Asia Harvest

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

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December 2011 - Newsletter #112



Showers of Refreshing

God's Kingdom Continues to Grow in Asia

Unexpected Detours

with Robert & Lisa Plumbridge

Robert and Lisa are missionaries who work in a restricted Asian country, overseeing Asia Harvest projects. They recently shared an encouraging message and testimony with us, which we in turn would like to share with you in this newsletter....

All Christians find their walk with Christ can be very challenging at times, especially when they encounter the storms that life can suddenly throw at them.

Of course such turbulence is understandable when a person makes bad choices or acts with presumption and without discernment. But it can be very hard to understand when it happens to a believer who has done their best to walk obediently before the Lord. They may have done all they believe God is requiring them to do, yet events intervene that end up making us feel our vision may never be fulfilled.

In Acts 27 the Apostle Paul set sail for Rome. He believed God would have him stand before Caesar—the most powerful individual on the face of the earth at the time.

The journey began well. The sea was calm, and the winds favorable. After a while they arrived at their first port, Sidon. Paul saw that God had given him great favor. Julius, the Centurion in charge of the prisoners, told Paul he could go ashore unguarded and meet with his friends. The immensity of this favor becomes apparent when we remember that Paul was a prisoner, and the law stated that a Roman soldier would be executed if he allowed a prisoner to escape. Yet this Centurion allowed Paul absolute freedom to leave the ship and visit his friends in a foreign port!

As they set sail from Sidon, it would have been easy for Paul to rejoice in the circumstances, good weather, and incredible favor he had experienced. He was no doubt confident that God was going to allow him to plead his case before Caesar.

Then things began to change. We read in Acts 27:4-9 that they quickly encountered strong headwinds. It became difficult to keep the ship on course, and their progress was halted as the wind turned against them. Things worsened until in verses 14-18 we are told the weather abruptly deteriorated and became hurricane strength. The captain was unable to steer the ship. They threw the cargo overboard, and "*When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up hope of being saved.*" (Acts 27:20).

To encourage Paul in the midst of these horrendous circumstances, God sent an angel to him, telling him to take courage because he would live and stand before Caesar. After 14 days caught in the storm, the ship ran aground on the coast of Malta and broke up. (In the past we used to do a lot of scuba diving and we have been caught in wild storms at sea. These usually passed within a day or two. Fourteen days is simply unimaginable.)

Dumped on a cold beach, Paul tried to make a fire when a snake bit him on the hand! It must have seemed like God had forgotten the plan. Things were going from bad to worse, and weren't lining up with the vision Paul had to go to Rome and stand before Caesar.



Why did God allow these things to occur? Let us take a look at what happened from His heavenly perspective.

When the snake bit Paul, he shook it off and showed no ill-effects. The people previously thought Paul was an evil man whom God was determined to punish, but now they viewed him as a man of unique power.

Malta has a coastline 121 miles (196 km) long. Paul could have been shipwrecked anywhere along the coast, but it happened right in front of the estate of the most powerful man on the island, the Roman governor Publius. The father of Publius was suffering from fever and dysentery, a near-certain death sentence in those days. Paul prayed for

him and he was healed. News of this miracle went forth, and over the next three months, *"the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured"* (Acts 28:9).

Paul eventually arrived in Rome, three months later than he thought he would. History records that indeed he testified before Caesar.

The three elements of Paul's "detour" were the storm, the shipwreck and the snake.

The storm blew them off the course they had set and pointed them in the direction God wanted. The shipwreck stopped them exactly where God wanted them to stop.

The victory over the snake bite was a demonstration of the power of God that opened the doors of Malta to Paul. What was the fruit of this detour? History tells us that Publius became the first Bishop of Malta and 2000 years later Malta is the nation with the highest percentage (98%) of citizens who regard themselves as Christians.

That is fruit which has remained!

Do you feel like you are in a storm? Maybe God is changing your direction for a special assignment. Do you feel you have been shipwrecked? Maybe God wants you to stop just where you are for this season.

Do you feel you have been bitten by a snake? If your focus remains firmly on God, that bite will be a sign and a wonderful witness to others of the power and goodness of God in your life.

Be encouraged. Storms, shipwrecks and snakebites can happen with relationships, health, finances, career and ministry (as with Paul), yet they can be part of a detour that can produce great fruit for God's kingdom!

