

Asia Harvest



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

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Indonesia

Jesus is Reaching the Muslim World

From the Frontlines

with Paul & Joy

“But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish” (Jonah 1:3).



It's unfortunate that many Christians know so little of the Book of Jonah, except that a 'great fish' swallowed him and later spat him out. Most people's knowledge of Jonah seems to stop there, and they have missed the main point of the book.

When God commanded Jonah to preach in Nineveh, not only did he run away, but he went as far as possible in the opposite direction. Nineveh was 550 miles northeast of Israel, but he headed to Tarshish, located on the coast of Spain some 2,500 miles to the west! The Prophet Jonah was a man of God, so what motivated him to disobey the Lord in such an extreme way?

After he returned home from his remarkable ordeal, God again instructed Jonah to go to Nineveh. This time he went, albeit reluctantly. He preached God's coming judgment, and incredibly the whole city repented of their sins, from the king down. Jonah's worst fears were confirmed. Those evil-doers had met God's conditions and he knew the merciful Lord would relent of His punishment.

Jonah was "very angry" when the city repented. He threw a major hissy-fit and prayed, ***"Isn't this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. Now, Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.' But the Lord replied, 'Is it right for you to be angry?'"*** (Jonah 4:1-4).

To understand why Jonah was so upset we need to know what Nineveh was like at the time. The city had emerged as the center of the Assyrian empire, known for its cruel and ghastly acts. For generations they had bullied and destroyed surrounding nations. The Ninevites were similar to Islamic extremists today, performing barbaric acts of terror.

If we understand that similarity, we may begin to grasp why Jonah was so keen to disobey God. **If we're honest, if the Lord told us to travel to the Middle East and preach to ISIS, we might head in the opposite direction too.** Interestingly, Nineveh was located just outside the present-day city of Mosul in Iraq, which is still in the news today as a terrorist stronghold, thousands of years after Jonah's visit.

Before we rush to judge Jonah, we see many similarities between his attitude and that of many Christians today. In the past few years a number of people have rebuked us for our desire to reach Muslims with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Some church-going professing Christians have brazenly told us we are false believers because we don't appear to "hate God's enemies with perfect hatred." Just like Jonah, they don't want a certain group of people to experience God's grace. Some have even said they would rather see all Muslims annihilated and wiped off the face of the earth.



Friends, if you love the Lord Jesus, please guard your heart closely and ensure it doesn't grow bitter against Muslims or anyone else. While it's right to hate the demonic, filthy acts of terrorist groups like ISIS, if we allow a root of bitterness to gain hold we will be defiled and it will affect everyone around us. Satan would love for that to happen. One way to tell if bitterness has crept into our hearts is to gauge our response when we see pictures of Muslims.

When you look at the above picture, do you feel anger or disgust rising up in your heart? If so, please cry out to God for deliverance. The three young women in the photograph have just obtained their first ever copies of the New Testament. They are thrilled, and can't wait to get home and study the teachings of Jesus. **Millions of Muslims have been searching for Bibles for years because they are tired of centuries of dead legalism and bondage and they long to know the Truth.**

A few people have asked us if we are “for or against” Muslims. **We are for Jesus Christ**, and if the Holy Spirit is drawing people to God out of the Muslim world, we want to be part of it. There is no greater joy than to see a Muslim transformed by the blood of Jesus.

We currently support more than 150 evangelists throughout Asia who were once Muslims, but who now love the Lord Jesus with all their hearts. They daily risk their lives to make Him known in the midst of their communities. We regularly receive amazing reports from these co-workers, telling how many Muslims are surrendering their lives to Jesus after discovering that He is the living Savior of the world.

Finally, we encourage you not to harden your heart against Muslims for one more reason you may not be aware of: **God is working powerfully in the Muslim world and every day thousands are becoming born-again Christians!** The respected mission publication, *Operation World*, recently released a list of countries with the fastest growing churches in the world. It may shock you to learn that the top three countries are all Muslim—Iran, Afghanistan and Gambia! Rounding out the top ten are four more Muslim nations: Algeria (6th), Somalia (7th), Kuwait (9th) and Tajikistan (10th).

May God search our hearts and motives, lest, like Jonah, we find ourselves out of touch with His eternal plans for our generation. We will miss what God is doing today if we don't want Him to show mercy to a group of people we consider undeserving of His grace.

We serve a wonderful God who desires to know all people. We're glad that's the case, otherwise we would be lost and heading to hell. The day is coming when the Lord Jesus will judge the whole earth and purge all evil and evil-doers. Indeed, Nineveh's repentance was not permanent. The Prophet Nahum foretold the destruction of the city 150 years after Jonah's visit.

While the door of opportunity to bring lost people to salvation remains open, we plan to do all we can to help bring in the harvest, realizing that it's not our role to tell the Lord whom He should or shouldn't accept into His family, for ***“God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden... I will call them ‘my people’ who are not my people; and I will call her ‘my loved one’ who is not my loved one”*** (Romans 9:18, 25).

One day, just as He did in the time of Noah, the hand of God will close the door on this sick and vile world. When He does, many will be surprised to discover that millions of former Muslims have been saved by His grace and washed clean by His precious Blood.

Indonesia — A Holy Wind is Blowing



Next year it will be 30 years since we first started working in the enchanting country of Indonesia. While Christians around the world tend to know more about other parts of Asia like China, Japan, and India, Indonesia is often left off people's radar. This is sad, because the Lord Jesus is beginning to move powerfully among the maze of 18,000 islands (922 of which are inhabited) that make up this beautiful and complex country.

