

Asia Harvest



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

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Spiritual Genocide in China

Interview with Paul Hattaway, Part Four

SPIRITUAL GENOCIDE IN CHINA

Straight Talk on the Need for Bibles

An Interview with Paul Hattaway (Part 4)

Last year we conducted two interviews with Paul Hattaway, the director of Asia Harvest, about the present need for Bibles in China. These interviews were published in our June and August 2011 newsletters. In our last issue we continued with part 3, and this month we conclude the interview....

Asia Harvest: What do you find is the main point of confusion people have when you share about the need for millions of Bibles in China today?

Paul Hattaway: Without doubt the most difficult thing many Christians outside China struggle to grasp is how come there is still such a huge need when they have heard that Bibles are now legally printed inside China by the government-approved Amity Press.

We dealt with this subject extensively in our previous interviews, but basically the frustration is one of scale. In a country of more than 1,300 million people, to allow a

trickle of legal Bibles, only available to believers in the registered churches, is obviously not going to satisfy the need of the 60 million+ Christians who don't belong to the government-approved churches. They have been isolated and left alone to fight for a few crumbs which might fall from the table.

At the same time, it is a tricky balancing act because we *are* thankful for every single Bible that is legally printed in China! We just wish they did tens of millions more, and that there was a way to feed *all* of God's hungry children, rather than favoring those who attend a certain kind

CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS FROM ASIA HARVEST



As this is our fifth and final newsletter for 2012, we want to thank you for your prayers, encouragement and support throughout the year. We pray the risen Jesus Christ will truly be part of the Christmas and New Year period for you and your family. Next year we hope, by God's grace, to continue serving the Church in Asia and we invite you to partner with us to see this happen. God bless you!

of church while ignoring those who fellowship elsewhere.

AH: *If the need for Bibles among the house churches is so great, why do so many people, and organizations like The Bible Society, claim there are plenty of Bibles available for Christians in China today?*

Paul: People need to understand one more key element to the need for Bibles in China. Unless people understand this, they will remain confused about why there are such varying claims.

There are three government-approved Christian entities in China: the Three-Self Church, the China Christian Council, and the Amity Press (which is sponsored by The Bible Society). These three entities do NOT acknowledge the presence of the (illegal) house churches which we serve. If they do mention the house churches at all, it is grudgingly, but they scoff at any suggestions that there are 50 or 60 million

house church Christians, compared to only about 20 million believers among the registered churches in China.

This being the case, in the eyes of these organizations there ARE plenty of Bibles in China today among the registered churches they serve, because they have chosen to close their minds and eyes to the vast need of the house churches.

The house churches are often treated like a senile relative seated in the corner of the room during family gatherings. The registered church people are aware of the house churches, but they are a bit embarrassed by them and they wish they would go away. Usually they find it easier to simply ignore them altogether.

Tragically, the need for Bibles among the house churches has become even more acute in recent years because several ministries who used to supply Bibles to them are no longer doing so. Some decided



it was more politically correct to give their money to print legal Bibles than risk their reputations helping the illegal believers.

By the grace of God we will not ignore our precious brothers and sisters in the house churches, even if everyone else gives up on them! As long as millions of Christians in China are perishing with no access to Bibles, we will advocate for them and work hard to meet the need.

AH: *In many countries there is an abundance of Bibles sitting on Christians' shelves, and they can even be found in the homes of unbelievers. Why are the Chinese so desperate for God's Word compared to many Christians in other parts of the world?*

Paul: The difference is that the Word of God is fresh and new to many people in China. They have no Christian background or worldview, so when they hear the message it is amazing and transformative to them. This is especially true in poorer rural areas, but a little less so in the bigger cities where materialism has taken hold.

More than 60 years of atheistic Communist teaching in China has resulted in a large spiritual void in the lives of a billion people, which creates a hunger for truth. When many people hear truth, they are eager to embrace it and wholeheartedly live for God.

There is also a desire among China's house churches for *all* of God's truth.

I recently read about the "Jefferson Bible" exhibition on display at the Smithsonian Institute. Thomas Jefferson disliked much of the Bible, so he took a pair of scissors and cut out all the sections he didn't

approve of! He especially disliked the supernatural stories in the Bible, the account of creation, the virgin birth, etc, so he gave them the chop. He described the Book of Revelation as "the ravings of a mad man" so cut that out as well.

When I first read about 'Jefferson's Bible' I laughed, but then the thought occurred to me that Jefferson was no different to many Christians today. We may not go as far as using a pair of scissors to disfigure the Word of God, but we may have our own favorite teachings and parts of the Bible which we focus on, while ignoring other

"Our fellowships have experienced great growth in recent years. One of the side effects of this growth is that we struggle to get enough Bibles to meet the need of the new believers in our fellowships. This is vital so they can grow deeper in their understanding about our Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot thank you enough for providing Bibles to us in recent years. Our churches are growing stronger in faith and wisdom as well as in number as a direct result of these precious gifts you provide. At this moment, we need 146,238 more Bibles so that each new believer in our fellowships can have their own copy. From the bottom of our hearts we say thank you and God bless you!"

