

Asia Harvest



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

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The Asian Workers' Fund

Helping the Unhelped and Reaching the Unreached

From the Front Lines

by Paul & Joy Hattaway

One of the strangest things we have encountered during our time serving the Lord in Asia is the argument over whether or not Western churches should support Asian evangelists to reach the lost in their own countries, or whether it is best for foreign missionaries to continue being the main focus of their efforts and funding.

The argument usually boils down to one side warning that we should not support 'third-world' missionaries because it can create an unhealthy 'dependency.' On the other side, organizations which specialize in supporting native missionaries often point out that local workers can live on a fraction of the budget that the average foreigner can.

While both sides have valid points worth considering, to us, they both miss the point. A drowning man who is in his last gasp of breath before sinking under the water doesn't care whether it is a Westerner or Asian person who throws him a life preserver! All he cares about is getting saved before it is too late. It seems a lot of Christians waste their precious time arguing about who should do the job, while millions of people all around them plunge into eternity in hell.

We are convinced the best way to get the job done is for the worldwide Body of Christ to *work together*. It is not a case of either foreigners or locals doing the work. Both have strengths and weaknesses that compliment one another.

A number of years ago Paul was blessed to attend a meeting in northern Myanmar (Burma) with many key Chinese house church leaders. One man, Brother Wang, had spent 23 years in prison for the Gospel. After his release, he travelled around China visiting many churches and renewing his relationships with key leaders.

Brother Wang stood to his feet and spoke directly to the Western mission leaders in the room. Decades in prison meant there was no 'beating around the bush' which often characterizes Chinese speech. He said, ***"We appreciate that you want to help reach China. However, many times you come in with your ideas and plans, and start bossing us around. You don't even take the time to ask what plans and strategies we have to reach our own nation. To be honest, we wish you would all leave, because you are getting in the way and slowing down the Gospel in China because of your work."***

As his words were translated into English there was a hush over the foreigners in the room. They had never been told the truth in such a direct manner before. The other Chinese leaders in the room were a little embarrassed by the bluntness of Brother Wang's

message, but I noticed as they looked down at the floor that they were all nodding in agreement!

It is important to understand that Brother Wang was *not* saying there is no place for foreign Christians to serve in China. But they must go to serve and not to be served. They should learn the vision God has given the local believers and become a part of it, rather than impose their own agenda.

When we first arrived in Asia back in the 1980s, we thought we would walk into villages and proclaim the Gospel to people. It didn't take long for us to realize, however, that local believers were far better equipped to do the job. They spoke the language fluently, were part of the culture, and to be honest, in countries like China and Vietnam the Christians had undergone decades of refining which made them far more spiritually effective at reaching the lost than we were.

After a few years we became aware of hundreds of unreached tribes and ethnic groups in the countries we were called to serve in. Instead of us taking a traditional 'West to the Rest' missionary philosophy, we realized God's kingdom could advance far more effectively if we adopted a different approach. We took a step back, and instead of imposing our own vision on the Christians in Asia, we decided to serve *alongside* them and find ways to *help them* get the job done. Over the years this strategy has taken many forms, including supplying Bibles and other resources to Christians in persecuted nations, humanitarian relief projects that focus on reaching the lost, and providing support for Asian missionaries going to the most unreached people groups.

We learned the first step in this process was to come in humility, asking local church leaders what vision and strategy God had already given them. Then, we prayerfully found ways we could come alongside and serve them.

Believers involved with mission work should be careful to guard against having a kind of Christian imperialist mindset, thinking what we have is better than what Christians elsewhere have. It is impossible to truly serve with such an attitude. It takes a bit of humility for people and organizations to be willing to let someone else get the credit, while they stand back and serve in the background. If a Christian can get to the place where he is content to remain in obscurity, where he does not have to be up front but would rather sit in the back seat than on the platform, then God can use him. After all, it is Jesus Christ alone who deserves all credit and glory!

