

Asia Harvest



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

www.asiaharvest.org

office@asiaharvest.org

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**Introducing the
BLESS THE CHILDREN FUND**

From the Frontlines

with Paul & Joy Hattaway

"All your children will be taught by the Lord, and great will be their peace."

(Isaiah 54:13)

The world seems like a very dark and depressing place at the moment. If we spend too much time watching the news it's easy to think that evil is winning and God's kingdom is losing. Nothing could be further from the truth!

We recently spent an extended period of time meeting our project leaders throughout Asia. After weeks of praying and strategizing with these key co-workers, we felt greatly encouraged. Despite many hardships and struggles, the kingdom of God is advancing in extraordinary ways, and entire communities are being transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We have been serving the Lord in India since 1991. To be honest, in the early part of those 25 years we often felt demoralized about the prospects for the Gospel there. Anyone who has spent time in India knows that it's a place of chaos and confusion, and we struggled to see how the myriad of more than 2,300 unreached people groups within that amazing country could ever be reached. More than once we said, "India is so complex that only God can reach it." Well, we have some good news: **God is reaching India!**

While the Gospel continues to face many barriers in the cities, where resistant Muslims and high-caste Hindus tend to live, the bulk of India's population lives in more-than one million rural villages. About 90% of those villages are inhabited by poor Hindus and tribal people, and it is among these precious groups that the Lord is reaping a mighty harvest.

If you are familiar with the work of Asia Harvest, you will know that China has been our major focus since we began in the 1980s. Indeed, we gained a reputation for knowing something about the Church in China, and even wrote several books on the mighty revival there. Now, we are seeing and hearing testimonies from throughout India that are very similar to stories that came out of China when the revival fires burned hot in the 1990s. We are excited to be in a position to help the kingdom of God advance in India, as we have in China. In fact, after much prayer and many

meetings with key ministry leaders, we would like to make a bold prediction: **In the next decade or so, India will be home to more Christians than China!**

Experts say India will surpass China as the world's most populated country just six years from now, in 2022. India's population currently stands at over 1.2 billion people. The government claims that 3.5% are Christians, which would give a total of about 42 million believers. However, every Indian church leader we know says the government's estimate is ludicrously low, and that the true percentage of Christians in India may already be at least 8 to 10 percent. If true, that would give a total number of between 96 to 120 million Christians in India today. Hallelujah!

The Holy Spirit is doing a powerful work throughout India, especially among the poor and downtrodden of society, and many are pressing into the kingdom of God. This is not going unnoticed. *The Hindu* newspaper on August 30th last year ran an article about religion in the large state of Odisha with the headline: "Population of Christians Grew by 478% in Odisha in 50 Years." The article summarized how Christianity in the state far outpaced Hindu and Muslim growth over that time.

While the population in many Western nations is aging, when you travel to a place like India you are instantly struck by the extraordinary number of children everywhere. In fact, 40 percent of India's population are children under the age of 15. For the kingdom of God to flourish throughout the thousands of ethnic groups in India, **the children must hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ!**

In the remainder of this newsletter we are honored to introduce a new project, which we have named the **Bless the Children Fund**. We are excited about the effect this project will have on the lives of thousands of families and their communities. Reaching children for the Lord Jesus has always been a major focus of Asia Harvest's work. We have provided help in many ways, including printing thousands of children's Bibles and story books, training workers in children's ministry, and supporting orphans. We have also been engaged in many humanitarian initiatives that are always accompanied by the proclamation of the Gospel. These include providing hundreds of wheelchairs to disabled children, supporting the children of persecuted church leaders in China and other countries, and rescuing girls from sexual slavery in South Asia.

We plan to continue supporting all these and more important initiatives through this new project. Even Project Smile, which has provided more than 15,000 surgeries to children in Vietnam over the past 15 years, has now been placed under the umbrella of our new **Bless the Children Fund**.

Blessing the Children of India



With a staggering 40 percent of the population of India aged 15 and under, now is the time to impact the future of this great country for Jesus Christ. We would like to share some ways our co-workers in India are doing this, by describing six effective steps they employ to reach precious children with the Gospel.

1. Vacation Bible Schools

In the next few months, all across India, untold millions of people will be busy working in the fields from morning until night, bringing in the harvest. This is the most crucial time of the year, because there is little government assistance in India. If the harvest fails, countless millions of people will struggle to survive. During this time, our Christian colleagues, who already serve God in more than 1,000 villages throughout India, offer free “Vacation Bible Schools” (VBS) to village children. This program actually dates back a long time, having been introduced by missionaries over 100 years ago. Parents are more than happy that someone has offered to look after their kids for up to ten

days while they gather the harvest, and they gladly send them along, knowing full-well that the program is run by Christians.

2. Cleaning the Outside

Many of the children who first turn up at the VBS have great physical needs, so before their spiritual needs are met, the children are given a good clean. Our Indian Christian brothers and sisters bathe the kids, give them a haircut, wash their dirty clothes, clip their fingernails and toenails, and generally scrub them up nice and new! They also feed the children healthy food, with hardboiled eggs, bananas and nutritious biscuits filling the bellies of the children. Many of them come from extremely poor families who struggle to survive from day to day. Incredibly, the cost of providing food to these precious children amounts to just 10 Rupees (about 15 cents) per day for each child.