Did you know that Indonesia contains the most Muslims of any country on earth? Don't allow this fact to make you fearful, however, for most visitors to Indonesia are met with a very warm welcome from smiling and friendly people. Indeed, Muslim leaders from other more fanatical countries like Saudi Arabia do not consider Indonesians to be genuine Muslims, and label them 'infidels' (unbelievers). It is in this context that the wind of the Holy Spirit has been sweeping multitudes of Indonesians into the kingdom of God.

Throughout history the Lord Jesus has used political events for the benefit of His kingdom, and He has used political events to establish His Church in Indonesia. In the 1960s Communism was sweeping through much of Asia, backed by China. One by one the nations of Southeast Asia were becoming Communist. Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia had embraced the empty philosophy, and many other countries were doing all they could to crush Communist insurgents in their midst. Indonesia had one of the largest Communist parties in Asia, with 800,000 members. With the



government losing control, President Suharto launched a massive crackdown on the Communists, killing hundreds of thousands of them.

In 1967, the government of Indonesia decided they would rather live with religious people than with Communists, so laws were passed that every Indonesian citizen must identify with one of four accepted religions—Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism or Christianity.

Before that time, Christians in Indonesia had been a small and persecuted minority, often struggling to survive in a sea of Muslims. All of a sudden it was legal to be a Christian, and over the next few years more than two million Indonesians joined Christian churches.

Although it's true that some joined the churches out of political expediency, hundreds of thousands of people genuinely repented of their sins and placed their trust in Christ. Most of the newly baptized Christians were ethnic Chinese or from tribes like the Dayaks, but thousands of Muslims also heard the gospel and believed, especially on the main island of Java. While many devout Muslims firmly resisted the gospel, others who followed a more relaxed form of folk Islam were disenchanted with their religion and decided to follow Jesus Christ instead.

In the five decades that have passed since the constitutional change guaranteeing freedom for Indonesian Christians, the Church has continued to grow steadily. The shining witness of their transformed lives has influenced many of the believers' friends and relatives. Millions of Indonesians have been blessed to discover



that Christianity is based on the living Jesus, and is not a dead religion made up of oppressive rules.

Over the years the growing number of Christians in Indonesia has caused tension, as the more devout Muslims try to keep control of the population. Severe persecution occasionally breaks out against the children of God, but through it all the kingdom of the Lord Jesus has continued to expand, and many hungry people have been swept into His family.

While we should rejoice greatly over the awesome things God has already done in Indonesia, there remains 222 “most unreached” ethnic groups in the country today, totalling more than 150 million people. The linguistic, cultural, and spiritual barriers between Indonesian Christians and these unreached tribes means that few of those people have ever heard the gospel in a clear way.



We are in contact with Indonesian evangelists who need prayer and financial support through our **Asian Workers' Fund**. Please pray fervently for the salvation of every people group in Indonesia. Until each one has believers redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb, the Lord Jesus will not return to rule and reign upon the earth.

You can support one or more workers with a gift of \$25 per month each. If you have a preference, please note the name of the group(s) you would like to help to reach when you send a gift for the **Asian Workers' Fund**. A laminated prayer card of the worker being helped will be sent to each donor.

**MADURA**

8.1 million people
<0.1% Christian

**RAWAS**

207,000 people
0.0% Christian

**JAMBI**

1.1 million people
<0.1% Christian

**JAVA
BANYUMASAN**

8.2 million people
1.9% Christian

**BALINESE**

3.6 million people
0.2% Christian

TESTIMONY CORNER



Of the hundreds of worker reports we receive from Asia, many are from faithful evangelists reaching their own tribes in Indonesia. Every now and then a testimony reaches us which is particularly God-glorifying. Here is one man's remarkable story:

"Praise God, for He is very good. I am grateful that He chose me to be His servant. I am from a large ethnic group that is outwardly Muslim, but in reality many people practice black magic. I was one such person, trapped

in deep sin and spiritual darkness. For 30 years I kept thousands of snakes and I slept in the same room with them. I used magic charms and demonic power to prevent the snakes from biting me, and many people came to witness the spectacle of a man surrounded by thousands of poisonous snakes. I even had a small group of disciples whom I taught my magic arts to. I was well known in our area of Indonesia.

One day I had a terrifying vision that I was going to die for two days but would come back to life, and I told it to my wife. A short time later I was bitten in the leg by a venomous snake and I fell unconscious. Thankfully my wife did not bury me because she remembered my vision.

While I was dead or in a coma, a man dressed in white stood in front of me. I dared not look into his face because it was so bright it would have burned my eyes out. I fell down and worshipped Him, and He said, 'Come to me and I will make you a fisher of men.'

After two days I was revived and my life was spared. I wondered who the great Man was that I had seen. I asked my wife but she didn't understand what I meant. One day I shared my experience with a young man. He told me the person who spoke to me was the Lord Jesus Christ, and he showed me verses in the Bible about others who had met the glorified Jesus.

Over time I surrendered my life to God and became a dedicated Christian. I also brought many of my disciples to faith in Christ. Over the years I have experienced many trials, but God has always been with me. I have started three churches and now many hundreds of my people also follow the Living and True God. Hallelujah!"

ASIAN WORKERS' FUND



We are currently supporting 1,898 Asian evangelists working among 819 unreached people groups.

The **Asian Workers' Fund** assists indigenous church-planting evangelists who are involved in strategic ministry to unreached Asian tribes and ethnic groups. 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: 10,339,022 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: 733,489 Bibles printed in 74 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.

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

LIVING MARTYRS' FUND

Because of your partnership we are supporting 374 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.

BLESS THE CHILDREN FUND



Your generous support has so far reached 64,606 children for Jesus throughout Asia.

The **Bless the Children Fund** introduces children to Jesus Christ in India, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, 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**.

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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