We would like to share how God recently sent us on an unexpected detour, and brought about a great deliverance for one family.

We are privileged to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in a closed (Communist) country of Asia. Recently we were feeling exhausted after a very hectic month of ministry. Hundreds of people, by God's grace, had been helped and many lives had been transformed by His love. At the end of the month we were looking forward to having a rest and recharging our spiritual, physical and emotional batteries. God, however, had a divine detour planned for us!

A local contact who was accompanying us said, "There is a very poor family living in a remote village who needs help. If you want, I can take you there." We asked how far it would be, and were told it would be a 45-minute detour over a rough village road. We were resistant to the idea of going to this place. We felt we had done enough work for the month, and thought we could visit that family next time we were in the area.

We were about to tell our host that we couldn't go to the village, when the following question came to Lisa's mind, "What was the difference between the Levite and the Good Samaritan? The Good Samaritan stopped and helped."

Sometimes opportunities come at inconvenient times, but when we take those God-given opportunities we can be the answer to someone's prayer. We should always be ready to *"Preach the word, be prepared in season and out of season"* (2 Timothy 4:2).

We agreed to make the detour to visit this needy family.

After a difficult journey along a terrible pot-holed road, we arrived at the village. The first thing we heard when we opened our car doors was horrible screaming. It came from a 12-year-old boy who was possessed and tormented by demons. If you are one of those Christians who think demon-possession only happened in Bible times, come with us on such a trip and you will change your theology in an instant! This boy was in a similar condition to the demoniac described in the 5th chapter of Mark.

He had been possessed for some time and could not be controlled. His shrieks sounded like those of an animal, and made the hairs stand up on our necks. His family had been forced to build a small pen with wooden bars to contain him. He sat naked in this enclosure, a trophy of sin and Satan.



The boy's partially-paralyzed father shuffled forward to greet us. He shared how his wife's kidneys were failing, and how his elderly paralyzed father lay inside, close to death. While he was speaking, the man's sister painfully limped out of the house, both of her feet severely deformed and twisted. Every single member of the family was horribly afflicted in one way or another.

The father shared that things were so miserable that he thought his family was cursed. He told us, "I am desperate to be set free from this curse. Whenever anyone dies in the village I attend the funeral, hoping that somehow the spirits will take this curse away from our family."

Lisa asked if we could pray for the family. We noticed a statue of Mary in the corner of the room, as the family were nominal Catholics. When we asked to pray for them, the man went to light two candles. Lisa gently told him we would not be praying to Mary, but to the Lord Jesus Christ, for He alone is the one who took the curse and can set people free.



One of our team members knelt down and lifted the woman's soiled, diseased and deformed feet in his hands and asked God to heal her. The woman was shocked that anyone would touch her feet, and began to weep at this demonstration of God's love.

We then prayed in the powerful Name of Jesus Christ, binding and breaking all curses and demonic power that bound that desperate family.

Suddenly our host cried out, "The boy has stopped screaming! I have never heard him quiet and peaceful like this!"

We thank God we were able to pray for this family and helped them financially so they could buy some basic necessities. Last week we spoke with our host by phone. He said the family felt they had been greatly honored by our visit and the love of God that had been shown to them. We have sent some local coworkers to follow up with that family, and we believe they will continue to experience dramatic and life-changing transformation, as they "*turn from idols to serve the living and true God*" (1 Thess. 1:9).

Glory to God! We are glad He sent us on that detour, just as the Apostle Paul was many years ago when God sent him to Malta. May the Lord open our eyes to see the many opportunities we have to serve and glorify Him!

CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS FROM ASIA HARVEST



As this is our fifth and final newsletter for 2011, 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. In 2012 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!

From our Mailbox

"God put his finger on this money last night and asked me to give it to print Bibles in China. I had been saving it for when I get married (I don't have a clue when that may be), but obviously God needs it more than I do."

From a Sister in Indiana

"Please take me off your newsletter list. I have been to China and know that Bibles are being printed there. Are you really sure you are doing the work of Jesus when you do things like this [supplying Bibles to Christians in China]? If you are, that is great, but for several reasons I question - strongly question - if Jesus himself would do what you are doing if He were here." **Paul, California**

"Just a short note to let you know how much I have enjoyed reading your last 3 newsletters; including the two about Bibles for China. I am thrilled to hear that your capacity to print and distribute Bibles within China has been raised from 200,000 to 230,000 per month. And, that as a ministry you have nearly hit the 4 million mark.

