Asia Harvest



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

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Why Jesus Has Yet to Return

The Most Important Thing on God's Heart Today

From the Front Lines

by Paul & Joy Hattaway

"When I look at the younger generation, I despair for the future of civilization."

"The world is passing through troublesome times. The young people of today think of nothing but themselves. They have no reverence for parents or old age. They are impatient of all restraint and they talk as though they know everything and what passes as wisdom to us is foolishness to them. As for the girls they are immodest and unwomanly in speech, behavior and dress."

Can you guess who said the two quotes above? Were they spoken by a television pundit or a disgruntled church leader, upset at where things are heading in the world today?

It may surprise you to learn that the first quote is from Aristotle in about 300 BC, and the second quote is from Peter the Monk in the year 1274!

Our point in using these ancient quotes is that as followers of Jesus Christ we need to be careful not to allow ourselves to slump into despondency, fear and inactivity. For millennia God's people have been grieved by the decay of the communities they live in. Each new generation tends to think they have it worse than ever before, but Solomon observed, ***"What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun"*** (Ecclesiastes 1:9). The Bible says that 4,000 years ago Lot was ***"distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard"*** (2 Peter 2:7-8).

We should not be surprised if the world is falling to pieces around us. That is what this world system is destined to do, because they do not know the Living God. As believers we are told to ***"Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life"*** (Philippians 2:14-16).

Recently we have spoken with Christians from a variety of countries and backgrounds. Many feel deeply troubled about the state of their nations, the economy, debt, corrupt governments, and most of all the moral decay spreading throughout their societies. Many believers we met seem fixated on the problems around them. While many of these problems are real, they can easily be used by Satan to take a Christian's focus away from where it should be.

As disciples of Jesus we must look upward and outward, not inward. If we become insular we will die. The Dead Sea holds a great lesson for us. Nothing lives in the Dead Sea except bacteria and other organisms. Yet there are 153 rivers and streams of fresh water flowing into it, including the Jordan River. All that fresh water and life flows into it and dies, because it has nowhere to go. The Dead Sea doesn't have a single outlet. This is a lesson for every denomination, church, and Christian. Without an active and effective outlet for your faith you too will become stagnant and die.

As scary as the world may appear, it is not time for Christians to head for the hills or their bomb shelters! To do so is to play into the hands of the devil, who wants the followers of Jesus to think the job is done, and that their own needs and self-preservation are all-important. To the contrary, Jesus told His followers: ***"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven"*** (Matthew 5:14-16).

Jesus didn't say we should take care of our own needs, security and happiness first. No! Instead He said we must ***"seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well"*** (Matthew 6:33).

The focus for believers should never change. Firstly we should be committed to know, love, and obey God and His Word. Secondly we must focus on what God is focused on—reaching the unreached nations of the world and bringing in the harvest.

Only then will the Lamb of God receive the inheritance of the nations for which He was slain! Only then will the seventh angel sound his trumpet in heaven, and proclaim, ***"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever"*** (Revelation 11:15).

"Thank you for the Asia Harvest annual report and the encouragement for the teaching on fruitfulness. We trust the Gardener for our fruitfulness as we are still being pruned, dug and dunged on but we know it will lead to our fruitfulness.

Without fail your magazine brings encouragement, hope and truth and I so look forward to it. A.W. Tozer wrote, 'To be crucified means, first, the man on the cross is facing only one direction; second, he is not going back; and third, he has no further plans of his own.'

God bless you as you travel and stay with health and safekeeping in Jesus' Mighty Name." — *Kate, Australia*

Cover picture: Three hard-working Chhetri women in Nepal. The Chhetri are one of the 187 people groups we are reaching through the Asian Workers' fund.

Why Jesus Has Yet to Return

What is the most important thing on God's heart today?

I think if we sat down with a dozen Christians and asked them this question we might receive a dozen different answers.

All Christians understand that Jesus conquered the grave and completed the incredible task He came to do. He has created a Way for mankind to come back into relationship with God.

That is not the end of the story however! Strangely, many preachers fail to mention that God's plan on the earth is still unfolding. It is the reason why Jesus has not yet returned. The Bible says that ***"Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of Gentiles has come in"*** (Romans 11:25).


Uygur

God is so pleased with the sacrifice of His beloved Son that He wants the whole world to know about it. He wants every representation of the human race to hear and have the chance to accept or reject His Son's sacrifice for their sins.

There are numerous end-time preachers today, but for some reason many of them seem to neglect mentioning the final sign Jesus said would take place before His return to the earth: ***"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end shall come"*** (Matthew 24:14).

This is what we believe is the most important thing on God's heart today!

God is bringing in the Harvest, but only after "the full number of Gentiles has come in" will He call an end to this world in its present form!

Defining the Task

We would like to share something crucial for all Christians to understand. Without it, we will be confused about the state of the harvest, and therefore God's plans in the world today. Have you been led to believe that God's harvest has basically already been brought in, and the task of winning the nations has been completed?

