

Asia Harvest



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

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AFGHANISTAN
The Gospel's Final Frontier

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***"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field"** (Luke 10:2).*

For many years we read the above verse and prayed for God to send more workers into the harvest fields of the world. More recently, we have come to understand the Lord Jesus was saying more than making a request for more workers. He is not only in charge of the work, but He is in charge of the harvest itself. After more than 25 years serving God in Asia, we have come to see how the harvest fields ebb and flow like the tides. Sometimes whole nations are open to the gospel, and other times they are relatively closed. It's good to "make hay while the sun shines" and to faithfully sow the seed during slower times.

Let's take Iran for example. An early missionary named Robert Bruce once wrote about his work in Persia (now Iran): ***"I am not reaping the harvest, I can scarcely claim to be sowing the seed. I am hardly plowing the soil; but I am gathering out the stones. That, too, is missionary work; let it be supported by loving sympathy and fervent prayer."***

Robert Bruce never saw a harvest in Iran, but he and others faithfully did their part sowing the seeds of the gospel. Today, despite the most trying circumstances, God is reaping a harvest of Iranians into His kingdom! We recently spoke with a good friend who visited the Middle East. He said he has never seen anyone as hungry for the gospel as Iranians are. Muslims literally chased up down the street, pleading for him to tell them about Jesus and begging for a New Testament. They are fed-up with their government, and they know Islam is a bankrupt philosophy that holds no hope for their lives. The Lord of the Harvest has arranged the seasons and now is harvest time for Iran.

The harvest in other nations is not as strong as it used to be. In China, the time of greatest harvest was probably about 8-10 years ago. While there are still thousands of people coming to faith in Christ throughout China every day, materialism and consumerism have gripped the hearts of millions and their desire for spiritual truth has waned compared to how it used to be.

Similar things could be said of Nepal, where evangelists are finding it increasingly difficult to win people to Jesus Christ. Right now, of the countries Asia Harvest works in, we would say the places most ripe for harvest are Laos and Indonesia;

while in other countries, part of the harvest is ripe while other parts are not. In poor rural areas of India, for example, thousands of Hindus are repenting and putting their trust in Jesus, whereas people living in the more sophisticated cities of India are comparatively difficult to reach. The same applies to Vietnam, Myanmar and elsewhere.

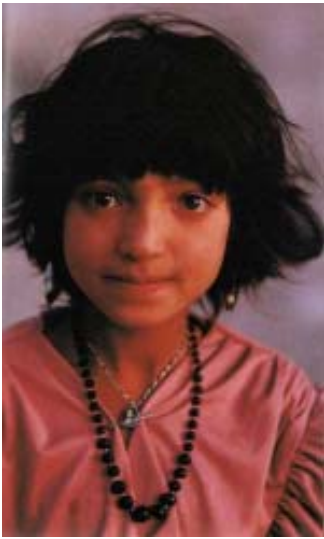
We would like to introduce you to a country you will have heard about often, but probably only in terms of death and destruction. **Our Lord Jesus died for the 72 unreached ethnic groups and 30 million people of Afghanistan.** We would like to tell you about the people of this amazing country, and we will even present an opportunity for sharing the Gospel there.

Instead of images of sin-stained old men holding machine guns, which you have no doubt already seen through the media, we would like to present another side of Afghanistan in this newsletter. We want to show the lost humanity of people waiting to meet the Savior whose Name they have not yet heard. Yes, Afghanistan is a brutal and harsh place, but it is also home to millions of precious children and families not too different from people elsewhere. They want to live in peace, and they long for their children to grow up in health and wholeness.

Afghanistan may be the most needy, unreached country in the world today. In many ways it is the Final Frontier for the Gospel. **The Lord Jesus will not return to rule and reign on this earth until there are blood-bought worshippers from among every one of the 72 unreached people in Afghanistan.** Please pray for their salvation. The Living God desires to know them! The Bible says that one day in heaven there will be *"a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb"* (Revelation 7:9).

We would like to announce a change to one of our projects: In 2003, we first revealed the missionary vision of the Chinese Church through our book 'Back to Jerusalem'. At that time we also launched a project of the same name, through which we have supported many Chinese missionaries over the years. From now on, **we are including the Back to Jerusalem project under the umbrella of our Asian Workers' Fund.** We are currently supporting over 1,000 Asian missionaries among 700 unreached people groups through the Asian Workers' Fund. Most of them are serving outside China.

If you have recently given to our BTJ project please don't worry, all funds will continue to be used to support dozens of frontline Chinese missionaries. In fact, this change means we are now able to send prayer cards and updates of specific Chinese missionaries to supporters. Our yellow response forms will continue to list the Back to Jerusalem project while we are in transition. Thanks and God bless you!



