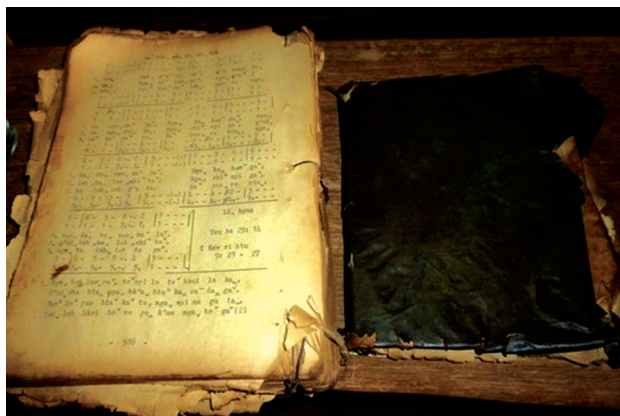
That one page was from the Book of Acts, chapter 9, when Saul was confronted by the Resurrected Christ. Saul was thrown to the ground and heard the audible voice of Jesus ask him, *“Saul, Saul, who do you persecute me?”* (Acts 9:4).

The missionary remained in the valley and taught the believers for several days. Complete Bibles were later carried in to help them gain a more rounded knowledge of the Word of God.

### ***Our Greatest Privilege***

The need to get God’s Word into the hands of hungry believers has never left us, although over the years the methods for us achieving that goal have changed dramatically. In the late 1990s we started printing Bibles directly inside China and other countries in the region. In our last newsletter we shared about a new project we are involved with to provide the Scriptures to the persecuted church in North Korea. **It is one of more than 50 different Asian languages into which we have been privileged to print and deliver Bibles. In many cases the Christians who receive them have been unable to source the Scriptures for years, sometimes even decades.**

Our coworkers frequently travel to remote regions and meet with Christian leaders, who share their great need for Bibles. Often they find a whole region will only have a few tattered copies of the Scriptures. Hundreds of believers are forced to depend on those crumbling Bibles for their spiritual sustenance. Note: The photo below, taken this year, is of a Bible presented to us by Lahu tribal believers in Myanmar (Burma). At least 40 years old, the cover has fallen away, all the pages are loose, and the edges have been devoured by moths.



Our project leader was able to reconstruct the original plates of this Bible and reprint thousands of new copies for the thankful Lahu believers.

Over the years, we have often shared about the need for Bibles in China and other parts of Asia. People have prayed and responded generously, and the number of Bibles we

have been able to provide has exceeded our expectations! Yet the need remains great, and countless millions of Christians in Asia are still unable to access God's Word because of hostile governments, war, poverty, and other reasons.

## ***Effective Evangelism***

In the past we have shared about the soul-winning benefits of providing the Scriptures to hungry believers. In China, feedback has suggested that an average of two or three people come to Jesus Christ either directly or indirectly after Bibles are sent to churches. We know of numerous instances where the church in an area has doubled after receiving a shipment of Bibles.

Indeed, as evangelism is at the core of what we do at Asia Harvest, each year we also print more than a million booklets of the Gospel of Mark in many languages, which are used exclusively for evangelism among Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and other non-Christians in Asia. Thousands of people have come into the family of God as a result, and are subsequently discipled by the Asian ministries we partner with.

Now, we would like to focus on another major benefit of providing God's Word to believers. To some, this reason may not sound quite as exciting as the evangelism stories, but it is crucial to the well-being and development of the kingdom of God in Asia. The second major benefit is...



## ***Sound Doctrine***

Asia is full of strange and bizarre religious beliefs. Numerous cults and sects flood the continent, and it is a constant battle for Christian leaders just to keep the most dangerous heresies from infiltrating and destroying their flocks. For example, in China a cult called the Eastern Lightning continues to ravage churches throughout the country. At the core of the strange movement is the belief that Jesus has been reincarnated as a woman and is living in central China, waiting for the right time for her identity to be revealed to the world.

