

Asia Harvest

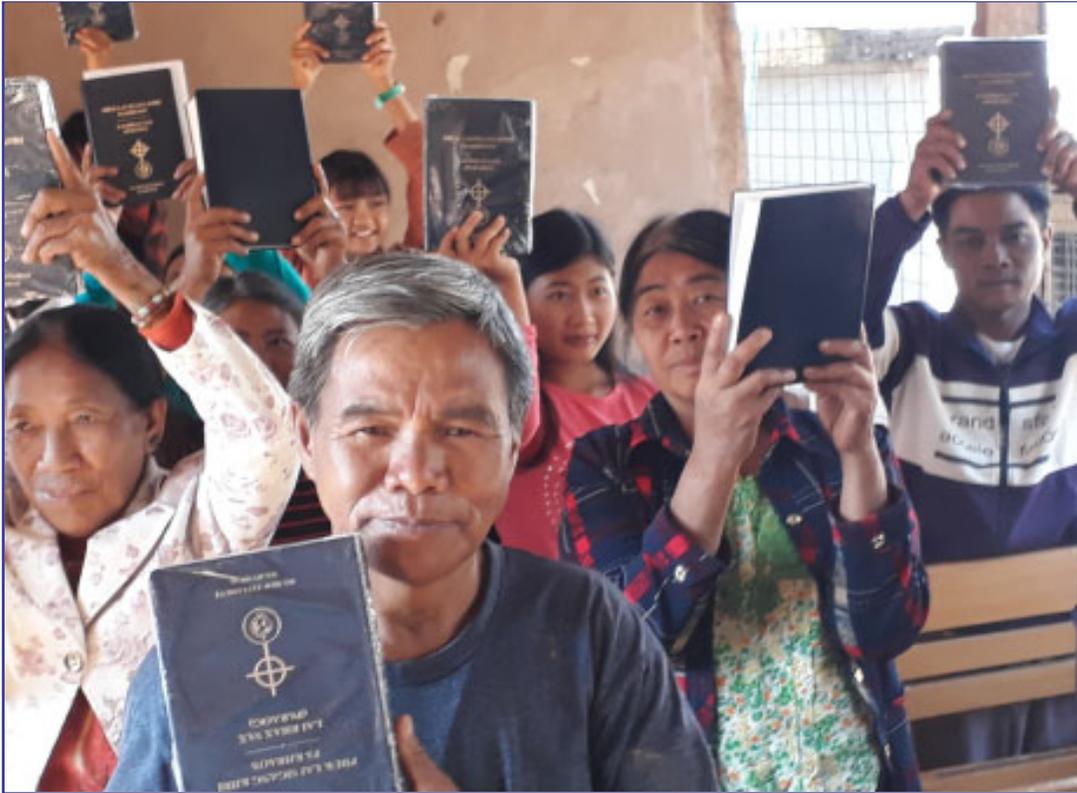


'Put in the Sickle, for the Harvest has Come!' (Mark 4:29)

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Bibles for the Wa People

From Demon-Worshippers to Children of God

From the Frontlines

“He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in their hearts” (Ecclesiastes 3:9).

“From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ‘For in him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:26-28).

You may never have heard of the **one million Wa people of northern Myanmar (formerly Burma) and southwest China**, but in this newsletter we would like to introduce you to some of our Wa brothers and sisters in Christ, and share how tens of thousands of them are receiving the Word of God in their own heart language for the first time, through our **Asian Bible Fund**.

Do you know that most missionaries, including us, have been confronted over the years by both heathens outside the Church and misguided people inside the Church, telling us that we should leave “peaceful, loving” tribal people like the Wa alone? “They don’t need Christianity,” we have been told. “It just messes up their beautiful, harmonious way of life.”