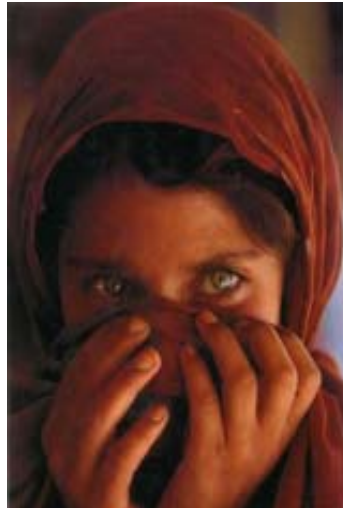
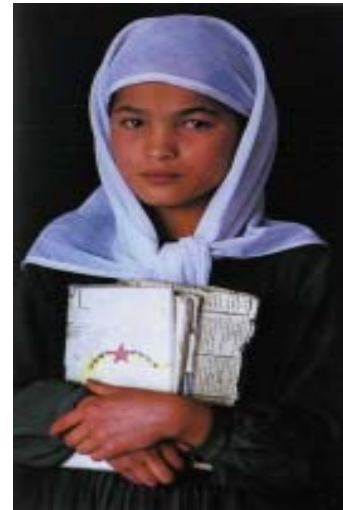
Afghanistan's 72

<u>Ethnic Group:</u>	<u>Population:</u>	<u>Religion:</u>
Afshari	13,000	Islam
Aimaq, Char	295,000	Islam
Aimaq, Firozkohi	292,000	Islam
Aimaq, Hazara	227,000	Islam
Aimaq, Jamshidi	129,000	Islam
Aimaq, Taimani	584,000	Islam
Aimaq, Timuri	146,000	Islam
Ansari	2,100	Islam
Arab, Tajiki	15,000	Islam
Arora	1,300	Hinduism
Baloch	407,000	Islam
Bania	5,600	Islam
Brahman	3,200	Hinduism
Brahui	281,000	Islam
Changar	2,700	Islam
Darwazi	14,000	Islam
Garwi	1,700	Islam
Guhjali	18,000	Islam
Gujur	3,700	Islam
Gypsy, Domari	9,700	Islam
Hazara	2,891,000	Islam
Indus Kohistani	41,000	Islam
Ishkashimi	2,700	Islam
Jakata	1,400	Islam
Karakalpak	2,800	Islam
Kazakh	2,800	Islam
Khatri	2,400	Sikhism
Kurd	235,000	Islam
Kyrgyz	1,100	Islam
Moghal	2,000	Islam
Munji	6,100	Islam
Mussali	2,800	Islam
Naristani, Arundui	14,000	Islam
Naristani, Ashkuni	42,000	Islam
Nuristani, Bashgali	30,000	Islam
Nuristani, Grangali	9,800	Islam

Unreached People Groups

<u>Ethnic Group:</u>	<u>Population:</u>	<u>Religion:</u>
Nuristani, Kamviri	19,000	Islam
Nuristani, Malakhel	2,800	Islam
Nuristani, Prasuni	8,400	Islam
Nuristani, Tregami	3,700	Islam
Nuristani, Urmuri	2,800	Islam
Nuristani, Waigeli	12,000	Islam
Pahlavani	3,200	Islam
Parachi	7,000	Islam
Parsee	2,000	Zoroastrian
Parya	300	Islam
Pashayi, Northeast	80,000	Islam
Pashayi, Northwest	14,000	Islam
Pashayi, Southeast	189,000	Islam
Pashayi, Southwest	105,000	Islam
Pashtun, Northern	6,508,000	Islam
Pashtun, Southern	6,855,000	Islam
Persian	577,000	Islam
Punjabi	5,200	Islam
Punjabi, Western	32,000	Islam
Qizilbash	260,000	Islam
Romani	15,000	Islam
Sanglechi	2,400	Islam
Sau	4,200	Islam
Shugni	39,000	Islam
Shumashti	1,400	Islam
Sindhi	21,000	Islam
Tajik	8,135,000	Islam
Tangshuri	14,000	Islam
Tirahi	11,000	Islam
Turk	9,300	Islam
Turkmen	1,672,000	Islam
Uyghur	4,200	Islam
Uzbek	3,060,000	Islam
Warduji	7,000	Islam
Wotapuri	2,800	Islam

Data Source: www.joshuaproject.net



Two Small Flocks of Goats

Now that we have revealed the size of the task facing the Church of Jesus Christ in Afghanistan, is there anything we can do? In a country said to have 48,000 mosques but not a single visible church building, should the global Body of Christ just throw up our hands and give up? No way!

Afghanistan doesn't belong to the devil. It belongs to Jesus! It will one day be part of His glorious inheritance, and every language and ethnic group in the mountains and valleys of this extraordinary land will have disciples of Jesus, cleansed by His precious blood.