All of this might sound good, but how does it work out on a practical level? Let us provide one example.... We are frequently contacted by someone who has written a book. They want us to help them translate it into Chinese so that the house churches in China will be blessed by their teaching. We thank them for their offer, but also inform them that among the more than 100 million Christians in China today, God has gifted many to write and teach His Word in a powerful and effective way. The Chinese church

has been filled with countless books translated from the West. Some have been helpful, many have not. More than a few have caused division and confusion.

Do you think we should look first to translate Western books into Chinese, or should we encourage and help develop the gifts God has placed in the Chinese Church? We believe it is wonderful that God has raised up many Chinese believers who preach, teach, sing and write in a way that glorifies Jesus. Perhaps it might be more beneficial for the kingdom of God if more books by Chinese Christians are translated into English!

If we truly want to serve the Church in Asia, we should never want to take over their churches or dominate their work in any way. This is why when we support Asian evangelists we always do so through existing local churches and ministries. By God's grace, things have grown and today we support hundreds of faithful and courageous frontline workers through the Asian Workers' fund.



It might surprise you to know that most of the field workers we support have never heard of Asia Harvest. We are content if nobody knows who we are, as long as the work is advancing and souls are being saved. The workers are simply told by their ministry leaders that the support comes from "God's people." By giving in a non-controlling manner like this, the local Body of Christ is built up to maturity, and foreign influence is minimized. Another key principle is that we only provide partial support for any worker. They must also be supported by their home churches and friends. This ensures it is a joint effort, and if for any reason our support should end, they will continue to serve God where He has placed them, because they are looking to the hand of the Lord and not to us for their provision.

The ideas we have are not new. The Apostle Paul was always careful not to outstay his welcome. He established a work and moved on, allowing the believers to grow and take responsibility. The great 19th century pioneer to China, Hudson Taylor, had a similar

view on the role of missionaries. He wrote, ***“I look upon foreign missionaries as the scaffolding around a rising building. The sooner it can be dispensed with, the better; or rather, the sooner it can be transferred to other places, to serve the same temporary use, the better.”***

This year is exactly one century since an English missionary named Roland Allen wrote a ground-breaking book, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* In the book, Allen went even further on this theme, writing, ***“Foreigners can never successfully direct the propagation of any faith throughout a whole country. If the faith does not become naturalised and expand among the people by its own vital power, it exercises an alarming and hateful influence, and men fear and shun it as something alien.”***

Unfortunately, instead of seeing themselves as the “temporary scaffolding” as Hudson Taylor described, many mission organizations end up thinking they are the grand building, and the Asian Christians are the scaffolding privileged to hold them up! Tragically,



we know of one house church network in China which became so tired of being manipulated and used that they have decided to cut off all contact with foreigners.

Armed with a God-given determination to serve (and not use) the Asian Church, over the years we have developed many wonderful relationships with leaders who know and trust us, and we know and trust them. This has led to effective partnership. They often tell us how thankful they are to God for the way we encourage and support their work. They know we will never attempt to sign their workers up as *our* employees or staff, and they also know we would never dream of asking for Asia Harvest to be named on the sign above their Bible schools or church doors (if they had such a thing as a physical building!).

In the early part of our time in Asia, we realized it would take a lot of effort for little success if we tried to reach just one people group for the Lord by ourselves. Today,

TELLING THE UNTOLD, REACHING THE UNREACHED

Asia Harvest is privileged to support many faithful and courageous Asian evangelists. In order to be most effective for the kingdom of God, we only support those working in difficult areas, taking the Gospel to the most unreached tribes and people groups. Below is a list of many of the key unreached people groups that are hearing the Gospel because of these dedicated workers. Thank you for praying and for supporting them!

