

# Asia Harvest



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

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**COVID LOCKDOWNS -**  
**“Please help us Stay Alive!”**

# From the Frontlines

*“They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid” (Mark 10:32).*

*“Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God I will praise His Word. In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?” (Psalm 56:3-4 NKJV).*

You have probably heard many preachers warn against the dangers of fear. Of course, fear is toxic and can kill your faith. However, God doesn't expect His people to just dismiss fear as irrelevant. Jesus is always real, and He wants us to be real in sharing our feelings with Him.

The first step, when we face the kind of unstable situation millions of believers find themselves in today, is to be honest. If we are afraid, we should tell the Lord and ask for His help, power, and deliverance.

To pretend that fear doesn't exist is not helpful. King David knew a lot about fear. His life was in constant danger, but he prayed, *“Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You.”*

Nehemiah was a man who was greatly used by God, but when the Lord first put it in his heart to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls and gates, Nehemiah said, *“I was very much afraid”* (Neh. 2:2). Despite being terrified, he conquered his fears and asked the king's permission to return to his homeland, where he gradually overcame the taunts of the enemy. One brick at a time, Nehemiah and his construction teams worked hard until they finally completed their great task.

Likewise, you may be feeling fearful about Covid, or about the general decay of the world and the increase of lawlessness, violence, and unprecedented governmental control. If so, we encourage you to do as David and Nehemiah did, and truthfully acknowledge your feelings to the Lord Jesus. He is wonderful, and has always been able to work with every type of personality among His followers.

For two millennium, Thomas has been somewhat looked down upon by many Christians. Even today, people who show any skepticism are labelled a 'Doubting Thomas'.

*Front and back cover photos: Multitudes of hungry people flock to receive food and essential supplies from our co-workers in India. Each person is not only helped physically, but are presented with the Gospel of salvation.*

Whereas Thomas appears timid and cautious in the gospels, Peter was at the other end of the personality spectrum—he was never backward in coming forward, courageous, and outspoken. The Lord Jesus, however, loved both Thomas and Peter, and He used them greatly in the extension of His kingdom.

Although not much is mentioned of Thomas in Scripture, it is strongly believed that he became the first missionary to India. We have visited the tomb of Thomas in the hills near Chennai in south India, where the apostle is said to have been murdered and buried in AD 72.

Some early Church historians (see Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, Vol. 1) record that very soon after the ascension of the Lord to heaven (and before Judas had been replaced as an apostle), the 11 disciples gathered in Jerusalem to strategize how to obey Jesus' command to ***"Go into all the world and preach the gospel"*** (Mark 16:15).

Lots were cast, and India fell to Thomas, who strongly resisted the call, asking, "How can I, a Hebrew, go and preach the truth among the Indians?" That night, the Lord visited Thomas in a dream and assured him, "Fear not, Thomas. Go to India and preach my Word, and my grace will be with you."

Thomas still hesitated, as investing the rest of his life in India was clearly not the way this cautious man had envisaged things. After more prayer by the disciples, however, Thomas was made aware that an Indian king named Gundaphar (who ruled the Indo-Parthian empire from AD 19-46) was visiting Jerusalem at the time, and was looking for a carpenter to accompany him back to India to build a palace for him. Thomas was in this way enlisted to make the journey.

In India, the Holy Spirit empowered Thomas. He preached with great power, and many miracles were done by him in the Name of Jesus. Trouble arose when many Hindu priests were converted, among the thousands of Indians who surrendered their hearts to Christ. Fearing their customs and religion was under threat, priests killed the apostle with a sword, but the kingdom of God had been planted in India, and Thomas is revered by Indian Christians to the present day.

You may also be a cautious or even timid person by nature, but fear not! Your Heavenly Father knows and can move on your heart, giving you confidence and all the gifts needed to fulfill His purposes in and through you.

The key to overcoming in a volatile and decaying world is not to pretend that fear doesn't exist, but to fix our eyes on Jesus Christ, who is marching ahead of His people and whose Word encourages us to be ***"confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus"*** (Philippians 1:6).

## *A Plea from Asia: 'Please Help us Stay Alive'*

Last year, as it became increasingly clear that the Covid pandemic was a major disaster, we wrote a newsletter to highlight all the ways we were helping God's people across Asia during the first lockdowns. We hoped the pandemic would peak and then pass, but obviously the opposite has occurred, and more people are dying and suffering more intensely than at any other time during the crisis.

Some parts of Asia have experienced continual, rolling lockdowns for over a year. A few countries have had ten or more different lockdowns, which has created great stress and anxiety among the population, including the Body of Christ.

Although the pandemic itself has brought terrible destruction, it is now clear that **the never-ending lockdowns**

**are causing even greater damage to people throughout Asia.** Starvation, despair, mental health issues, and anxiety are believed to be rampant.

Long-term, the biggest challenges in Asia will be economic. Nations that were already poor with few resources are struggling to survive. One leader we support explained that in his church the believers have only recently been allowed to meet again in small numbers, but few people have a job, and therefore there is





little money, food, or essential items necessary to live. Almost all employment has been wiped out, and the situation may not improve for many years.

When we first mentioned the needs last year, many believers responded by praying and giving generously. We were able to help tens of thousands of poor Christians survive the first round of lockdowns. Not only did we send every cent of donations that came in at the time, but we have continued helping by sending on gifts given to our general fund and to the **Persecution & Relief Fund**.