Having spent two months in China early this year in 16 different places, I was able to see the great need for myself. While I was in Beijing, I kept my eye out for Bibles and how hard they were to find; I had to go in to a 5 or 6-story bookshop just to find a handful and was then surprised at their cost - much greater than what your ministry can supply them at. I also felt at the time that they were 'more for show' in case foreigners came looking.

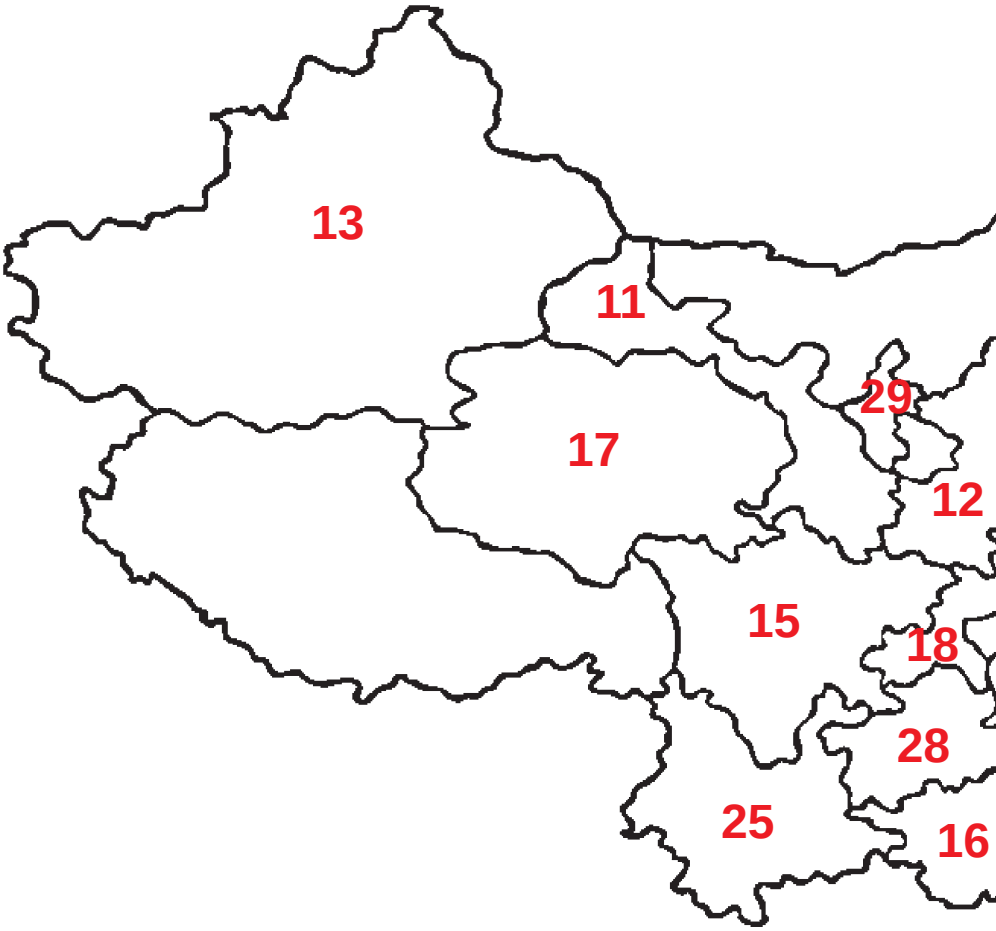
It is a MOST worthy cause to get the Word into the hands of the brethren who can read for themselves the precepts of God and go and do great exploits for Him. I heartily thank you for your ministry and the great grace and wisdom that rest upon you and your team, and pray that the Lord will give you the increase needed to bring glory to Him! A fellow labourer in the harvest, by His grace."

