

"PUT IN THE SICKLE, FOR THE HARVEST HAS COME!" MARK 4:29

Asia Harvest

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NEWSLETTER #192



THE LISU PEOPLE

Providing God's Word to Hungry Believers

ASIAHARVEST.ORG • OFFICE@ASIAHARVEST.ORG



From the Frontlines

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.

All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.

And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

Acts 2:42-47

OVER THE YEARS MANY CHURCH LEADERS AND BELIEVERS have read our reports about revival in China and other parts of Asia they have asked us to share the “secret” to how they too can experience “real New Testament Christianity.”

Invariably, when we delve further, we find that what they mean by New Testament Christianity is the record in the early chapters of Acts, like the passage quoted above.

While such experiences are tremendously exhilarating, are they the sum total of New Testament Christianity? About 30 years after the Day of Pentecost, the Apostle Paul sent detailed instructions to Timothy about church structure and leadership, how worship should

FRONT COVER: *Lisu Christians overjoyed at receiving a delivery of Bibles in their own language. 1.5 million Lisu inhabit areas on both sides of the China-Myanmar border.*

be ordered, and the qualifications of deacons and elders.

Are those Scriptures any less inspired and important than the accounts in the second chapter of Acts?

There are different seasons in the growth and maturity of the Body of Christ.

At *Asia Harvest*, it has always been our driving ambition to establish the Gospel in the most unreached areas. Like Paul, we can say: *"It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation"* (Romans 15:20).

This focus has not wavered for us, and by God's grace it never will.

At the same time, however, we realize that there are tremendously important needs throughout Asia among people groups that have had the Gospel for generations, but desperately need a visitation of God to renew and revive them.

We don't think there is much point in leading people to Christ if they are then neglected and drift back to the darkness from where they came.

Spiritual stagnation often occurs in countries where **Christians have deliberately been starved of God's Word** by the authorities.

This is the case among the *Lisu* people of southwest China and northern Myanmar.

*Not for the faint-hearted:
Pulling yourself across raging
torrents on a rope is the only
way to cross many rivers
in the Lisu area.*



**IN THIS NEWSLETTER WE WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO
A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO HELP PROVIDE PRECIOUS BIBLES
TO THE LISU CHURCHES IN BOTH COUNTRIES...**



A Remarkable Homeland

THE NAME “*LISU*” means “*come down people*” reflecting the Lisu belief that they originally had a kingdom on the Tibetan Plateau, before they came down into the mountains of southwest China.

Today, the *Lisu* can be divided into three main groups depending on their location. The *Black Lisu* are the most remote, dwelling in villages high up in the mountains, often more than 10,000 feet above sea-level.

The highest peak in the *Lisu* area is Hkakabo Razi, which at 5,881 meters (19,295 feet) is the highest in Southeast Asia. The *Lisu* also inhabit a spectacular area in Nujiang which has been dubbed “Asia’s Grand Canyon.”

Other *Lisu* live in low-lying areas among the Han Chinese and other ethnic groups.

The extreme homeland of the *Lisu* has created some unique situations. People living in some villages on the side of a high mountain are able to communicate by shouting to their neighbors several hundred yards across the valley in a village clinging to an adjacent slope, but they may never meet them in person.

To do so, they would need to undertake a long and dangerous days-long journey down to the valley floor.

When they reach the bottom, they must navigate across raging, bridge-less rivers, inching their way across on a rope and pulley system, before climbing back up the other side.





A Black Lisu lady from the high mountains along the China-Myanmar border.

An Oppressed People

FOR CENTURIES the *Lisu* longed to live peaceful lives, but have been targeted and bullied by the Chinese, Burmese, and other large races, who have made their lives miserable.

The desire for freedom caused the Lisu to disperse into Myanmar, and as far afield as northeast India and Thailand.

Between 1801 and 1803 the Chinese government mobilized 10,000 troops to crush the *Lisu*.

Many thousands died and entire communities were decimated.

Survivors fled deeper into the remote mountains. Critics at the time described the excessive military action as “using a cattle knife to kill chickens.”

Later, in the 1940s, the Chinese despised the *Lisu* so much that 65 punitive taxes were levied on them, including one tax for each plane that flew over their region!

When the first missionaries reached the *Lisu* area in the early 1900s, they were appalled at their spiritual and moral condition. One missionary unflatteringly described the *Lisu* as “utter savages.” Alcoholism and gambling were so rampant that Isobel Kuhn wrote:

“When they have gambled away their money, they will often stake their children, their wives, and even themselves as slaves. As a result, in one night a whole family can be gambled away into life-long slavery.”

The state of the *Lisu* people was dire—**the perfect situation** for the Lord Jesus Christ to display His grace.

What followed is one of the **greatest** missionary stories of the 20th century...

JESUS—The King of the Lisu

FOR COUNTLESS GENERATIONS, the *Lisu* believed in a supreme god named *Wa Sa*, who had the power to heal and protect them. They had lost contact, however, and had given up hope of ever being reconciled with him.

A key to their eventual salvation was a long-held belief that one day a white brother would come and bring with him a lost book in the *Lisu* language, which would show them the way back to God, and He would rule them as their king.

The remarkable thing is that the *Lisu* at the time did not have any printed material or even an alphabet, yet this legend persisted, being passed down from generation to generation.

