

Testimonies From Asia Harvest 02

by Paul Hattaway

This sermon shares testimonies of heroic faith and the power of radio evangelism in reaching the lost, highlighting the lives of John Harper and David Livingston.

Duration: 29:36

Scripture: Psalm 127:3, Matthew 28:20, Acts 8:36

Topics: "Audio Books"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares two powerful stories of individuals who dedicated their lives to spreading the Gospel. The first story is about John Harper, a man who selflessly gave up his own life to save others during the sinking of the Titanic. Harper led a young man to Christ before succumbing to the cold waters, leaving behind a powerful message of salvation. The second story is about David Livingston, a missionary who traveled extensively in Africa, proclaiming the Gospel despite physical hardships and eventually passing away while praying. Both stories highlight the commitment and sacrifice of these individuals in sharing the message of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Welcome to testimonies from the AsiaHarvest.org website. This is Episode 2. Radio revival among the Hmong in Laos, 1950s. Listeners in one particular Hmong village inside Laos in the mid-1950s were responsive to Christian messages, but, being illiterate, had no idea how to communicate with the Vang Chuan post office box given on the program.

The chief of the village, therefore, sent a delegation down several days' walk to the capital, to the main post office, where they inquired if there was a religious man associated with a particular mailbox. Postal officials did not understand the request and referred them instead to a member of the locally established religious hierarchy, who sent a representative back with the delegation, several days' walk, return trip, to the mountains. However, when the chief asked the representative to acquit himself in terms of his views, he was dissatisfied with the result and declared that it was not the same as they had heard on the radio.

He, therefore, apologized to the representative and sent him on his way back down the mountain. But the village were determined to make contact with the broadcaster. So, again, a delegation went back three days' walk down the mountain to Vang Chuan, where they gave more details to the postal officials, who then decided these people must be referring to a foreigner who indeed had a mailbox.

This missionary returned with the delegation, preached the gospel to the chief and his men, and all accepted Christ. As is quite ordinary in Hmong culture, the chief gave permission to his village to become Christians, every one, and as a common response to a chief's suggestion, the whole village followed suit. Reprinted from the Miao Messenger, Volume 6, Number 1, Fall 1997 Radio Revival Among the White Hmong in China, 1990s There are about 150,000 white Hmong living in southern China, and perhaps 500,000 in Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand combined.

They are called white because their women traditionally wore white dresses, but they also speak a different language from other Miao Hmong groups. The Chinese commonly call these groups Miao, but this name is not used by the people themselves. In their own language, they call themselves Hmong Daw, which means white Hmong.

Although there have been Christians among this group in Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos for most of the past 30 years, in China they remained completely unreached without any knowledge of Christ. One white Hmong Christian was a refugee who was able to flee from Vietnam to California after the war. He was deeply burdened for his people back in Asia.

He started recording gospel messages in his native language which were aired by FEBC, the Far East Broadcasting. For years they broadcast the gospel in white Hmong without receiving any feedback from China. In 1994, an old white Hmong man in Jinping County, Yunnan Province, China, was tuning his radio one day when suddenly he heard his own language being spoken.

He was shocked. He ran outside and gathered his family to come and listen with him. They too were amazed because their language is not allowed to be used in media within China.

They heard about Jesus who they had never heard of before and did not understand, but they were excited to hear their own language. The next day, when the broadcast came on again, the old man had notified the whole village. Hundreds of people gathered around a radio to listen to see if it was true.

Soon after, the old man decided he should tell other white Hmong villages about the broadcast. Because he was too old to work, he had plenty of spare time. So he walked to 18 other villages and tuned their radios for them to the shortwave broadcast.

Within weeks, thousands of white Hmong were listening to the gospel every night. Slowly, their understanding started to be pierced by the truths of the gospel. This radical teaching so gripped their hearts and convicted them that they decided they must make a decision to accept the gospel or else to never listen to this teaching again.

The leaders of all 18 villages gathered for a summit meeting. At the meeting, they decided all of their people should become Christians. Not having any churches, evangelists or pastors to advise them except for the radio preacher, the white Hmong decided they must obey whatever the radio told them to do.

One day they heard a teaching about idolatry. The people immediately smashed their idols and tore down their ancestral altars that had been on the walls of their homes for countless centuries. God was moving among the white Hmong in a powerful way.

Drug addicts were being delivered from their bondage. Fragmented marriages were put back together. And wrongs were made right.

Another time they heard a teaching about water baptism. The new believers, out of the simplicity and innocence of their hearts, dug pits in the ground, filled them with water from a nearby stream, and baptized each other. At this time, FEBC did not know these events were taking place but continued to faithfully broadcast the gospel in the hope that God would use their efforts.

One day a teaching came on the radio about the Lamb's Book of Life. The white Hmong did not fully understand the teaching, but they knew they wanted to be in this book. About six months later a large package arrived at the FEBC office in California.