It's obvious that any Christian activity in Afghanistan is very difficult, but where should we start? Firstly, you are probably aware that open Christian activity is not going to be the most effective way forward in Afghanistan at the present time. Those who work there, regardless of their ethnicity, quickly learn to operate in low-key, quiet ways. This doesn't mean, however, that the gospel is not preached. The Good News is being shared discreetly, and **an increasing number of Afghans are becoming followers of the Lord Jesus!**

We know a number of Christians who boldly serve in Afghanistan, and we thank God for every one of them. Most are people nobody has ever heard of, but the Lord knows their names, and that's enough. One friend recently shared his heartache. He said the biggest challenge facing the church in Afghanistan is quite simple: most Afghan believers are murdered soon after they convert to Christ. He arranged for a secret meeting of scattered Afghan believers, so they would get to meet each other and enjoy fellowship with other Christians for the first time. Before the meeting took place, however, many of the believers were killed.

Let's start by praying earnestly for every Christian in Afghanistan. They need the encouragement of the Holy Spirit. They often feel hopeless and isolated, surrounded by millions of Muslims and up against impossible odds. They feel like the Israelites did when they found themselves up against the vast Aramean army. The Scriptures record, ***"The Israelites camped opposite them like two small flocks of goats, while the Arameans covered the countryside"*** (1 Kings 20:27).

Thankfully, the Living God loves to take the side of the underdog, and just as the Israelites were victorious on that occasion, so too will the kingdom of God miraculously spread throughout every ethnic group of Afghanistan!

Love Your Enemies

For centuries, Afghanistan has proudly withstood the advance of great armies that have marched upon their land. They are surely among the most fierce fighters in history. There is one fight they have no chance of winning, however. The kingdom of Jesus Christ is ultimately impossible to resist. God's plan will march forward relentlessly, for He has declared, *"I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it"* (Matthew 16:18). His Word has already been going forth and achieving God's purposes, transforming hearts and lives.

Occasionally we have met Christians who tell us, in all seriousness, that Muslims should be bombed off the face of the earth and countries like Afghanistan should be turned into uninhabitable wastelands. Such deluded views are completely contrary to God's heart and plans. He created the 72 ethnic groups of Afghanistan. He loves them and longs to reveal His Son to them and to forgive them of their sins. To those who feel the Afghan people are their enemies, the Lord says, *"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven"* (Matthew 5:43-45).

Bombs and bullets will never bring about any true peace. The last decade of warfare in Afghanistan should be sufficient evidence of that futile approach. The Lord doesn't want to destroy lives. He wants to save and cleanse them for His glory. Isn't that how we first met Jesus? *"For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"* (Romans 5:10).

What Afghanistan needs is fervent prayer and the Good News of Jesus being shared with people, one precious life at a time. We believe that Afghanistan will gradually begin to change and will no longer be the final frontier for the Gospel.

After much prayerful consideration, we have decided to partner with a group of experienced Christians who have been effectively and discreetly serving God in Afghanistan for decades. We first worked with this group 15 years ago, after a severe earthquake killed hundreds of Afghan people. Back then we were impressed by their godliness and integrity, and we were able to help them rebuild schools and other collapsed buildings.

These men and women risk their lives on a daily basis, and over the years they have attended the funerals of some of their own leaders and workers who have been called to lay down their lives for the Gospel.

How to Help

We have a wonderful opportunity to share with you, and we welcome your prayers and partnership. Our co-workers in Afghanistan have spent decades developing strong relationships throughout the country. They are bringing life and blessing to a land devastated by centuries of death and conflict.

One of the main ways they are bringing God's life to the people of Afghanistan is by digging fresh-water wells in remote Afghan villages. The photos on the next few pages show the joy these wells bring to people. This act of love opens the hearts of many to the Gospel. Each well costs an average of US\$1,900 to construct. We realize this is a lot for one family to consider, so regardless of the amount people give, big or small, we will pool together all donations to construct as many wells as resources allow. By joining together we can make a great difference in the lives of many people.

This is a tremendous opportunity to show the love of Jesus to the people of Afghanistan. Our co-workers are in place and hope to build at least 60 wells throughout Afghanistan in the next year. They are also involved in several other strategic projects, but at this stage we would like to present the need for wells as our focal point for ministry in this war-torn land.





Three ways you can bless the people of Afghanistan

- 1** In your church or family, please pray for each of the unreached groups of Afghanistan listed on pages 4-5 of this newsletter. Pray each group will soon hear the Gospel in their own language; and the Holy Spirit will prepare the hearts of some to repent and believe upon Jesus Christ for salvation.
- 2** Please consider our **“Persecution & Relief Fund.”** All gifts marked “Afghanistan” will help provide wells for Afghan villages without access to clean water.
- 3** Please pray for all Christians involved with these projects and for all believers in Afghanistan, that the Holy Spirit might protect and refresh them, and use their lives to glorify Jesus in Afghanistan.



ASIAN WORKERS' FUND



We are currently supporting 1,023 Asian evangelists working among 700 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: 9,332,143 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: 613,678 Bibles printed in 68 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 **South-east 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 361 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** supports 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 14,617 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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