Asia Harvest

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

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July 2011 - Newsletter #110



An Emergency in China

Interview with Paul Hattaway, Part Two

What Future for China?

by Brother Gary*

I have known Paul Hattaway since 1992, when we first worked together delivering Bibles to house churches in China. In recent years we have increased our partnership together, and we look forward to increased synergy providing Bibles, as together we intensify our commitment to the priority of God's Word.

How can anyone seriously say there is no longer a need for Bibles in China? It is not only a problem of distribution, it is also a problem of basic supply. Not only is there a great shortage of God's Word among believers, there are countless tens or even hundreds of millions more people who are interested in Christ, but who will not make a decision unless they have an opportunity to read the one Book that truly represents what Christian faith is. How can new Christians, with no cultural background in Christian faith whatsoever, grow and know their Lord without His Word? Could you?

It is clear that the 21st century is going to be "China's Century". China is THE emerging superpower. What kind of China will emerge? Possibly a Christian China—but that cannot come to pass without Bibles. The greatest missions sending nation in history? Not without Bibles. The greatest wealth directed towards the cause of Christ worldwide? Not without Bibles. Political and military power harnessed for good? Not without Bibles.

What investment has a better guaranteed return than the Word of God? Where could that investment be more strategically directed than in China? And when more critically than right now? I know three different successful Christian businessmen who have been surprised to receive requests for help from Chinese house church leaders. They ask for one thing only — Bibles. They are hungry for the only Bread that satisfies, but there is a famine in the land. The printing capacity and the delivery networks already exist under the supervision of proven and honest men and women of God, most of whom do the work at considerable personal risk. The missing ingredient is simply the finances.

** Gary is a long-term friend of Asia Harvest. He leads China Harvest, a ministry with a similar vision and heart to serve and equip the believers in China.*

AN EMERGENCY IN CHINA

Straight Talk on the Need for Bibles

An Interview with Paul Hattaway (Part 2)

For nearly a quarter of a century Asia Harvest has been providing Bibles to the house churches in China. In the early years this consisted of hosting many short-term teams who came to Hong Kong and carried Bibles in their bags and suitcases across the border into China. In the late 1990s we started printing Bibles secretly inside China. This greatly increased the quantity we could supply, while sharply reducing the cost per Bible. Overall, Asia Harvest and our supporters have now printed and delivered more than 3.7 million Bibles to the house church believers in China.

We recently sat down with Paul Hattaway, the director of Asia Harvest, and asked him about the current need for Bibles in China. Following is the second and final part of our interview....

Asia Harvest: *In our previous newsletter we ascertained that there is a huge need for Bibles in China among the house churches. Just how great is the need?*

Paul Hattaway: Our co-workers needed to answer the same question, so last year they asked many leaders of house church networks in China to survey their members and tell us of their needs. The result was staggering. Added together, ***the house churches throughout China urgently need 34 million Bibles***, just to provide the Word of God to all of their members. It would be many millions more if enquirers are considered, but our priority is to provide Bibles to as many believers as possible.

AH: *This is a huge number. How did the need get to be so large?*

PH: It has been stated that "every Christian in China is an evangelist," and generally this is true. In one sense, the problem of providing Bibles can never be fully met while the church is in revival.

The more Bibles that are printed, the more people get saved and the more Bibles are needed!

Many China ministries believe that, on average, ***two to three people come to faith in Jesus Christ for every Bible that is printed in China***.

For years one major mission group has said at least five people experience salvation for every Chinese Bible. Our experiences line up with these claims.

We have received numerous letters from church leaders telling us how they used to have 500 believers in their area, for example, but after we delivered a shipment of Bibles they grew to two or three times

that number in a short time. It is a great problem to have!

In the past, many missionaries to China were greatly discouraged because of the difficulty trying to reach people. The Welsh missionary Griffith John wrote, *"The good news is moving very slowly. The people are as hard as steel. They are eaten up both soul and body by the world, and do not seem to feel that there can be reality in anything beyond sense. To them our doctrine is foolishness, our talk jargon. We discuss and beat them in argument. We reason them into silence and shame; but the whole effort falls upon them like showers upon a sandy desert."*

The seasons have changed, and for the past 30 years God has done a mighty work in China. Countless millions are meeting Him for the first time. Now is the time of salvation in China!