The first thing we must understand is just how God measures the harvest. The Bible defines the task quite clearly. In Revelation 5:6-10 we are given a glimpse to a future time when the harvest has been fully gathered:

"Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders.... He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne.... And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with

your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

This is exciting news! We are told there will be worshippers of Jesus around the throne from ***"every tribe and language and people and nation."***

Two chapters later the Apostle John saw a new vision and wrote, ***"I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb'"*** (Revelation 7:9-10).

Once again we have the words ***"every nation, tribe, people and language."*** Just to make it clear, God mentioned His definition of the harvest one more time in Revelation 14:6.

God always completes things perfectly. He created the first divisions among the human race back at the Tower of Babel, splitting people into ***"clans and languages, in their territories and nations.... From these the nations spread out over the earth after the flood"*** (Genesis 10:31-32).


Bonan

The whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation carries two main themes. The first is the redemptive story of Jesus.

The second main theme seems to have been lost to many preachers today however. It is rarely mentioned. This is sad and tragic! It seems that Satan has done a great job hiding this truth from so many millions of Christians today.

The second main theme of the Bible is God's plan to reach the nations!

Without knowing this, a Christian's life will lack a key ingredient and sense of purpose.

Jesus didn't die on the cross just to give *you* salvation. He died to save *the nations*!

God doesn't bless you and me just so we can be happy. He blesses us so we can reach the nations!

What are 'Nations'?

This is a key question. In the English language the word 'nation' has become largely synonymous with the word 'country' but these are not the same thing.

When we watch the news we hear about the "nation of India," or the "nation of Great Britain." This is not what the Bible means when it talks about "nations".

In both the Hebrew language of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament, the word translated "nation" in our English Bibles means

something quite different than a political country. The Greek word is "ethnae," from where we get our word "ethnic."

When you read the word "nations" in the Bible, instead of thinking about countries, you should think "ethnic groups."

If Jesus meant "countries" when He said, ***"this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end shall come"*** (Matthew 24:14), then He should have already returned.


Bhattra

There are approximately 240 countries in the world today. Every one of them already has a Christian remnant of some description, a group of faithful, blood-bought followers of Jesus Christ.

The plan of God was never just to reach every country. It is to reach every ethnic group, language, tribe and people group.

Only when this has happened will the Lord Jesus have received the reward He deserves for His matchless sacrifice. God once told His Son, ***"Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of your earth your possession"*** (Psalm 2:8). Asaph wrote, ***"Rise up, O God, judge the earth, for all the nations are your inheritance"*** (Psalm 82:8).

Dear friends, do not be deceived into thinking the work of the Gospel is almost done. The nations (ethnic groups) are not yet all the inheritance of Jesus. There is much work to be done!

There are Christians who have sat on their backside for decades while they wait for the Lord to return. They were taught the harvest has been brought in and there is nothing else to do. Tragically, their lives have frittered away and they have done nothing for the Lord.

The State of the Harvest Today

Two thousand years after Jesus commanded His followers to take the Good News into all the world, how much progress do you think we have made?

The best source for information about the world's "tribes, languages, peoples and nations" is undoubtedly the Joshua Project (www.joshuaproject.net).

Decades of research has resulted in them defining 16,586 people groups throughout the world today.

They have classified an "unreached" group to mean any group that is less than 2% Christian.

Using this definition, **how many of these 16,586 people groups do you think remain to be properly "reached" by the Gospel of Jesus?**

The answer may shock you.

After 2,000 years there are still 7,165 *unreached* people groups in the world today!

From this point of view, the Church is just past the half way mark toward the

goal.

No wonder the Lord Jesus has not yet returned!

We are glad God has called us to Asia, because 72% of all the remaining unreached groups in the world are found there.

Hundreds of millions of Asians are waiting to hear the Name of Jesus for the first time in their lives. Not only individual people, but whole tribes and ethnic groups (nations) remain totally unevangelized.

We and our co-workers regularly come across people who have no clue of God's plan of salvation. Even in China there are multitudes who have never heard of Jesus. They ask us questions like, "Does he live in your country?" when we first tell them His Name.

Consider the following table about the state of Christianity in Asia. I think you will agree there remains much work to do....

Region	People Groups	Unreached Groups
Central Asia	1,012	837
Northeast Asia	655	489
Southeast Asia	1,808	744
South Asia	3,411	3,117
Totals	6,886	5,187

Perhaps you have never been presented with information like this before and it is a surprise to you.

When God views China, he doesn't see one 'nation,' but He sees 513 distinct "ethnae," most of which have their own language and culture. The Lord desires to redeem people from the 11 million Turkic-speaking Uygur people who inhabit northwest China. He also desires to save people from the small Bonan nation, numbering just 11,000 people in Gansu Province.

India remains the greatest challenge to the Gospel in the world today. It is home to 2,599 distinct nations, 2,365 (91%) of which remain unreached by the Gospel. Who will reach the 300,000 **Bhattra** nation of Orissa, or the tiny **Muriya** tribe who number less than 100 people?