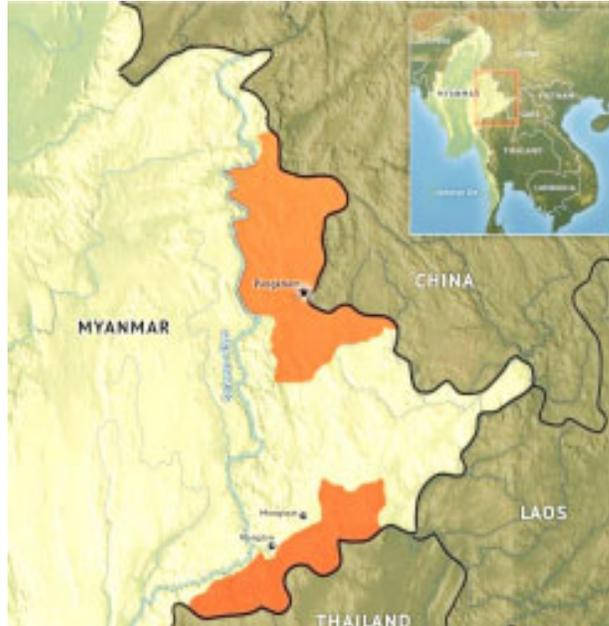
Such ignorant statements come from people who have obviously never spent much time on the ground in an Asian village. If they did, they would soon see how desperately the Wa and other tribes need the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Their “peaceful” communities are actually full of strife, bitterness and sin. In the case of the Wa people, they have lived in deep bondage to demons for countless generations, with curses and violence causing many to live in utter terror.

Please don’t be sucked in to the lie that any society can find peace or joy apart from God. The Word of God tells us: *“We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one”* (1 John 5:19).

The recent history of the Wa people has been very difficult and complex. Before Burma gained independence from Britain in 1948, many of the tribes had been promised their own nationhood, but the British cowardly reneged on their promises and abandoned tribes like the Wa, who were left to fight for survival.

As a result, to the present time various civil wars have raged in Myanmar, with tribal armies fighting for freedom from the cruel Burmese military that has killed hundreds of thousands of civilians over the decades.

Today, there are no less than 27 different insurgent armies across Myanmar! The Wa are divided into two main groups as shown on this map. The Northern Wa live in areas along the China border, and are ruled by the United Wa State Army, which has about 30,000 troops.



The northern area is closed to outsiders, and is deeply influenced by the Chinese Communists, who provide training and weapons to the Wa army. It is also one of the major drug-producing regions on earth. In recent years many Wa churches inside Myanmar have been forced to close and pastors have been arrested, due to the influence from China's Christian-hating President Xi.

Further south, the Southern Wa live near the Thailand border. They also have their own military, the Wa National Army. Separated by hundreds of miles of dense jungle and rugged mountains, the Wa people have fragmented into about 40 different dialect groups. All Wa people desperately need the Gospel, but have been deprived of God's Word in their language for generations.

The history of Christianity among the Wa is a long one, with God first reaching them with great power through a unique demonstration of His love and grace in the 1880s. The late Don Richardson's wonderful book, *Eternity in their Hearts*, tells the extraordinary story of how the Gospel first came to the Wa people:

"The Wa were headhunters. Just once a year, in the planting season, Wa tribesmen felt compelled by bloodthirsty spirits to plant human heads in their fields along with their seeds—just to ensure a good crop. Neighboring tribes always wanted to leave for vacation when the Wa were planting their crops, but unfortunately that was when they had to plant their crops too.

A benign influence, however, was at work within the folk religion of the Wa people. From time-to-time prophets of the true God, whom the Wa called Siyeh,

arose to condemn headhunting and spirit-appeasement! One such prophet, Pu Chan, appeared during the 1880s. He persuaded several thousand Wa tribesmen to abandon headhunting and spirit worship on the grounds that the true God was about to send a long-awaited white brother with a copy of the lost book. If he came to the Wa territory and heard that the Wa were practicing evil things, he might think them unworthy of the true God's book and turn away again! If that happened, Pu Chan warned, surely the Wa would never get another chance to have the lost book restored to them.

One morning Pu Chan saddled a pony. 'Follow this pony,' he said to some of his disciples. 'Siyeh told me last night that the white brother has finally come near! Siyeh will cause this pony to lead you to him. While Pu Chan's disciples gaped in astonishment, the pony started walking. Expecting the pony to stop at the nearest stream, they followed it.'

Two hundred miles away, an American missionary from Nebraska, William Young, had recently set up base in the town of Kengtung. One day Young went to the marketplace to preach among the people, and he noticed strangely garbed men gravitating toward him out of the throng in the market.