People reading this may feel that their own communities bear little resemblence to what is happening in China and many other parts of the world today.

Don't be jealous, however. For when God was powerfully visiting many parts of the Western world in past generations, China was blind and hardened to the Gospel message. Millions who perished are now burning in hell because of it.

AH: *When we share about the needs of China and Asia with Christians in our country, someone invariably says, "We have plenty of needs in our area too, so why should we worry about people on the other side of the world?" How do you respond to this?*

PH: Certainly there are needs everywhere, but there are a few different ways I would respond to this attitude. The first and most important thing people need to consider is what does the Bible teach? God clearly reveals that His heart is for the whole world. Our God is a missionary God, who sent His own Son to reach the lost. He didn't command His followers to only go into their local communities, but to the ends of the earth. The disciples were told, ***"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem*** [the local area], ***and in all Judea and Samaria*** [neighboring regions], ***and to the ends of the earth***" (Acts 1:8).

Notice the Lord didn't say they should "first" reach Jerusalem, "then" Judea and Samaria, and "ultimately" the ends of the earth. All three are to be done simultaneously. Christians need to be involved in reaching the far ends of the earth at the same time they are reaching their local communities.

People often think they are at the center of the universe, whereas God's primary concern is for the lost masses and people groups who have never heard the Gospel. If we count ourselves among His followers, we need to have an interest in the big picture. He cares for His lost sheep wherever they are, especially for those in the most remote and neglected lands.

Often during my travels in the West I feel a bit weird. We meet many sincere Christians who spend all their time and energy "reaching" towns in their country which already have churches on every street corner.

Then we travel thousands of miles through areas of Tibet or Central Asia where not a single church building can be seen. There are no Christian workers, and few people



have ever heard the Name of Jesus. Such things must look strange in heaven.

***AH**: Many Christians don't help with needs on the other side of the world because they are unable to relate to those languages and cultures. How can this be overcome?*

PH: In regards to Bibles in China, we are all one family in Christ. We have millions of brothers and sisters in China starving without God's Word, despite there being a proven and efficient method to provide Bibles for just $1.80 each. This opportunity should excite Christians who hear about it, regardless of where they live in the world.

Another way to look at things is from a strategic investment point of view.

Several years ago the *World Christian Encylopedia* published a fascinating study on the financial cost of producing one new baptized follower of Christ in various parts of the world. This was calculated by finding the total spent on all Christian activities (outreach, church buildings, Christian television and radio, literature etc.) in a country, and dividing the amount by the number of baptisms each year.

Incredibly, the study estimated that it costs $1.5 million to produce every new baptized believer in the United States! Are these believers precious to God? Of course they are! But so are souls in China, the most populated country on earth, where about 1,300,000,000 people are lost in their sin and hell-bound.

Providing God's Word to fellow believers in China should appeal to all kinds of Christians. For those with a shepherd's heart, here is an opportunity to nourish and strengthen new believers with the Scriptures. For those with the heart of an evangelist, I can't think of a more attractive investment. $1.80 will provide a Bible, which will bring an additional two or three

Chinese people (on average) to salvation. That's unbeatable investment value!

AH: *Can you share a little about why the Bibles we print in China are so inexpensive? Most people think $1.80 is a very low price for a Bible. Other organizations charge anywhere from $3 to $10.50 for similar Chinese Bibles.*

PH: There are no gimmicks or trickery involved with our cost price of $1.80 per Bible! If someone sends us $1.80, then one Bible really is printed and delivered to a believer in China. If we receive a donation of $180, then 100 Bibles really are printed and delivered.

The Bibles we print in China are full Bibles (not just New Testaments), excellent quality, with strong covers and binding. As a ministry, we have always wanted to supply as many Bibles as possible, for as economically as possible. After 3.7 million Bibles, we have yet to receive a single complaint from anyone in China!

The reason why our cost price is much less than most other organizations is something people who want to know will need to ask the other organizations involved. We are glad for every Bible that is produced for China. We just wish there were a lot more!

We do not use this or any other project as an excuse to raise funds for ourselves. Anyone who knows the way we operate will testify that we do so with a bare minimum of staff and overhead expenses.