In the first half of the 20th century, a succession of godly missionaries entered the *Lisu* region. Some—like James Fraser, Allyn & Leila Cooke, and John & Isobel Kuhn—became well-known in the Christian world as they reported on the extraordinary revival sweeping the *Lisu* into God’s kingdom.

In 1916 and 1917 alone, Fraser baptized 60,000 *Lisu*, with many of the converts serving Christ with the kind of zeal they had previously used to serve the devil.

When one village surrendered to the Lord, they poured out all their liquor, causing all the pigs in the village to get drunk!

A key development occurred when missionary Samuel Pollard created a unique script to translate the *Lisu* Bible into.

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b	p	d	t	z	c	zh/j	ch/q
[p/b]	[p ^h]	[t/d]	[t ^h]	[ts]	[ts ^h]	[tʂ/tɕ]	[tʂ ^h /tɕ ^h]
└	└'	┘	┘'	Δ	Δ'	┐	┐'
dr	tr	g	k	dl	tl	gh	kh
[t/d]	[t ^h]	[k/g]	[k ^h]	[t ^l /d ^l]	[t ^h]	[q/ɣ]	[q ^h]
┘	'┘	└	'└	⋈	'⋈	L	⋈

A sample of the Lisu script created by missionary Samuel Pollard.

Despite looking like a collection of symbols and inverted English letters, the alphabet was a stroke of genius, and the *Lisu* were able to learn to read and write their language for the first time in history.

The first Bible portions were completed in 1921, and the New Testament in 1938. Having the Word of God in their own language transformed the *Lisu* people.

When the Communists came to destroy their faith in the 1950s, a young *Lisu* man told his interrogators: “Christianity has already penetrated into our flesh and blood and it will not be easy to tear it away from us.”

Decades of Decline

THE LISU CHRISTIANS ALSO TOOK RESPONSIBILITY to take the Gospel to other unreached tribes. For example, in 1960 Lisu evangelists risked their lives by going to the head-hunter Naga and Tangshang tribes on the Myanmar-India border.

Willing to die for their faith, they planted many churches, and today the majority of the people in those groups remain Christians.

It would be nice if we concluded our story here, with hundreds of thousands of *Lisu* in China and Myanmar having come into the family of God. But without constant tending, a garden will slowly become choked with weeds.

Over the decades, the Lisu have been deprived of Bibles, with the Chinese Communists and the Burmese military rulers combining to cut off the supply of God's Word to them.

As a result, while multitudes of Lisu remain dedicated Christians today, many of the younger generations have a form of godliness but no personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

They need a fresh visitation of the Holy Spirit.

Missionary Grace Jacob taught at a Chinese university for years.

She was excited to learn that some of her new students were *Lisu* Christians, but discovered that even though they regularly



attended church, the young men lived immoral lives and loved partying every weekend. None of them had ever heard of John 3:16 or Psalm 23!

When she asked them, “What is a Christian?” they replied with a confused expression, “Is it someone who lives a moral life?”

After a century of glorious victories and famous missionary stories, **it would be tragic** for the final chapter of the *Lisu* to be one where they reverted back to their former ways due to decades of decline without access to the Scriptures! ☹️

FOR THIS REASON, ASIA HARVEST IS PRINTING AND DELIVERING 60,000 LISU BIBLES TO LISU CHURCHES ON BOTH SIDES OF THE CHINA-MYANMAR BORDER

More copies will be provided according to the need, as the Lord provides.

As with ALL of our projects, we guarantee that **100%** of donations towards this need will go directly to the field to implement the project.

Nothing will be deducted for administration or any other need.

We invite you to **pray** for the *Lisu*, and to consider **partnering** with us to help our *Lisu* brothers and sisters obtain God's precious Word.

Each Bible costs \$3 to print and deliver through our **Asia Bible Fund**.

Donations can be made by sending a gift along with the **yellow Response Form** in this newsletter. One-time or monthly donations can also be made via our secure website. Thank you.



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ASIA BIBLE FUND ABF

CURRENT TOTAL: 19,594,390 BIBLES PRINTED IN 159 LANGUAGES

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

Each Bible costs just \$3 to print and deliver. We also print millions of Gospel booklets for evangelism through this project.



ASIAN WORKERS' FUND AWF

WE CURRENTLY SUPPORT 1,710 ASIAN EVANGELISTS AMONG 1,254 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 1,306,911 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.

MINISTRY TRAINING FUND MTF

THANKS TO YOUR SUPPORT WE HAVE HELPED TRAIN AND EQUIP 15,465 ASIAN BELIEVERS TO EFFECTIVELY SERVE GOD

The Ministry Training Fund helps the Asian Church disciple and train believers to be effective ministers of the Gospel among the unreached.



Often workers live in remote places and coming together once or twice a year is the only outside fellowship and teaching they receive. We cover travel, food and other costs associated with the meetings. To train each worker costs an average of \$50.

LMF

LIVING MARTYRS' FUND

BECAUSE OF YOUR PARTNERSHIP WE ARE CURRENTLY SUPPORTING 883 LIVING MARTYRS

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.



TCF

THE CHILDREN'S FUND

YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT HAS REACHED 214,799 CHILDREN THROUGHOUT ASIA SO FAR

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 help reach a child for Christ.



PRF

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 lepers, communities and families throughout Asia who are in desperate need.





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