

Asia Harvest

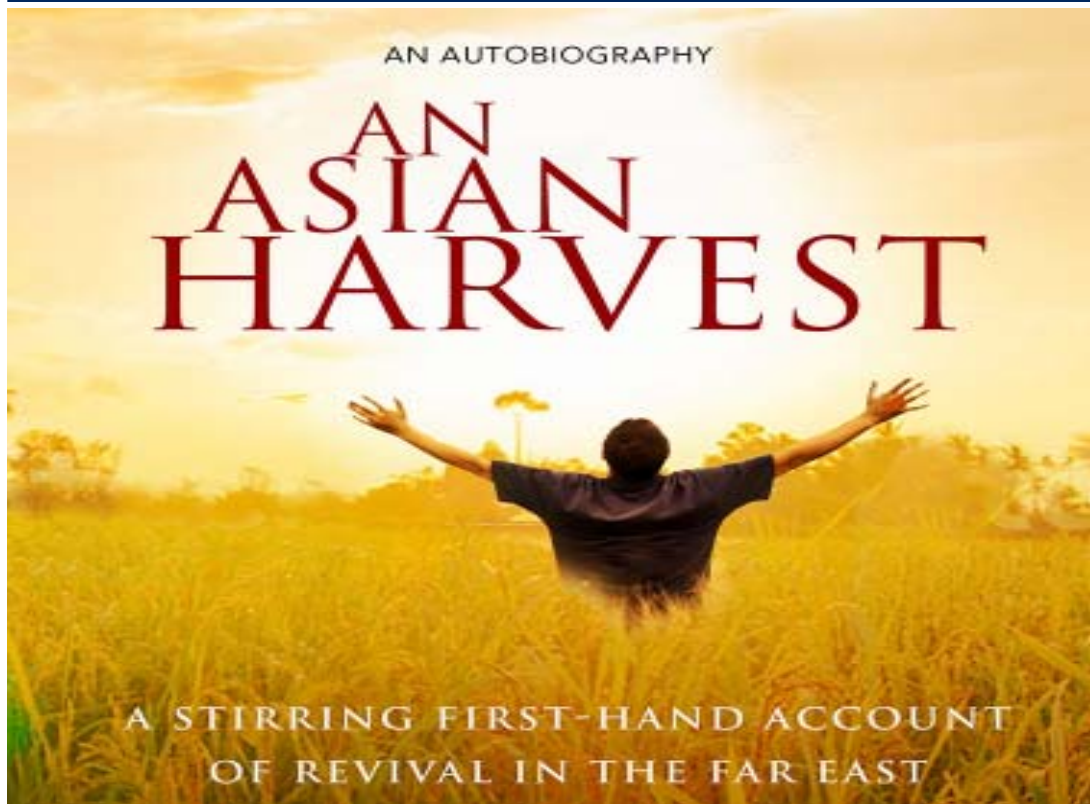


‘Put in the Sickle, for the Harvest has Come!’ (Mark 4:29)

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‘An Asian Harvest’

The Autobiography of Paul Hattaway

'An Asian Harvest'

A Stirring First-Hand Account of Revival in the Far East

The Autobiography of Paul Hattaway

About 15 years ago, missionary friends who were familiar with my testimony encouraged me to write a book to inspire others. I hesitated, not least because our work in Asia requires me to maintain a low public profile. For years I pushed all thoughts of writing an autobiography to the back of my mind and concentrated on the work at hand.

A few years ago I realized that 25 years had elapsed since God first launched me out in Christian service. At the time, various people asked how Asia Harvest had been founded, and what principles had spurred our growth over the years. After receiving a number of these enquiries, I began to seek God more earnestly about whether or not He wanted me to share my testimony.

It gradually became clear that the time had come to share my story. This month we are glad to announce the release of my autobiography. I hope the Lord Jesus Christ will use it to encourage you as you walk with Him.