BHUTAN ♦ Drukpa ♦ Nepali ♦ Sharchocka ♦ Tsangla ♦ Zongkha

CAMBODIA ♦ Khmer

CHINA ♦ Achang ♦ Amdo Tibetans ♦ Axi ♦ Baima ♦ Bonan ♦ Bouyei
♦ Deqin Tibetans ♦ Derung ♦ Dong ♦ Dongxiang ♦ Eastern Khampa ♦ Hani
♦ Hei Miao ♦ Hmong Shuad ♦ Hui ♦ Jiao Miao ♦ Jiarong ♦ Kawa ♦ Kazak
♦ Kirgiz ♦ Lahu ♦ Lisu ♦ Miao ♦ Mosuo ♦ Mulao ♦ Northern Zhuang ♦ Nosu
♦ Nu ♦ Qiang ♦ Salar ♦ Shui ♦ Southern Zhuang ♦ Tajik ♦ Uyghur ♦ Wa
♦ Western Xibe ♦ Yi ♦ Zhongdian Tibetans

INDIA ♦ Adi ♦ Adivasi ♦ Aka ♦ Apatani ♦ Assamese ♦ Bengali ♦ Bhatra
♦ Bhutai ♦ Bhutanese ♦ Bugun ♦ Chakma ♦ Dam ♦ Darua ♦ Gondi ♦ Gujar
♦ Hill Miri ♦ Kachari ♦ Karbi ♦ Kashmiri ♦ Keaute ♦ Khampa Tibetans ♦ Ladakhi
♦ Lepcha ♦ Lumchan ♦ Mahara ♦ Mangali ♦ Miji ♦ Mirgan ♦ Monpa
♦ Mossang Naga ♦ Muklom ♦ Nepali ♦ Nishing ♦ Nocte ♦ Oriya ♦ Pahari
♦ Pashtun ♦ Punjabi ♦ Rai Sikh ♦ Rana Tharu ♦ Santal ♦ Sherdukpen ♦ Sikh
♦ Sulung ♦ Tagin ♦ Tangsa ♦ Tharu ♦ Tibetan ♦ Toto ♦ Tripuri ♦ Wangcho
♦ Zeme Naga

KYRGYZSTAN ♦ Dungan

MYANMAR (BURMA) ♦ Bahmar ♦ Chin ♦ Konyak Naga ♦ Shan ♦ Somra Naga

NEPAL ♦ Bhawun ♦ Brahmin ♦ Chapang ♦ Chetri ♦ Dalit ♦ Dhimal ♦ Gurung
♦ Limbu ♦ Magar ♦ Newar ♦ Pun ♦ Tamang

THAILAND ♦ Isaan ♦ Shan

VIETNAM ♦ Cham ♦ Churu ♦ Co ♦ Ede ♦ Gie Trieng ♦ Hoa ♦ Hre ♦ Jarai ♦ Katu
♦ Khmer ♦ Khmu ♦ Koho ♦ Lat ♦ Ma ♦ Mnong ♦ Muong ♦ Nung ♦ Raglai ♦ Stieng
♦ Tai ♦ Tay ♦ Thai ♦ Vietnamese ♦ Xo Dang

thanks to the blessings of God and the wonderful participation of many Christians like you, the Asian Workers' fund has grown and **we are supporting hundreds of Asian missionaries who are reaching 173 different tribes and people groups throughout Asia.** Tens of thousands of people have met Jesus Christ over the years, and many hundreds of fellowships have been established in places where there was previously no knowledge of the Gospel.

We don't often specifically mention the Asian Workers' fund in our newsletters, but it is a great opportunity for those who would like to help an Asian missionary working among a people group that has never before heard of Jesus.

Because we want to make the greatest impact possible, we carefully select evangelists who are working among truly unreached people groups. Some of the workers have to walk for days just to reach the nearest road. Their work is often difficult and dangerous, and sometimes it takes years before they experience a breakthrough. They have left the comfort of their homes and the love of their family members to take the light of the Gospel to a tribe trapped in spiritual darkness. They have few possessions in this world, and few people know their name, but God is with them mightily!