Mathew, England

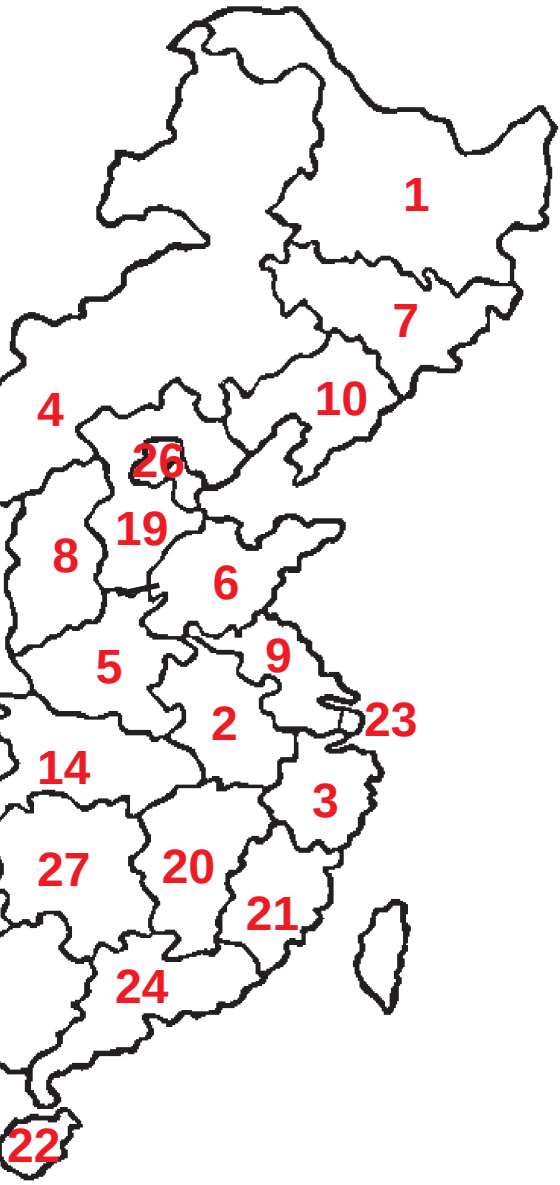
"Thank you for your newsletter about the great need for more Bibles in China. Your note came just a day or so after I had prayed about where God would have us give. We prayed that God would use us to help bring others into the kingdom in some way. Then we received your newsletter saying that for EVERY Bible that gets distributed in China, there is a direct correlation to people being saved. I had never heard it stated that way before. I now find myself thinking… that hamburger and drink was two bucks – that could be another Bible for China…. Thank you for getting the word out and I pray your message will touch the hearts of others."

Gerald, Kansas

CHINA BIBLE MAP



Thanks to the grace of God, and your prayers and generous support, Asia Harvest has now printed and delivered more than four million full Chinese Bibles to Christians in China. Our Chinese coworkers provide tremendous, detailed reports, which allow us keep track of every Bible we print and to create this distribution map. On behalf of all the believers in China, thank you and God bless you!

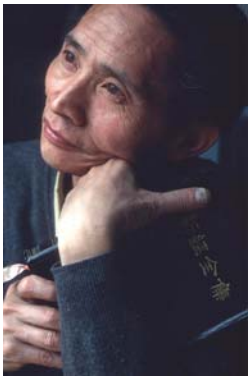


Bibles Delivered by Province:

1	Heilongjiang	386,704
2	Anhui	377,820
3	Zhejiang	322,187
4	Inner Mongolia	318,152
5	Henan	309,498
6	Shandong	277,102
7	Jilin	220,133
8	Shanxi	186,188
9	Jiangsu	153,402
10	Liaoning	147,346
11	Gansu	147,138
12	Shaanxi	129,378
13	Xinjiang	129,186
14	Hubei	125,806
15	Sichuan	124,194
16	Guangxi	123,086
17	Qinghai	119,694
18	Chongqing	107,254
19	Hebei	79,548
20	Jiangxi	74,592
21	Fujian	70,325
22	Hainan Island	69,149
23	Shanghai	51,586
24	Guangdong	40,812
25	Yunnan	30,703
26	Beijing	29,212
27	Hunan	12,888
28	Guizhou	10,718
29	Ningxia	5,735

TOTAL 4,179,519

CHINA BIBLE PRINTING



Current Total: 4,179,519 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 37.0% capacity.

ASIAN WORKERS' FUND

Thanks to your support we are currently able to support 497 Asian evangelists working among 147 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

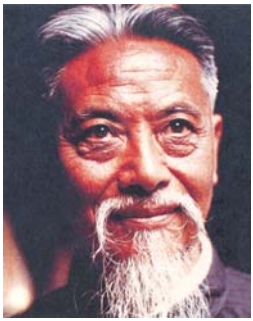
Current Total: 247,512 Bibles printed in 34 languages



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 708 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 10,338 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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