It came from China and had been sent by sea mail. Not knowing what it is, they opened it and found the names and signatures of some 10,000 white Hmong people. Attached was a cover letter saying, Dear Sir, please include the following people in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Because this took place in communist China, the government was not happy with this mass turning to Christ and soon stepped in to persecute the movement. All 18 leaders from the 18 villages were arrested. Most were released after paying fines and receiving severe warnings.

Some of the other leaders were imprisoned. We received reports that the local police even burned down the houses of some of the white Hmong Christians in a bid to intimidate them. Starting in 1994, Asia Harvest has delivered several thousand white Hmong Bibles and teaching books to the believers in southern China.

These have been received with great joy and thankfulness. However, the persecution has continued. In 1995, a hundred white Hmong Christian families living in Jinping got fed up with the persecution from the local authorities and relocated themselves 200 kilometers to Xishuangbanna Prefecture, where the officials are less harsh.

Please pray for the white Hmong. Note, the above testimony occurred in China, but similar events took place across the border in northern Vietnam, where as many as 100,000 white Hmong have come to Christ in the past 10 years, primarily as a result of the FEBC radio broadcasts. The Titanic's Last Hero Chances are you have seen the Hollywood movie, Titanic, which has been seen by more people around the world than any other movie in history.

What most people do not know is that there was a godly Christian man on board the Titanic named John Harper. John Harper was born to a pair of solid Christian parents on May 29, 1872. It was on the last Sunday of March, 1886, when he was 13 years old that he received Jesus as the Lord of his life.

He began to preach about four years later at the ripe old age of 17 years old by going down to the streets of his village and pouring out his soul for men to be reconciled to God. As John Harper's life unfolded, one thing was apparent. He was consumed by the Word of God.

When asked by various ministers what his doctrine consisted of, he was known to reply, The Word of God. Soon, John Harper started his own church in September of 1896, now known as the Harper Memorial Church. This church started with just 25 members but had grown to over 500 members when he left 13 years later.

Ironically, John Harper almost drowned several times during his life. When he was two and a half years of age, he almost drowned when he fell into a well but was resuscitated by his mother. At the age of 26, he was swept out to sea by a reverse current and barely survived, and at 32 he faced death on a leaking ship

in the Mediterranean.

Perhaps God used these experiences to prepare this servant for what he faced next. It was the night of April 14, 1912. The RMS Titanic sailed swiftly on the bitterly cold ocean waters, heading unknowingly into the pages of history.

On board this luxurious ocean liner were many rich and famous people. At the time of the ship's launch, it was the world's largest man-made movable object. At 11.40 p.m. on that fateful night, an iceberg scraped the ship's starboard side, showering the decks with ice and ripping open six watertight compartments.

The sea poured in. On board the ship was John Harper and his much-beloved six-year-old daughter, Nana. According to documented reports, as soon as it was apparent that the ship was going to sink, Harper immediately took his daughter to a lifeboat.

It is reasonable to assume that this widowed preacher could have easily gotten on board this boat to safety. However, it never seems to have crossed his mind. He bent down and kissed his precious little girl.

Looking into her eyes, he told her that she would see him again some day. The flares going off in the dark sky above reflected the tears on his face as he turned and headed toward the crowd of desperate humanity on the sinking ocean liner. As the rear of the huge ship began to lurch upwards, it was reported that Harper was seen making his way up the deck, yelling, women, children, and unsaved, into the lifeboats.

It was only minutes later that the Titanic began to rumble deep within. Most people thought it was an explosion. Actually, the ship was literally breaking in half.

At this point, many people jumped off the decks and into the icy dark waters below. John Harper was one of these people. That night, 1,528 people went into the frigid waters.

John Harper was seen swimming frantically to people in the water, leading them to Jesus before the hyperthermia became fatal. Mr. Harper swam up to one young man who had climbed up on a piece of debris. Harper asked him between breaths, Are you saved? The young man replied that he was not.

Harper then tried to lead him to Christ, only to have the young man, who was near shock, reply no. John Harper then took off his life jacket and threw it to the man and said, Here then, you need this more than I do, and swam away to other people. A few minutes later, Harper swam back to the young man and succeeded in leading him to salvation.

Of the 1,528 people that went into the water that night, six were rescued by the lifeboats. One of them was this young man on the debris. Four years later, at a survivor's meeting, this young man stood up and in tears recounted how that after John Harper had led him to Christ, Harper had tried to swim back to help other people, yet because of the intense cold, had grown too weak to swim.

His last words before going under in the frigid waters were, Believe on the name of the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved. Does Hollywood remember this man? No. Oh well, it doesn't matter.