I am greatly honored to have witnessed some marvelous things on my adventure with God. I have shared many of those experiences, as well as some of the severe trials we have been called to endure along the way.

In the remainder of this newsletter we share one of the chapters from the book. Only in hindsight did I realize the event described in this chapter, which took place on a remote Himalayan mountain in 1991, was the moment the Holy Spirit first brought Asia Harvest into existence. Since that time, everything useful that has sprung from my life has been the direct result of God's grace and mercy to me, and the focus of Asia Harvest's work has flowed from the supernatural vision God gave me that night.

May the Lord be exalted through this book, so that many of God's children will be challenged, encouraged, and drawn closer to Him. May Jesus receive all the glory, for He alone is worthy.

The following excerpt is taken from Paul Hattaway's new autobiography, 'An Asian Harvest'. If you would like to order a copy, please see the enclosed form or visit our website (www.asiaharvest.org) for details.

A Heavenly Vison

April 1991

My extensive travels throughout Asia in 1991 included a trip to the Himalayan kingdom of Nepal. Nepal was a tightly controlled country at the time, and Christians were persecuted for their faith. Prayer meetings were often held in secret, with believers pressing pillows or cloth over their mouths to muffle the volume of their prayers, lest their neighbors report the gathering to the police.

A ministry in Kathmandu asked if I would travel to western Nepal to help deliver a load of Bibles to a rural community of new believers. I jumped at the opportunity, and a few days later I joined a Nepali Christian named Ramesh on a seventeen-hour bus ride to the west side of the country. It was the first stage of an arduous journey that almost ended my life.

Our first stop was the town of Nepalgunj near the Indian border. After resting for the night, we caught another bus deeper into the mountains. I was only able to fit fifty Bibles into my backpack, owing to the large size of the Nepali Scriptures. My pack weighed at least 50 kg (110 pounds), and it felt like I was carrying bars of iron. Instead of sitting inside the bus, Ramesh and I decided to travel in the “air-conditioned” compartment. We climbed onto the roof and sat inside the spare tire that was secured to the roof by ropes.

Typically, bus journeys in Nepal are exciting experiences. This was a particularly hair-raising ride, as our driver navigated the narrow dirt roads at breakneck speed. As he drove around blind corners, with the cliff edge just a few feet away, he would calm his nerves with an occasional swig



of whiskey or a puff of marijuana. It didn't help my state of mind when I glanced down from the roof and saw the burned-out shells of wrecked buses and trucks at the bottom of the valley floor, thousands of feet below.

That day we commenced our travels on the plains of southern Nepal, not far above sea level. Eight hours later we were at more than 10,000 feet above sea level, in the midst of the Himalayas. Through the day we had crossed numerous mountain passes and traversed into deep valleys, only to begin climbing again toward the next pass.

After sunset we arrived at a small town and found lodging for the night. The following morning Ramesh woke me before dawn. We had a full day's hiking ahead of us if we were to reach the Christian village by nightfall.

I set out with great determination that morning. What a great joy it was to deliver God's Word to new believers! I looked forward to meeting my Nepali brothers and sisters, with whom I would spend eternity.

After a few hours of difficult hiking, my heavy backpack felt like it weighed a ton, and the energy began to drain from my limbs. I knew I was holding Ramesh back, but he was my guide and translator and I would have been totally lost in those mountains without him.

For hours I pressed on, one step at a time. I was determined to reach our destination and deliver the Bibles, no matter what. By mid-afternoon, as we climbed yet another steep incline, I sensed I was in trouble. I was sick from both ends, and my body shook from dehydration and the stress of my endeavor. A few hours later I felt even more disorientated, and was barely able to walk. Feeling frustrated, Ramesh could see I wasn't going to make it to the village, which still lay three hours ahead.

We passed a tiny village of homes constructed from uncut stones and dried mud, before continuing up another hill. We were now in a remote area, far from any road, as the sun began to set. When we reached a clearing at the top of the next hill, I sat down to rest. Feeling too exhausted to unclip my pack, I just lay on my back.