Now, more than a year later, the situation in most parts of Asia is far more dire. As the virus wreaks havoc on the most vulnerable communities, we again ask for your prayers and support for our brothers and sisters in Asia.

You may have seen on the news how India has been decimated in recent months, with thousands of corpses being piled up and burned each day. As terrible as it has been in India, however, we think the neighboring countries of Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh have been even worse affected. Their health systems were poor to non-existent in normal times, and death has dragged millions of people down into the grave in those countries.



In these pages we share photos of some of the recent help we have given to believers throughout Asia. Please pray for our projects, as we continue providing essential relief in more than a dozen countries, from Pakistan to Indonesia, and across the vast continent of Asia.

Of the many grim stories shared by our co-workers, the following one stands out as an example of the life-and-death struggle being faced by multitudes of Christians.

An evangelist in a remote part of Southeast Asia found himself completely cut off after the government imposed a severe crackdown. He was confined to his makeshift hut in the jungle, and his food soon ran out. Our colleagues tried to get money to him so he could survive, but in that area there are no banks or ATM machines. The only way he could receive help was by having funds hand-carried to him, but military

roadblocks manned by soldiers with machine guns were stationed to prevent anyone getting in or out of his area.

We last heard from this brother about three months ago. He was struggling at the point of starvation, with zero government assistance because he is a Christian. We do not know if he is now dead or alive.

You probably haven't heard this before, but something else has been going on behind the scenes in many Asian countries. Thousands of foreign Christians who live in places like Thailand and Malaysia have found themselves stripped of their legal status. In some cases, the entire visa category that allowed them to stay has been unilaterally revoked by



the government. Many of these foreigners were involved with support ministries to closed countries.

That's probably enough bad news!

There is plenty of good news too, and opportunities abound to bless God's people and to make a difference for the Lord Jesus.

One of the best things to come from the lockdowns is how the Body of Christ in many locations has adapted to the situation. Believers have grown closer together than ever before, and have shared their possessions and food with one another, and with others in their communities when the opportunity arises. Often, for the first time, fellowships of believers have experienced unity like the early Church: ***"All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need"*** (Acts 2:44-45).

Despite the severe challenges, the Gospel has continued to go forth, and many people have entered God's kingdom for the first time. Indeed, at the end of 2020 we were shocked to find that the evangelists we support through the Asian Workers' Fund reported **117,509 conversions to Christ** throughout the year, despite all the restrictions to their movement and untold difficulties.







In many areas, those we support have continued to plant new churches, and a constant stream of people have come to learn about Jesus Christ. Before the pandemic they showed little or no interest in the Gospel, but after seeing the instability of the world, coupled with the genuine love of the Christians, the two factors have combined to produce a great harvest of salvation.







We are currently helping about 10,000 poor families (including more than 2,000 Christian widows) survive through the Covid ordeal. **For \$20, we can buy and deliver relief packages of food and essential supplies to poor families for one month.** A gift of \$100 will therefore help five families for a month, or \$500 will help 25 families. Please pray for them and all our coworkers who are overseeing the projects. If you would like to help, please fill out and return the yellow Response Form, or you can give to the **Persecution & Relief Fund** via our website: [www.asiaharvest.org](http://www.asiaharvest.org). Every dollar received is sent directly to the frontlines in Asia. Nothing is deducted for any other expense. The contents of each relief package are:

6 bars of Soap	\$ 3.00
3 kg of Dahl (protein)	\$ 4.70
3 liters of Cooking Oil	\$ 4.80
2 kg of Onions	\$ 1.50
500 g of Tamarind	\$ 2.00
Salt and Curry Powder	\$ 3.00
Washing Detergent	\$ 1.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 20.00</b>

Thank you and God bless you. Let's pray the kingdom of God will grow during this long struggle, and the Body of Christ will come out stronger than ever, with multitudes of new members as people hear the Gospel for the first time.

## CHINA BIBLE FUND



*Current Total: **15,078,437**  
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 WORKERS' FUND



*We currently support **1,525** Asian evangelists  
among **1,150** unreached people groups.*

The **Asian Workers' Fund** supports indigenous church-planting evangelists among unreached Asian tribes and ethnic groups. These disciples have committed their whole lives to the Gospel but are hindered by lack of finances. To date, the evangelists we help have reportedly led **602,804 people to faith in Jesus Christ**. You can help support these dedicated workers for **\$25 per month** each. A prayer card and occasional updates are sent to all regular supporters of this project.

## ASIAN BIBLE FUND



*Current Total: **1,318,156** Bibles printed in **125** languages.*

The **Asian Bible Fund** provides the Scriptures in numerous languages in Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, and anywhere in Asia that God's people need His Word.

**Each Bible costs an average of \$2.70 to print and deliver.** We also print millions of Gospel booklets for evangelism through this project.

## LIVING MARTYRS' FUND

*Because of your partnership we are supporting **1,839** 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 Christian widows and church leaders and their families throughout Asia 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 **\$25 per month** you can help support one of these living martyrs.

## THE CHILDREN'S FUND



*Your generous support has so far reached **180,791** children throughout Asia.*

The **Children's Fund** introduces children to Jesus in India, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, and a host of other Asian countries. Activities include printing and distributing Gospel literature designed for children, funding Sunday school training classes, providing free surgeries for those with special needs, and generally lifting children out of spiritual and physical poverty. It costs an average of just **\$10 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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