— Recent letter from a senior house church leader in Shandong Province.

whole sections which make us feel 'uncomfortable'.

This is very dangerous. We must accept the whole Bible, and change our lives so that we live in God's truth, and never try to bend the Bible to suit our lifestyles.

There are problems in the Chinese church, but I have always appreciated the hunger and reverence the majority of Chinese Christians have not only to read God's Word, but to live it. The first step, however, is for them to have access to it!

AH: Several people have asked us if it would be a better idea to stop printing paper Bibles in China, and use more modern methods to get God's Word to the Christians there, such as Bibles on smart phones, MP3 players, CDs etc. What do you think?

Paul: It is always wonderful to hear how Christians are using their initiative to provide Bibles in electronic and other forms. As long as God's Word is getting to Christians who need it, I am happy!

When it comes to the 60 million or more house church Christians in China, however, it needs to be understood that the majority of them live in poor, remote farming areas. In such areas, the average income is often just a few hundred dollars per YEAR. Most of the house church believers we serve have never owned a smart phone or computer in their lives.

There are house churches in the cities too, but they tend to have an easier time accessing Bibles, so practically 100 percent of the Bibles we print and distribute are to these rural regions of China.

There is a more basic part of the equation however. Let me ask, would you be happy if the only access you had to God's Word

was electronic or on your phone or computer? There remains an overwhelming desire among those we serve in China for paper Bibles. If our co-workers turned up at a village with a bag full of CDs or micro-chips, and said "here are the Bibles you requested," they would receive very strange looks!

While we are thankful for every effort people are making to get God's Word into China in more modern formats, we remain committed to helping meet the stated needs of those we serve. Their requests remain for paper Bibles, and lots of them.

AH: If there is one little known fact about the China Bible project you would want people to know, what would it be?

Paul: Here is something people should know. The vast majority of churches in China, probably 99 percent, only want to

"I was blessed by your interview with Paul Hattaway in your October newsletter. Less than a year ago I spent several weeks in China and was involved with taking Bibles across the border from Hong Kong.

The need is great, and if one is willing to question whether Bibles are needed outside of the registered churches they will find exactly what Paul said in the article to be true. People need to realize how controlling the government in China is, and be in contact with house church members before they might understand the size of the need for God's Word. Keep on serving God and the Chinese believers!"

— Jared T., Ohio, USA



"My heart feels like dancing before the Lord since receiving this Bible and having the opportunity to know more about our Lord and His plan for my life. God bless those that made it possible for me to have a Bible!"

— Recent letter from
Heilongjiang Province

use the Union Version of the Chinese Bible. This was translated directly from Hebrew and Greek more than a century ago.

In the early 1980s a large gathering of church leaders from across China took place, from all streams of the church. They vowed that China should only have one Bible, the Union Version. They wanted to avoid the confusion we have in the West with dozens of competing translations.

This was a vital decision, not least because many Chinese Christians learn doctrine and memorize Scripture by singing together. In a sense the Bible doubles as a hymn book. This would have been impossible to do if there were multiple translations in circulation.

In recent years some have tried to introduce modern translations of the Chinese Bible, and these have been strongly rejected by the believers. They are desperate for Bibles, but specifically the Union version which has been a great unifying force among them for the past century.

AH: What would you say to people who would like to help Christians in China get

Bibles, but feel their contribution will not make much of a difference?

Paul: One famous missionary arrived in India and was asked how he could possibly make a difference among a billion needy people. He replied, "One life at a time." That is how the kingdom of God grows, one life at a time. As you know, we can print and deliver a Bible to a house church Christian in China for just \$1.80 each, yet the eternal fruit from that single Bible can be staggering!

I would ask two things of anyone considering giving financially to this project: firstly, don't give if you feel compelled or manipulated by us or anyone else to do so. That is not our intention at all. Rather, people should see this as a God-given opportunity to make a big difference in the lives of fellow Christians in need.

The Bible says **"Each one of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver"** (2 Cor. 9:7).

The second thing I would say is this: If you would like to give to this project,

please don't in any way be concerned or embarrassed if the amount is small. Each and every Bible is precious and will be treated like gold by those who receive it.

I think we Christians need to adjust our understanding when it comes to the concept of "living by faith" so that all of us are doing so, not just those in so-called "full-time ministry".

AH: What do you mean?

Paul: Let me explain what I mean this way....

There are many amazing books written about people who "live by faith" on the mission field. They trust God and He provides their needs. Such books are stirring and faith-lifting to read. One of the most famous accounts is that of George Mueller, who ran an orphanage in Britain which helped thousands of desperate

children over many decades. Mueller held a strong conviction that he should only let his needs be known to God, and he never asked any person for anything.