Ramesh was growing increasingly anxious. Being a local, he knew the dangers of spending the night outside in the Himalayas. Wolves, jackals and other wild animals roamed the hills at night, in addition to some of the world's most venomous snakes and spiders.

"Okay Paul, let's go!" he ordered. "We've got to get moving! We can't stay here any longer. It's too dangerous. We Nepalis say only crazy people sleep out in the open."

By this time I was scarcely able to acknowledge Ramesh. My mind had become clouded and confused. I was so weak that the most I could do was to motion with my index finger, signaling to my guide to go on alone. "Okay brother," he exclaimed. "I'll go ahead and will try to send someone to help you."

That was the last time I ever saw Ramesh.

I was now alone, and a chill ran through my body as the last rays of sunlight descended behind the mountain peaks. I had never felt so totally devoid of energy, and my mind seemed to be shutting down.



Ironically, I knew what was happening to me, but I wasn't able to do anything about it. A few days earlier in Kathmandu, I had picked up a magazine at the mission guesthouse and read an article about altitude sickness. Every year, many trekkers in the Himalayas perish from it. Altitude sickness strikes people who ascend too quickly, before their bodies have time to adjust to the reduced air pressure and lower oxygen levels. Many people die when, in their weakened state, they simply close their eyes and fall asleep. Their lungs fill up with fluid, causing them to suffocate, and they never wake up. The medical term for this fatal condition is pulmonary edema. I already had most of the symptoms and was coughing uncontrollably. A bubbling sound was coming from within my chest as my lungs began to fill with fluid.

Even though I knew what I was suffering, I was completely powerless to overcome it. The only solution for someone suffering from altitude sickness is to quickly head down to a lower altitude, in the hope that their body will adjust to the thicker atmosphere.

Another half-hour passed, and it was now completely dark. The temperature had plummeted, and for the first time I was aware that I was about to die. An overwhelming exhaustion enveloped me. Every cell in my body wanted to rest. My eyes were heavy, and I was on the verge of nodding off to sleep.

A few months earlier I had read *Foxes Book of Martyrs* — a book full of stirring accounts of Christians who had died heroically for the gospel. I wondered if my church back home would ever learn how I had died.

Incredibly, at the point of my greatest weakness, pride rose up within me. I wanted my friends to know I had perished while serving Jesus, so I made a huge effort to pull my personal Bible out of my pack and place it beside me. When my body was

discovered, I wanted people to know that I had been reading God's Word to my very last breath!

As I contemplated the end of my life, I suddenly had a dramatic and life-changing experience.

Firstly, my heart was overwhelmed with *"the peace of God, which transcends all understanding"* (Philippians 4:7). I *knew*, without a shadow of doubt, that I was going to heaven. It was a supernatural revelation, not something I conjured up by myself. I didn't merely hope or wish that my eternal destiny was secure. My confidence had nothing to do with me. I had numerous faults and my life was still very much a work in progress. Every particle of my being, however, knew I was saved because of the blood of Jesus Christ! It was His blood that made me acceptable to God, and nothing else. I realized I was saved not because I was good enough, but because Jesus is good enough.

"Lord Jesus," I whispered, as tears welled up in my eyes, "I'm coming to see You soon. Thank You for saving me. Thank You for your precious blood. I love You."

Now lying on my side, I turned on a small pen light that I kept in my Bible cover. Mustering my last ounce of energy, I opened the Bible to near the middle of the book. I looked down to find I had opened to Psalm 91. When I read to the end of the Psalm, these words grabbed my attention:

"Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation" (Psalm 91:14-16).

As I pondered these beautiful words, a heavenly vision suddenly flooded my spirit. It lasted no longer than a few seconds, but it came with such clarity I will never forget the details.

Some people later suggested I may have been hallucinating because of my weakened state. All I know is that this brief encounter altered the course of my life and resulted in me loving the Lord Jesus with a greater passion than ever before.