They were not Wa, but were men from the neighboring Lahu tribe, who God chose to receive the Gospel first. The Lahu had also been waiting for a white man to come with a lost book that would reconnect them to the true God, whom they called Gwi'sha in their language. Richardson continues the story:

"They stared incredulously at the missionary's white face, the interior of the book in his hand, and listened to his description of the laws of God contained



Left: A 1927 photo of Pu Chan, the Wa prophet who helped the Wa find the True God, and missionary William Young (right).

[Our thanks to Marcus Young, the grandson of William, for providing these two precious photos.]



in that book. Then, in an outburst of powerful emotion, the Lahu pleaded with Young to follow them up into the mountains. ‘We as a people have been waiting for you for centuries,’ they explained. ‘We even have meeting houses built in some of our villages in readiness for your coming.’

Some of the men showed him bracelets of coarse rope hanging like manacles from their wrists. ‘We have worn ropes like these since time immemorial. They symbolize our bondage to evil spirits. You alone, as the messenger of Gwi’sha, may cut these manacles from our wrists—but only after you have brought the lost book of Gwi’sha to our very hearths!’

Nearly speechless with awe, Young went with them. Tens of thousands of Lahu became Christians, and it was at that stage that Pu Chan saddled his pony (200 miles away in Wa territory) and told his Wa disciples to follow it to the missing book and the messenger of the True God. When the pony finally arrived at the home of William Young, the Wa asked him: ‘Have you brought the book of God?’ Young nodded. The men, overcome with emotion, fell at his feet and blurted out, ‘This pony is saddled especially for you. Our people are all waiting. Fetch the book! We must be on our way!’

Thousands of Wa heard the Gospel from both the Young family and the new Lahu Christians. They repented of their sins and gave their lives to Jesus Christ. Young’s son, Vincent, later translated the New Testament into Wa.

During much of the 20th century, many Wa people continued to outwardly follow Christ, but their faith generally slipped into dead formalism. A vibrant, life-giving revival was greatly needed among the Wa, lest the amazing breakthroughs of the past would go to waste.

One reason for the spiritual decline among the Wa was the problem with their Bible. Because of their widespread locations and multiple dialects, only a fraction of Wa were able to understand the dialect the Bible was available in.

Some years ago, a Wa Bible committee was set up to address this problem, and a new translation was launched in a common vernacular that many more Wa people could understand.

Asia Harvest has been greatly blessed to provide **more than 80,000 new Wa Bibles**, free of charge, through our **Asian Bible Fund**. There are many requests for more, and we invite you to prayerfully consider supporting this strategic endeavor.

In the following pages we are privileged to introduce you to just a few of our Wa brothers and sisters, as they share how they are overjoyed to finally have God’s Word in a form they can easily understand.



“My name is Moe, and I am 19-years-old. My family were animists, so we served the spirits and had never heard about Jesus. My friend told me the Good News, and I went to church with her. The pastor gave me a Bible and I brought it home, but my father was the village shaman so he didn’t let me read the Bible. One day my mother fell ill, and my father spent all our money to try to make her well. He heard that Jesus could heal the sick, so he let her go to the church with me. She was healed that day, and now my whole family are Christians! Thank you for the wonderful Bibles you freely gave us.”

“My name is Nyi. Everyone in my family lived in fear of the spirits for generations. We did all we could to appease them, but in return we got death and suffering. My mother died when I was a baby, and my father died when I was 8. Then when I was 13 my brother died and there was no one to take care of me. I started using drugs, and at my lowest point a Christian told me about Jesus, and He changed my life! I even graduated from Bible school, and now I serve my Wa people, getting as many saved as I can. The Word of God you gave us is so precious!”



“My name is Kal, and I am 37-years-old. I pastor a church and I am also the General Secretary of the Wa Baptist Association. It has been very difficult to get Bibles in the Wa controlled areas, because there are many war zones. Many pastors in our northern area have been arrested and their churches closed down, under pressure from the Communists. Many Wa are desperate to read the Bible, but it has been impossible to find any. Now God has answered our prayers and we have received His Word for free from you! The Scriptures have shown us His ways, and they are alive and powerful and can transform our lives. On behalf of the Wa people I thank you and ask the Lord to richly bless you!”