Our goal is simply to do what the Lord has told us to do, and that is to provide as many Bibles as possible to His children in China. We have been doing this since 1988. This is a matter of life and death. We have been blessed to see the life-changing difference God's Word makes when it is provided to a community, and horrified to experience the depravity and deception that envelops a people group or place when the Scriptures are absent or ignored.

We feel the time available to reach the lost is running out, and God's clock will soon strike midnight. There is no time to play games or make excuses. This is no time to live our lives like we will be on this earth forever, while the lost perish around us. May we pray like Moses, ***"Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom"*** (Psalm 90:12).

Another key reason for the low cost of our Bibles is the diligence of our Chinese co-workers. They have spent a lot of time finding the most secure and economical way to print Bibles, because their motive is also to reach as many people with God's Word as possible.

AH: *How do you know that all the Bibles being printed in China are really getting delivered to believers?*

PH: Many people who are experienced in China Christian work have told us they are greatly impressed by the level of reporting we receive from our Chinese co-workers.

Within weeks of each print-run, we receive detailed reports showing us where every single box of Bibles ended up, along with extensive accounting.

We then have some Western colleagues who do "spot checks" to ensure the information we receive is correct, that the funds have been used with full integrity and the Bibles have been delivered as reported.

For partner ministries, we take the distribution reports and overlay the

information on maps of China, giving a powerful visual display of the locations in China their support has impacted.

This tested and effective method of providing Bibles to the hungry believers in China has not just fallen into place by accident. It has come about through many years of prayer, faith, and hard work by many people in China. Some have been arrested and imprisoned for their involvement, so it has also come at great cost.

AH: *The house churches in China need 34 million Bibles for their members. At $1.80 each we would need $61.2 million! ....*

PH: Let me interrupt you there. Such numbers often discourage people from thinking they can make a difference. When one missionary arrived in India he was asked, "How do you plan to reach a billion people?" He replied, "One at a time!"

In the same way, every single Bible that is printed makes a huge difference in the lives of those who receive it. These are people just like you and me. They are young men and women whose lives have been transformed by the Gospel. They are families who desire more of Christ, and who want to raise their children in a godly home.

After receiving a Bible, their faith is established and strengthened, and they in turn share the Gospel with their neighbors and friends.

Everyone reading these words can make a huge difference in China, regardless of whatever resources they may or may not have at their disposal.

Firstly, please pray for this project. We don't want to take on this need in our own strength, without God's blessing, because our endeavors will fall flat.

Believe me when I say that every person who becomes closely involved with the Bible project immediately finds themselves in an intense spiritual battle. Satan does all he can to disrupt and destroy this work. Please pray for God's power, protection, and provision to cover all who are involved in providing Bibles to the Chinese house churches.

Secondly, in this time of economic difficulty for many, let us remember the words of the hymn, "Little is much, when God is in it!" You don't need to be materially wealthy to make a great difference in people's lives in China.

Recently we received a letter from a friend named Rich, who lives in New Jersey. He wrote, *"How's this for a clever way of sending Bibles... I called up my private garbage collector and requested a smaller size can. Now I save $5.40 every two months—just enough for three more Bibles!"*

With this simple action, Rich is able to provide 18 more Bibles to the believers in China each year. These 18 Bibles will result in between 36 and 54 people coming to know Jesus for the first time. I realize that this sounds too good to be true, except that all the evidence points towards it being true!

Therefore please don't think you are unable to make a difference in China. God always looks for an obedient heart, and is not impressed by the things that people are often impressed by.

AH: *At the same time isn't it true that those who do have a lot of resources at their disposal should also be involved?*

PH: Yes, of course. It is a huge responsibility to be a Christian with the means to help God's work. To those whom much has been given, much will be required.

May I be really blunt with you? The main reason 34 million Christians in China are without access to God's Word is not because China is a Communist nation, but because the priorities of the Church around the world has become so skewed.

Multitudes of believers are spiritually blind to things that matter most to God, and they major in things of little consequence.

You mentioned earlier that if we had $61 million we would be able to provide God's Word to every believer in China who is without a Bible.

When we think of such a large number we may feel personally helpless, but is such an amount a lot of money for the worldwide Church to provide?

A few years ago my family and I were in the United States, where we visited some friends. They took us to see their church building where several thousand believers meet every week. As far as buildings go, the church was an impressive structure, but our friends explained the church was building another facility right next to the existing one.