In the vision I was positioned high up in the air, looking down upon a huge open plain containing countless millions of Asian people, from a myriad of ethnic groups. Each person was adorned in their traditional tribal clothing. The colorful sea of humanity stretched to the distant horizon, further than my eyes could see.

As I gazed upon the vast multitude, a deep, overpowering sense of God's love and compassion flooded my soul. These words about Jesus were impressed on my mind: *"He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd"* (Matthew 9:36).

The vision ended as abruptly as it had begun, and I remained alone in the dark of the Himalayas, lying on the cold ground. For the next ten or fifteen minutes I was awestruck by the vision. My heavenly Father, in a moment of time, had shared His heart with me for the lost peoples of Asia. His amazing love so overwhelmed me that I could scarcely contain it. It felt like my heart might explode within me.

After the vision, a deep sense enveloped me that I was not going to die that night. God had shared a glimpse of His heart for a reason. He wanted me to invest the rest of my life taking the gospel to as many Asian people groups as possible. I realized my work was far from complete, and Jesus wanted me to live!

Although I felt spiritually uplifted from my heavenly experience, I was still unable to move and I remained completely devoid of energy. As I looked up into the star-filled sky, I began to shiver uncontrollably, and wondered how I was going to survive the night without a sleeping bag or warm coat. As I lay there, I thought I heard a sound way off in the distance. My ears perked up, but all I could hear was the chirping of crickets.

A few more minutes passed, and again I thought I heard a tiny sound in the distance. Then it stopped again. The third time I heard the sound, I knew my mind wasn't playing tricks on me. I really was hearing something. It sounded like a faint trickle of water, ebbing and flowing in intensity. Sometimes it was louder, then it would fade away for a few minutes before returning.

As the time went by, it was apparent that the sound was getting closer! It was now just a few hundred yards behind me, and I recognized the sound as the tinkling of a bell. Someone was coming down the trail toward me!

A Nepali man and his donkey suddenly emerged into the clearing. The donkey had a small bell around its neck, which tinkled as it walked along. Because of the hills and valleys, the sound-waves had reached my ears when the donkey was at the top of a hill, only to disappear when it went down into a hollow.

The man didn't say a word to me. He looked at me lying in the dirt and immediately summed up the situation. He lifted up my pack, and with a great struggle managed to secure it with rope across the back of his donkey. He then helped me to my feet, and although I was unstable, the Lord provided a boost of energy and I was soon staggering back down the trail from where I had come earlier that day.

After about thirty minutes we reached the small village of stone and mud houses that Ramesh and I had passed hours earlier. The man motioned for me to wait while he spoke with a woman who managed the only shop in the village. Beneath the shop was a tiny space with a small opening. I got on my hands and knees and crawled inside. The woman pushed my pack into the opening, said some things in Nepali that I couldn't understand, and left for the night.

Although the Lord had spared my life, I remained extremely ill. For days I lay under the shop, too sick to move. The lady brought me water and some lentil soup, but everything that passed my lips immediately came back up. She gave up trying to provide me with sustenance and brought me an old broken bucket to throw up in.

That Nepali woman was like an angel to me, emptying my bucket every day and trying to cheer me up by bringing children from the village to stare at me. That part of Nepal was isolated and far from the normal tourist routes. I was almost certainly the first foreigner any of the locals had ever seen.

Finally, after remaining there for a full week, I regained some strength and was able to contemplate my situation. The next day I decided to try to retrace my steps back to the capital city of Kathmandu. I walked all day back to the road and hailed a bus. This time I took a seat inside. From Nepalgunj I bought another ticket for the long journey back to Kathmandu. I was upset because I had failed to deliver the Bibles to the new believers, but hauled them all the way to Kathmandu, where I placed them back on the shelf at the mission guesthouse.