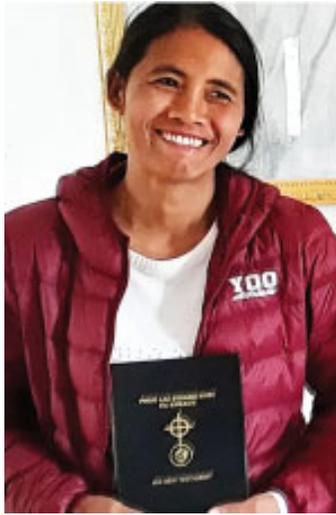
“My name is Mrs. Kring, and I am 35-years-old. I was not raised as a Christian and when I was 12, I was afflicted with brain cancer. My parents sold our house and land in order to help me, but nothing worked. One day a Christian came to the hospital. He told me Jesus is the Healer. I believed, and after two days I was completely restored. Because of this miracle all my family accepted Christ. Our Wa people could not obtain Bibles anywhere. Even though the Bible Society claim to sell them, we found that is false. All we could do is cry out to God, and He heard our prayers! His Word is our greatest need and now we will grow in every area of our lives. Thank you for your wonderful gift of life!”

“My name is Elizabeth, and I am 25-years-old. Today was the happiest and most blessed day for me and our Wa people, because God has answered our prayers for His holy Word. It is what we have long hungered for the most. People everywhere are very excited, and I would just like to say ‘thank you very much’ to everyone who donated so that we could have free Bibles. May the Lord bless you and we pray you will continue to be concerned for the Wa people.”



“My name is Khat, and I am a 53-year-old pastor. My parents were animists who offered sacrifices to the spirits every month, and our family was plunged into poverty and bondage to cruel demons. In 2001 I heard of God’s love and forgiveness, and I committed my life to Jesus. We smashed all our idols and the Lord blessed us in every way. I was eager to read the Bible, but for years I could not find even one for sale. Now you have brought many Bibles to us, and we are overwhelmed with joy. Thank you! You have done the greatest thing possible for our Wa people.”





“My name is Mrs. Kap, and I am 36-years-old. I was raised in a Christian family and was saved in my Sunday school class when I was a teenager. After I accepted the Lord I eagerly wanted to read the Bible, but there were no Bibles in our area. Most Wa people had never seen a copy of the Bible. I prayed to God every day to own and be able to read His Word. Then after 13 years of praying, God answered! My pastor presented me with my very own Wa Bible on Christmas Day. What a wonderful gift from the Lord! Thank you so much for your love and concern for our Wa people. May the Lord bless you more and more.

“I am Pastor Kuhn. I am 64-years-old. Even though I have been a Christian most of my life, we have always struggled to access God’s Word. The Bible Society used to print an old version of the Wa Bible, but it was difficult to understand, they printed very few copies, and they charged far too much money for us to afford. By the grace of God, He knew our needs and He touched His children around the world to pray, give and work so that we received free Bibles from you, in a language we can easily understand. The day they arrived was a great blessing from heaven, and the most precious and unforgettable day for our Wa people. Thank you and may God bless you!”



The Wa Christians highlighted in this newsletter are representative of countless thousands of others who receive life-changing Bibles through Asia Harvest’s two Bible projects. The **China Bible Fund** continues to strengthen and equip house church believers in China. Each full Chinese Bible is printed and delivered for just **\$3.00**, while the **Asian Bible Fund** continues to provide the Scriptures in numerous languages of Asia for an average of **\$2.70 per Bible**.

If you would like to help provide God’s Word to hungry believers like these, we invite you to fill out the yellow response form in this newsletter and send it back along with your gift. Alternatively, one-time or monthly donations to the project can be made via our website: www.asiaharvest.org

CHINA BIBLE FUND



Current Total: 16,449,996
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 \$3.00 to print and deliver.

ASIAN WORKERS' FUND



We currently support 1,598 Asian evangelists
among 1,203 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 **661,386 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: 1,415,702 Bibles printed in 146 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 **2,096** 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 **187,024** 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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