3. Song and Dance

You are probably aware that Indians love to sing and dance. Their entire culture seems to be centered on music. After the children have had their physical needs met, our co-workers don't waste any time before they introduce the children to songs about Jesus Christ. Many wonderful Christian teenagers, like the ones pictured below, lead the way in teaching the Gospel to Hindu, Muslim and tribal children through song and dance (Note: on the Asia Harvest website we have some short video clips of children being taught about the Lord this way).



4. Teaching the Basics

Each child is then introduced to the basic truths about God and the Bible, starting with Creation and the Fall of Man, through to the Death, Burial and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The younger children are given large coloring books and pens, and are

taught Bible stories as they color in. Older children study more detailed aspects of the Gospel, and can ask questions as they interact with their Christian teachers. There are 5 different study books produced for various age groups, ranging from small children to 15 year-olds. Each book costs just \$1 to print, so a full set of books costs \$5 per child. This sounds inexpensive, although this year alone we are printing books for 30,000 children, so we would appreciate it if you could please join us in praying for this need.

5. Confused Parents Demand Answers!

Recently, the main Indian leaders of this work shared that after just the second or third day of the VBS, many parents come marching in, demanding to know what has happened to their children. "We want to give our lives to your God!" they exclaim. "In just a few days our children have been transformed. They are now obedient and respectful. They came home singing joyful songs that you have taught them. Our gods cannot change a person on the inside like this. Please help us! We want to know your God."



6. Joining God's Family

The Vacation Bible Schools take place every year, and are a tremendous way of introducing children to the faith. **This year alone, 30,000 precious children** in more than 700 villages throughout India will have their first contact with Christians through this strategic project. These children come from **132 different unreached ethnic groups**. Many go on to become mature followers of Jesus Christ, walking in His grace and knowledge. They, in turn, reach out to more children the following year. It is through projects like this that **India is being saved!**



In future newsletters we plan to share details of how the **Bless the Children Fund** functions in other countries of Asia, including China, Vietnam, Myanmar, Indonesia, Nepal and elsewhere. We invite you to join with us in praying for the salvation of Asia's children. By reaching them, entire communities and ethnic groups are being impacted for the kingdom of God.

The average cost of reaching a child through the Bless the Children Fund is just \$20. This includes all the materials and costs from when the children arrive, to the time they graduate from the courses as true followers of the Lord, including being provided with a Bible in their local language. If you would like to support this project we welcome you to do so. Support can either be mailed in to us by using the enclosed yellow Response form, or one-time and monthly donations can be set up online via our secure website at www.asiaharvest.org



India's future: Young Indian Christian children praying fervently over a map of India, asking for the salvation of Jesus Christ to come to their nation.



Teenage believers receiving their first Bibles.

TESTIMONY CORNER

"I was born into a Hindu family. We prayed to many idols and also worshipped nature. I had heard about Christianity but didn't understand why it was any different from other religions. My wife and I had a son. While I was away working as a driver he fell sick and was admitted to hospital. I rushed back home but by the time I arrived my beloved son had died.



Two evangelists heard the sad news and visited us. In her desperation, my wife asked them to pray for our son so that their God might raise him back to life. Before praying, they asked us to close our eyes. I did not believe, so I kept my eyes open. To my surprise, I saw the two Christians pray very intensely. When they finished their prayer my son sat up. He was alive! My heart leapt with joy to see this great miracle. I left my sins behind and became a lover of Jesus Christ. I committed my life to Him and received His wonderful salvation. I am now burdened to tell other unreached people what God has done in my life."

Surendra is one of hundreds of Asian evangelists we support through the Asian Workers' Fund. We have dozens needing support right now. We invite you to join us as we help them.

ASIAN WORKERS' FUND



We are currently supporting 1,420 Asian evangelists working among 814 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: 9,649,994 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: 655,975 Bibles printed in 69 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.

BLESS THE CHILDREN FUND



*Your generous support has so far enabled **55,897** Asian children to hear the Gospel.*

The **Bless the Children Fund** introduces precious children to Jesus Christ in India, China, Vietnam, Nepal, and a host of other countries. Activities include printing and distributing Gospel literature designed for children, providing free surgeries for those with special needs, and generally lifting children out of spiritual and physical poverty. The results of this project have been staggering. It costs an average of **\$20 to reach a child for Christ**.

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 elsewhere 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.

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.



Asia Harvest Addresses

www.asiaharvest.org / office@asiaharvest.org

NORTH AMERICA:	353 Jonestown Rd #320, Winston-Salem, NC 27104, USA
AUSTRALIA:	36 Nelson Street, Stepney, South Australia 5069 <i>Bank details:</i> CBA 06-4410-10255537 (Asia Harvest)
NEW ZEALAND:	P.O.Box 1757, Queenstown 9348 <i>Bank details:</i> ASB 12-3154-0092327-00 (Asia Harvest)
EUROPE:	Stiftung SALZ, Johannes-Kepler-Str. 6, 71083 Herrenberg, Germany <i>IBAN:</i> DE93 6426 1853 0060 0080 08 / <i>BIC:</i> GENODES1PGW
MALAYSIA:	STAMP Bhd., P.O.Box 8036, Pejabat Pos Kelana Jaya, 46780 Petaling Jaya, Selangor <i>Bank details:</i> HSBC 352-029615-101 (STAMP Bhd.)
SINGAPORE:	Clementi Central P.O.Box 119, Singapore 911204
UNITED KINGDOM & IRELAND:	AsiaLink, Mill Farm, Fleetwood Road, Wesham PR4 3HD, England <i>Bank details:</i> CAF Bank 40-52-40, Account No. 00014929 (AsiaLink)