During the week I spent recovering beneath the shop, I expected my friend Ramesh to come back and find me, but he never did. I found out later that he had continued on to the Christian village, hoping I would be able to make my own way back to civilization. I asked the ministry leaders to thank Ramesh for sending the man with his donkey to rescue me. They replied, "Ramesh says he doesn't know what you mean. He didn't send anyone with a donkey."

I weighed myself on a set of scales at the guesthouse, and was shocked to discover the toll my illness had taken on my body. I had lost 23 kg (50 pounds) during the ten days I was away. Looking back, the experience in Nepal had a major effect on my life.

The brief supernatural vision God shared with me of His heart for the peoples of Asia revolutionized my life and service for Him.

Although the Lord Jesus had first called me in 1987, and had thrust me onto the mission field while still in my teens, with the benefit of hindsight I believe the ministry of Asia Harvest commenced that night in April 1991 atop the remote Himalayan mountain.

My heavenly vision in Nepal was the launching pad for everything that has happened in my life and ministry since that day. Over the years, God has unfolded this vision in amazing ways, as the remainder of my story will reveal.

My hope and prayer is that one day, like the Apostle Paul, I may be able to say, "*I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven*" (Acts 26:19).

ENDORSEMENTS

“It has been my privilege to have known Paul Hattaway for nearly 20 years. I have not met anyone else with his knowledge and understanding of the Church and people of Asia. He has experienced missionary life first hand, his research is legendary, and he appreciates the challenges of going to the unreached. Paul has been an invaluable friend, partner and advisor. If you meet Paul, you will know that overriding all of this is his God-given desire to see Asia’s billions saved from eternal death.”

— **Colin Dudgeon, AsiaLink, United Kingdom.**

“We are grateful to Paul Hattaway and Asia Harvest for providing millions of Bibles to the people of China. We cannot find words to express our thanks for the unselfish giving of those who have provided the Word of Life to us.”

— **Brother Chen, A Senior House Church Leader, China.**

“I first met Paul twenty years ago when I visited his home in Asia. From the start, I saw love, integrity, humility, brokenness, giftedness, and most of all the authenticity of a child-like resoluteness to follow only God’s agenda in his life—all the major ingredients for the makings of a champion advocate in the Lord’s work.

The pathway God has laid out for Paul and his family has not been easy. They have shown God’s majesty by humbly taking the high road many times when their flesh and natural instincts shouted the opposite.

God has chosen Paul and his precious wife, Joy, to display the might of His power, to impact world missions, and in so doing has sent many of the mighty and the highly credentialed of world ministry scrambling for answers to their own degree of usefulness to the kingdom.

I pray this book brings much glory to God and great encouragement to His people. In this day when many feel discouraged and cynical, may this testimony become a success for His glory.”

— **Bo Barredo, Co-Founder, Advancing Native Missions.**

“Over the past 12 years we have seen the powerful and lasting impact Paul Hattaway and Asia Harvest have made for Christ Jesus among the Vietnamese people. Paul’s driving passion for being about his Father’s business, combined with his insight and deep understanding of the spiritual needs of our nation are a great blessing that has resulted in much fruit for the kingdom of God.”

— **Joshua & Ruth Nguyen, Ministry leaders, Vietnam.**

“I first worked with Paul and Asia Harvest in 1992, delivering Bibles to house churches in China. We have increased our partnership together, as we intensify our commitment to providing God’s Word.”

— **Gary Russell, Founder, China Harvest Inc.**

“Paul Hattaway’s zeal and dedication for reaching the unreached has highly motivated us. His fervent pursuit of God’s call, even in very difficult circumstances, is exemplary. The many years of collaboration with Paul have expanded our vision and helped us see God’s big picture. We count it a tremendous privilege and blessing to represent Asia Harvest in Europe.”

— **Jürgen & Ruth Rintz, Stiftung SALZ Germany and Switzerland.**



ASIAN WORKERS' FUND



We currently support 1,931 Asian evangelists among 832 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: 10,378,646 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: 740,816 Bibles printed in 75 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 64,815 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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