On pages 8 and 9 you will find an outline map of Asia covered by red asterisks. Each asterisk represents the general location of an unreached people group being presented with the Gospel by those we are privileged to support through the Asian Workers' fund. We were encouraged when we recently produced the map for the first time, because the original vision God gave us for Asia was to reach tribes along the spine of the Himalayan Mountain Range, and down into the hills of southwest China, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam. The map clearly shows that God has been faithful in seeing this vision come to pass.

We rejoice for the fruitfulness of this project, but there are hundreds more tribes in Asia waiting to hear about Jesus. For centuries they have lived and died in sin, and nobody ever bothered to tell them the Name of He who said, ***"I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me"*** (John 14:6).

The number of workers needing support continues to expand, and we have many right now who are prepared and ready to go, but lack the provision to do so. The amount of support we provide for each worker depends on their location and circumstances, but **for each monthly gift of \$25 we send a laminated prayer card of a worker your support has been applied to.** For those who continue in their support, we provide updates every six months.

Please pray for the Asian Workers' fund, and please consider supporting one or more workers as the Lord leads you. This is a great investment opportunity, helping to trigger breakthroughs for the Gospel among many of Asia's darkest regions.

ASIAN WORKERS' FUND

Each asterisk represents the location of one of the 173 tribes and people groups being reached for Jesus Christ by an evangelist we support through the Asian Workers' fund.

UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUP MAP



CHINA BIBLE PRINTING



Current Total: 5,408,241 Bibles printed and delivered.

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 believers and helping add fuel to the fires of revival in China. **Each full Bible costs just \$1.80 to print and deliver.**

Asia Harvest is able to print and distribute 230,000 Chinese Bibles per month depending on incoming funds. So far this year we are operating at 71.1% capacity.

ASIAN WORKERS' FUND

Thanks to your support we are currently able to support 521 Asian evangelists working among 173 unreached tribes and ethnic groups.



The **Asian Workers Fund** assists church-planting evangelists who are involved in strategic ministry in Asia. These servants of the Lord have committed their whole lives to the Gospel but are hindered by lack of finances. We only support evangelists/missionaries and not pastors, as we believe pastors should be supported by the flocks they shepherd. Please pray about whether you or your church could help support these dedicated workers, at **\$25 per month** each. A prayer card is sent to all regular donors.

SOUTHEAST ASIA BIBLE FUND

Current Total: 276,146 Bibles printed in 37 languages



The Communist nations of Laos and Vietnam are home to more than 250 different tribes, dozens of which had full Bibles or New Testaments translated into their languages prior to the arrival of Communism in 1975. Since then, these believers have been deprived of Bibles by the authorities. We are also providing God's Word to tribes in Myanmar (Burma), Cambodia, and other Southeast and South Asian nations as the need arises. **Each Bible costs \$2.70 to print and deliver.**

LIVING MARTYRS' FUND

Because of your partnership we are supporting 720 living martyrs.



"A martyr is 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 Voice of the Martyrs)

The **Living Martyrs Fund** assists pastors and evangelists in China and Vietnam 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 regular supporter of this project.

PROJECT SMILE



Your generous gifts have so far helped bring a smile to the faces of 10,917 children in Vietnam.

Project Smile helps children from poor families in Vietnam who were born with disabilities such as cleft palates, cleft lips and club feet, as well as others who need operations for burns, cancerous growths and other conditions. The cost of helping a child varies depending on the kind of surgery required, but each gift received of **\$60** helps a child have a better life. A laminated prayer card of a child helped through Project Smile is sent to all donors.

ASIA DISASTER RELIEF FUND

Transforming lives from ashes to beauty with God's love.



Over the years Asia Harvest has provided relief assistance to the victims of natural disasters such as the earthquake in China and cyclone in Myanmar (Burma); the Tsunamis of Southeast Asia and Japan, and a host of other disasters in India, Afghanistan, Vietnam, and elsewhere. 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 thousands of people have come to know Jesus Christ. This long-term fund helps us respond immediately whenever a disaster strikes.



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