When you read this you may think, "That's ridiculous! No Christian would ever believe such nonsense." Well yes, but in a country where Bibles been limited to members of the



government-approved church in a deliberate attempt to strangle the massive house church movement, many believers with a shallow knowledge of the Bible have been easy pickings for this cult. While in some parts of China the church has strongly resisted the Eastern Lightning, in other areas the impact has been devastating. Several years ago we met a senior house church leader responsible for many churches in northwest China. With tears in his eyes, he recounted how the cult had specifically targeted their congregations. Consequently, in just two years **the number of fellowships under his leadership had shrunk from 400 to 250.**

This brother is a godly, mature man who loves the Lord Jesus with all his heart. With the Scriptures and Bible teachers in short supply, however, his leadership team had simply been unable to withstand the onslaught of the cult.



## ***Poisoned Cows***

Earlier this year we read about a strange situation that occurred in a farming area in New Zealand. Without warning, one farmer found that his cows were falling sick and dying. The illness was a great mystery, and the farmer had never experienced anything like it before. He called in health inspectors who tested the farm's water supply for contaminants and conducted other environmental tests. While all this was unfolding, more cows fell sick and died. Soon almost his entire herd of 100 cows was sick.

When the results came back from the laboratory, the cause of the cows' sickness was found to be lead poisoning. The lead readings were off the chart, and the remainder of the herd was slaughtered. The farmer was baffled. A further autopsy of one of the dead cows revealed the cause.

A rifle range was located near the farm. Over time, hundreds of stray bullets and casings had landed in the adjacent farmland. They were inadvertently mulched up with the grass to produce straw, which was then fed to the livestock. The tiny specks of lead, too small to see with the naked eye, had poisoned the cows.

False Bible teaching can have the same impact on a believer that the lead poisoning had on the herd of cows. Over time, wrong teaching produces wrong thoughts about the character of God. This manifests in our lives as sinful behavior, which ultimately leads to spiritual death (alienation from Jesus Christ). **For this reason all Christians should pay careful attention to what we are being fed.** First and foremost, if we don't know God's Word ourselves, we will not be able to discern if fragments of poison are part of our regular spiritual diet.

### ***A Warning to Leaders***

In many Christian circles the last thing people want to hear about is “sound doctrine.” Such topics are considered too negative or controversial. While many Christians go to great lengths to appear happy and ‘successful’ to others, they have been slowly feeding on false teaching for years, and over time their spiritual life has grown progressively worse.

Surely nothing is more important in Christian work than the teaching of sound doctrine. This is particularly important for those involved in Bible teaching or missionary work. Many Christians think that being politically correct is more important than standing up for truth, even the truth of God's Word.

The great British preacher Charles Spurgeon once taught about the grave responsibility preachers have to teach sound doctrine. He said, *“Ensuring a printing press is correct has to be done with great care since thousands of copies will be faulty if the proof sheet is not as it should*



be. Similarly, a minister should be seriously earnest to teach truth because his people will imitate him. If the town clock is wrong, half the watches in the place will be set to the wrong time.”

For good reason the Scriptures warn, “**Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly**” (James 3:1).

The Apostle Paul gave a dire warning about the dangers of false teaching when he wrote, “**If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God’s curse!**” (Galatians 1:9).

All who work in Christian ministry should carefully study 1 Timothy chapter 4, which instructs us about the perils of false doctrine. The passage concludes with this exhortation: “**Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers**” (1 Timothy 4:16).

At Asia Harvest, we are constantly doing all we can to ensure that we, and those we work with and support, are upholding and teaching sound doctrine, and not compromising any of the essential truths of God’s Word. We consider this the first and most basic of our responsibilities. If we don’t ensure the message we are spreading is accurate and true, then everything we do is in vain, and all we could look forward to would be the judgment of God for misrepresenting the truth of the Gospel that His beloved Son sacrificed His life for!