Does God care if someone reaches the Muriya people? Are they too small to worry about?

Not at all! Jesus died for the Muriya. They are a distinct nation who will one day have believers worshipping the Lamb around His throne.

An Opportunity to be Involved

From the time we first started serving in Asia in 1988, the unreached nations have been our focus. Everything we do at Asia Harvest has the end goal of glorifying the Name of Jesus among the unreached tribes and ethnic groups of Asia.

All of our projects are geared towards this end, but the **Asian Workers' Fund** is our primary method for reaching the lost in Asia and fulfilling the Great Commission.

We have no desire to send Western missionaries into these nations. Although Westerners have a key supporting role, there is a much better way to get the job done.

At the moment we are supporting 381 Asian missionaries, serving among 187 unreached ethnic groups. We are

privileged to already support workers among all four groups we mentioned: the Uygur and Bonan of China, and the Bhattra and Muriya of India (pictures of people from these four nations are scattered throughout this newsletter).

We are thankful for all of the Asian missionaries and the wonderful work they are doing. We are also thankful for those who have prayed for them and given generously so that they are able to go.


Muriya

As we sought the Lord at the end of last year, we sensed He was challenging us to increase our focus for the unreached. Since then we have started new partnerships with other organizations to be more effective.

Our next goal is to support Asian workers among 500 different unreached groups. To achieve this we need a miracle, but we know our Lord is very good at working miracles!

Please pray with us. Ask God to expand the Asian Workers' fund, and to connect us with more Asian missionaries with a vision to reach these groups. Please also pray for an increase in provision.

In coming newsletters we plan to continue with this emphasis, because we believe it is the emphasis of God's heart.

A tremendous opportunity exists for you to be part of this vision! **Would you, your family or your church consider supporting one or more of these faithful Asian evangelists?**

A monthly donation of $25 ($300 per year) makes a tremendous difference in their lives. It allows them to carry out the work God has called them to.

We will send a prayer card of a worker to each regular supporter, and a written update of their progress every six months.

Please note that most of the workers need more than $25 per month, depending on their location and the kind of work they are called to do. We have set the standard unit of support at $25 per worker, which means your gift is joined together with one or more others to provide the full amount of help we give each worker.

If a person gives an amount of $100 per month for example, we apply $25 to four different workers and send that person four different prayer cards.

We have found that structuring the Asian Workers' fund this way provides a safeguard for the workers. If a donor is unable to continue with their support we can reallocate that portion to a new donor, and the missionary can carry on with their work unhindered.

Few of us can go where they go, but each of us can partake in the joy of their reward.

The Lord Jesus is waiting for His full inheritance to come in, and it is a great privilege to be able to play a part in seeing this happen as we serve the Church in Asia together.

Latest News



Because of a lack of space in our newsletters, we are unable to mention many of the activities the Lord has us doing throughout Asia. We would like to share something important that happened recently, and ask for your prayers. On March 9 a mob of Muslims attacked more than 2,000 Christians from the Joseph Colony, a Christian community in the large city of Lahore, Pakistan. The attackers torched the Christians' homes, seized their possessions, and burned their Bibles. Those who were slow to flee were severely beaten, including the elderly and children.

This incident was scarcely reported, and most Christians remain completely unaware it happened.

Our persecuted Christian brothers and sisters have been left destitute and traumatized. We provided an initial $10,000 to help them with basic necessities, food and shelter, and to provide new Bibles to the leaders of each family. Please pray earnestly for these 2,000 Christians. If you would like to assist them financially please add a note "Pakistan Persecution." 100% of support received will be given directly to the believers from the Joseph Colony.



Pray for Saeed

If you have visited our website in recent months, or you are on our email list, you will be aware that a close friend of our ministry, Saeed Abedini, was arrested in Iran and has been sentenced to 8 years in the notorious Evin Prison. His crime? He loves Jesus Christ.

Saeed was born in Iran but is now a US citizen. He has a remarkable testimony having converted from Islam to Christ. We were collaborating with Saeed to write his biography when he was dragged from a bus in Iran last September while visiting his family and was charged with "endangering the national security of Iran."

Since then thousands of Christians have started praying for him and his family. His situation is changing daily, so we have set up a special page on our website (**www.asiaharvest.org**) with regular updates on Saeed. Please pray for Saeed, and for his wife Naghmeh and two children who remain in America.

ASIAN WORKERS' FUND

Thanks to your support we are currently able to support 381 Asian evangelists working among 187 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.

CHINA BIBLE PRINTING



Current Total: 6,816,822 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.**

A generous donor has recently given a "dollar for dollar" matching grant to Asia Harvest. For a period of time each donation we receive for Bibles will be doubled, so that two new Bibles will be provided instead of one!

SOUTHEAST ASIA BIBLE FUND



Current Total: 325,961 Bibles printed in 47 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 744 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 12,387 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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