On a number of occasions Mueller records how the orphanage completely ran out of food. He and the orphans sat down to dinner with no food at all, yet thanked God for His goodness to them. Invariably, there would be a knock at the door and a large basket of delicious cooked food would be found there in answer to their prayers.

Such accounts of living by faith are wonderful! But, alas, how many times do we read about the other side of the coin?

Yes, it is an act of great faith to serve the Lord like George Mueller and many others have done, and still do. But were not the people who heard God tell them to prepare



the basket of food and leave it outside the door of the orphanage also living by faith?

We might present a need like the China Bible project, and trust God to provide the resources required to meet the need. More often than not, He will do so my moving on the hearts of people who respond by willingly giving a portion of their hard-earned wages.

God sees the whole picture, and He will surely reward each person for their faithfulness.

It is an unbiblical distinction to think that “full time ministry” is holy, whereas “work,” especially manual labor, is somehow not considered special to God.

A man who works long hours digging ditches, and then willingly gives some of his wages to help Christians in China have Bibles, or any other need God leads him to help with, is displaying great love for

the Lord Jesus Christ by his practical demonstration of faith.

We thank God for the many people who live by faith through giving this way, and we are always thrilled when people write and tell us what a great spiritual or material blessing they have received since they began helping the persecuted believers in China or elsewhere, even though they did not give out of a motivation to receive a blessing.

We are acutely aware how much people sacrifice to help the believers we are privileged to serve in Asia. It motivates us to make sure nothing is wasted, and we do the work God has called us to do in the most efficient way possible. That is why the Bibles in China cost just \$1.80 each to print and deliver.

Years of effort have been expended by our co-workers to find more cost-effective ways to print the Bibles, while at the same time

“In our fellowships we often talk about heaven and eagerly anticipate the day we can go home, but the only reason we want to stay on earth a little while longer is to bring more souls into the Heavenly Kingdom. Our evangelistic efforts have been tremendously blessed and strengthened by the Bibles you have provided. Before we received them, many of our evangelists did not have their own copy of the Bible and it was very difficult for them to teach only from memory. Now we are so blessed to report that all of the full time evangelists have their own copy! Now we are equipping more evangelists as well as providing Bibles to many new believers. As a result, we are now seeing much more fruit and there are now many new believers in our churches. To provide every new believer in our network with God’s Word we need 271,396 more Bibles.

We thank God for you and the brothers and sisters who have sacrificed so that we can have Bibles. We are asking our Heavenly Father to pile up treasures for you in Heaven because of your gift of love to us. Stay strong in Jesus Christ and we will meet in Heaven and thank each of you in person for providing us with God’s Word!”

— Recent letter from a senior house church leader in Liaoning Province.

being careful not to compromise the quality. The motivation for doing this is quite simple: it means more hungry Christians are able to be fed by the Word of God.

AH: *We have arrived at the end of our interview. I think everyone reading this will no doubt be much more knowledgeable about the need for Bibles in China today. Do you have any last things you would like to say?*

Paul: In the Parable of the sheep and goats, Jesus taught His followers that there is much more to life than us sitting around trying to perfect our doctrine. His kingdom is very practical. To the sheep, Jesus said, ***“Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”***

Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you,

or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me’” (Matthew 25:34-40).

There are millions of Christians in China right now who are hungry and thirsty for God’s Word, but they cannot obtain it. There are believers who are spiritually sick, naked and bound because of a famine of God’s Word.

This is not some kind of fundraising appeal. We are presenting an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of many Christians in China.

Thank you for the opportunity I have had to share the reality of this great need with you. Please pray our Heavenly Father will provide all of His children in China with Bibles, so that they may know His Word intimately.

We invite you to be part of this wonderful and strategic opportunity to help the Church in China.

Recently, a generous donor gave a “dollar for dollar” matching grant to Asia Harvest. A matching gift has a multiplying effect, so that for a period of time each donation we receive for Bibles will be doubled. Therefore, if you give \$1.80 for one Chinese Bible, it will be matched, so that two new Bibles will be provided instead of one!

We thank God for this wonderful opportunity to help feed God’s neglected children in the world’s most populated country.

We ask you to please pray that God would continue to provide His Word to China’s house church Christians.

If you would like to help provide the Word of God to China’s house church Christians, please fill out the yellow response form and send it back to us. Alternatively, you can give via our secure website: www.asiaharvest.org

CHINA BIBLE PRINTING



Current Total: 6,306,477 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 60.4% capacity.

ASIAN WORKERS' FUND

Thanks to your support we are currently able to support 559 Asian evangelists working among 185 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 and occasional worker updates are sent to all regular donors.

SOUTHEAST ASIA BIBLE FUND



Current Total: 291,941 Bibles printed in 46 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 728 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 supporter of this project.

PROJECT SMILE



Your generous gifts have so far helped bring a smile to the faces of 11,690 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 changes a child's 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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