### ***God’s Antidote***

The most effective way we know to counteract error and heresy in the Asian church is to provide as many Bibles as possible to serious believers who desire to know and obey the Scriptures. For many years we have seen that God’s Word truly is “living and active”. We have seen the Living Word transform lives as people have read it and allowed their minds to be renewed and transformed by it.







We have seen heresies crumble and crooked teaching made straight by the power of the Holy Spirit confirming the Word of God. Because He is alive, the Word of God Himself, Jesus Christ, can rightfully claim: *“my word that goes out from my mouth will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it”* (Isaiah 55:11).

### ***A Reality Check***

Many people ask us, “Aren’t there already enough Bibles for people in Asia today?”

Here are some shocking statistics which may provide a reality check....

There are **7,000 languages** in the world today.

Of these, only **513 have the full Bible** available.

**In Asia, 1,600 languages have no**

**Scripture available at all, not even a single book or portion of the Bible.**

**Half the people in the world have never even seen a page of the Bible in their lives!**

Getting God’s Word to those people is our priority and focus, and we invite you to help get this done.

### ***A Wonderful Christmas Gift***

We pray you and your loved ones will enjoy a blessed and restful Christmas this year. As you do, we invite you to consider two things...

Firstly, where does the Bible sit as a priority in your life? Do you read it and long to obey God’s Word? Or has your heart grown cold over the years? Nobody has ever fallen away from God while remaining strong in His Word; and nobody can love Jesus Christ and grow in His grace without first loving His Word. The two are mutually inseparable. Our relationship with God is directly related to our relationship with His Word. ***“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away”*** (Matthew 24:35).



It's not too late to cry out to God. Ask Him to change you and to renew a desire and hunger for His Word.



Please consider how you can help our fellow Christians in Asia this Christmas. We operate two main Bible projects: the **China Bible Fund** (costing just \$1.80 to print and deliver a full Chinese Bible) and the **Asian Bible fund** through which we have printed the Scriptures for believers in more than 50 different Asian languages, in many nations including *North Korea, Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan* and elsewhere.

We know of no greater investment a Christian can make in God's kingdom than by helping other hungry believers have access to the Word of God. **The Bible truly is "God's Greatest Missionary".**

*If you would like to help, you can do so either by giving via our secure website ([www.asiaharvest.org](http://www.asiaharvest.org)) or by selecting one of our Bible projects on the enclosed yellow response form and sending it along with your gift.*

*Whether you would like to participate financially or not, we do ask for your prayer support for these projects, the Lord's protection over the many workers involved, and most of all, that the Name of Jesus Christ will be glorified in His Church throughout Asia, and lifted up for all people to see and hear the message of salvation. Thank you!*

## ASIAN WORKERS' FUND



*We are currently supporting 1,028 Asian evangelists working among 604 unreached tribes and ethnic groups.*

The **Asian Workers' Fund** assists indigenous church-planting evangelists who are involved in strategic ministry to unreached people groups in Asia. These servants of the Lord have committed their whole lives to the Gospel but are hindered by lack of finances.

You can help support these dedicated workers for **\$25 per month** each. A prayer card and occasional updates are sent to all regular donors of this project.

## CHINA BIBLE FUND



*Current Total: 8,617,051 Chinese Bibles printed and 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 Chinese Bible costs just \$1.80 to print and deliver.**

## ASIAN BIBLE FUND



*Current Total: 471,076 Bibles printed in 50 languages.*

Asia is home to many ethnic groups where people have been deprived of God's Word, sometimes for decades. The **Asian Bible fund** provides the Scriptures in numerous languages in **Southeast Asia, North Korea, the Indian subcontinent, and elsewhere.** In China our China Bible Fund functions as a separate project.

**Each Bible costs an average of \$2.70 to print and deliver.**

## LIVING MARTYRS' FUND

*Because of your partnership we are supporting 337 living martyrs.*



"A martyr has been defined as "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 **Living Martyrs' Fund** assists pastors and evangelists in China, Vietnam and North Korea 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 smiles to the faces of 14,077 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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