The "old" building (which was actually quite new) would then be used for Sunday school classes and other purposes. The church had purchased a row of houses on an adjoining street, and demolished them to make room for more parking spaces. The total cost of this new church building was $40 million.

I wonder what the leaders and members of that one congregation would say if we met with them and asked them to abandon their plans? Instead, they could remain in their existing building and use the spare money to provide more than 22 million Bibles to the Christians in China, who in turn would lead 40, 50, or 60 million lost souls into the kingdom of God.



The above example is just one congregation, in one medium-size city, in one state of America.

There are countless other examples of far more lavish expenditure on things God has little interest in. It is by no means just an American problem either. One church in Singapore has recently raised $400 million to construct their new church building!

All of this must look very strange in heaven, the dwelling place of our God who ***"is the Lord of***

heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands" (Acts 17:24).

So after sharing this perspective, let me ask you this rhetorical question: is $61 million really a lot of money for the whole Body of Christ to provide so that all believers in China will have a Bible?

Could it be that the main reason the Gospel has yet to impact thousands of people groups in the world after 2,000 years is because Christians have their priorities all messed up?

I am reminded of a church in Australia who stopped supporting all of their missionaries, and instead used the money to pay for a 20-minute fireworks display. I'm sure it was an amazing show, but what does God think of such things? I could continue with many similar examples but they wouldn't be very edifying!

Our responsibility, in our own lives and families, is to earnestly seek the Lord and ask Him to make sure our priorities line up with God's priorities.

Bob Pierce, who founded World Vision, often prayed, *"Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God."* The Lord answered his prayers, and today millions of children throughout the world are fed, clothed and educated every day as a result.

Please pray our Heavenly Father would break through the spiritual blindness. Pray the Holy Spirit would reveal God's broken heart about those in China and elsewhere who are without access to His Word.

***AH**: Thanks for sharing your heart on the need for Bibles in China today. I think many readers will be surprised by the things you have shared. Is there anything you would like to say in conclusion?*

PH: I am thankful for everyone who has taken the time to read this interview. If all you have learned is the size of the need in China, then we have failed. I hope you can clearly see the exciting opportunities that exists to help meet this need.

On behalf of our neglected spiritual family who meet in China's house churches, I ask you to prayerfully consider how you can help provide Bibles, regardless of the amount. Every single Bible is important.

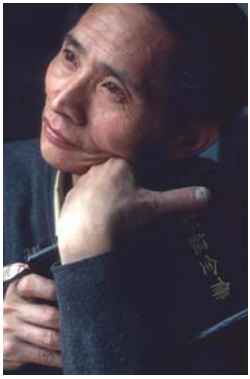
It is a great opportunity to be involved in transforming many lives from darkness to light through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our commitment to you is that we will continue to print and deliver as many Bibles to the Christians in China as we are able, as inexpensively as possible.

By God's grace we will not tire until the need is met, or the Lord Jesus returns for His bride!

If you would like to help support the need for Bibles in China, you can do so by post, using the yellow "Response form" in this newsletter. You can also set up one-time or monthly donations via our website: www.asiaharvest.org. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

CHINA BIBLE PRINTING



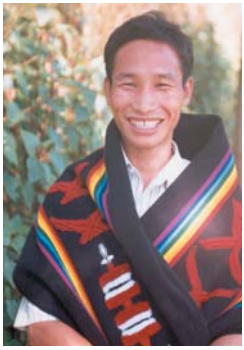
Current Total: 3,753,225 Bibles printed and delivered.

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 200,000 Chinese Bibles per month depending on incoming funds. So far this year we are operating at 35.4% capacity.

ASIAN WORKERS' FUND

Thanks to your support we are currently able to support 490 Asian evangelists working among 141 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

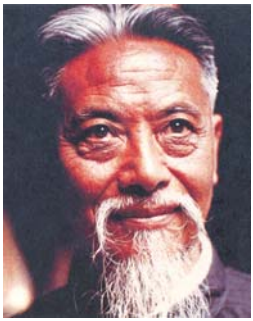
Current Total: 222,179 Bibles printed in 34 languages



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 694 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 other Communist nations 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 9,719 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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