This servant of God did what he had to do. While other people were trying to buy their way onto the lifeboats and selfishly trying to save their own lives, John Harper gave up his life so that others could be saved. The source was *The Titanic's Last Hero* by Moody Press, 1997.

David Livingston, far more than just an explorer. You have probably heard of David Livingston, the great Scottish missionary to Africa. Unfortunately, the secular media and historians have focused on Livingston as an explorer rather than what he really was, a missionary with God's heart for the lost.

Sixteen years after his first journey into dark Africa, Livingston returned to Scotland for a time of rest and speaking engagements. He was asked to speak to the students at the University of Glasgow. If he knew what awaited him, he might have declined the invitation.

It was the custom of the undergraduates in those days to heckle speakers that came, and they were well prepared for this preacher. They had peashooters, toy trumpets, rattles, and noisemakers of every description. Livingston walked out onto the platform with the tread of a man who has walked 11,000 miles.

His left arm hung limply at his side, having been almost ripped from his body by a huge lion. His face was a dark leathery brown from sixteen years in the African sun. It was furrowed with innumerable lines from the bouts of African fever which had wracked and emaciated his body.

He had been attacked by savages and by the Turks who plied their vicious slave trade. He was half deaf from rheumatic fever and half blind from a branch that had slapped him in the eyes in the jungle. The students stared, and they knew that here was a life that was literally burned out for God, not a rattle moved, not a foot shuffled.

A hush crept over that vast auditorium, and they listened in rapt silence as David Livingston told about his journeys and about the tremendous needs of this vast African population. Shall I tell you, he asked, what sustained me in the midst of these toils, hardships and incredible loneliness? It was a promise, the promise of a gentleman of the most sacred honor. It was this promise, Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Born in Blantyre, Scotland, in 1813, Livingston had dedicated himself to Christ at an early age. A great missionary to Africa, Robert Moffat, came to Livingston's town and spoke. He said, Often, as I have looked to the vast plains of the north, I have sometimes in the morning sun seen the smoke of a thousand villages where no missionary has ever been.

Livingston soon set sail for Africa. He plunged into the jungle from the south and found it impenetrable. After numerous hardships, he finally opened up a way into the interior.

A huge lion almost ripped his arm from his body and left him permanently crippled, but also brought a blessing in disguise. For while he was recuperating, Robert Moffat came and brought his beautiful daughter Mary. For David, it was love at first sight.

Soon they were married, and she shared his zeal and concern for the evangelization of the dark continent of Africa. Unfortunately, the months of hardship and toil were too much for Mary. They had watched one of their children die as they had attempted to cross one of the vast deserts of Africa, a burden that had almost crushed Livingston.

Finally, there came the most difficult decision of his life, to send his wife and three remaining children back to England. How difficult was the burden he was to bear! Perhaps the most cutting of all was the criticism that he had left his wife and children to go rambling about Africa because he really did not love them. His letters tell a far different story.

My dearest Mary, I see no face now to be compared to that sunburnt one which has so often greeted me with its kind looks. Gather the children around you and kiss them for me, and tell them that I love them, and that I have left them for the love of Jesus, and they must love Him, too. For five long, agonizing years, he never saw his wife or his children.

Then the time came when finally he was going home, home at last. With great expectation and joy, he burst into his old home in Blantyre to find it empty. They had just buried his father, and this man who had faced the spears of hostile savages and the roaring of wild beasts, without so much as blinking, fell down and wept like a child.

After months of sweet fellowship with his family, his dreams were again haunted by the vision of a thousand villages in the morning sun. So with great agony of heart, he set sail for Africa again. The years passed, and when the children were old enough, Mary wrote that she would be able to come and be with him.

For months she sailed upon the ocean and up steaming African rivers, finally to be greeted by her husband, only to be smitten by a grievous African fever. Night after night, day after day, he sat up with his beloved wife and wiped her fevered brow. Slowly she worsened, and she breathed her last.

Mary was dead. David Livingston buried her under a huge baobab tree and fell on the mound of dirt, and again he wept. His body was broken, his loved ones were gone, he seemed alone, discouraged.

Was he overcome? Listen to the words he wrote in his diary. My Jesus, my King, my life, my all, I again consecrate my life to Thee. I shall place no value on anything I possess or anything I may do except in relation to the kingdom of Christ.

When he arrived at Ujiji, natives stole his food, and worst of all, they stole his medicine chest with the quinine and other medicines to heal those terrible fevers. For Livingston it was a sentence of death, and he cried out, O God, you promised to be with me. For five years he had not seen the face of a white man, and now in the midst of the interior of Africa he looked up from that prayer and saw a white face walking towards him.

It was Henry M. Stanley who uttered those unforgettable words, Dr. Livingston, I presume? Stanley had searched until he found him, brought medicine and wholesome food, and nursed him back to health. For four months Henry Stanley lived in the same hut with Livingston. Stanley described himself in this way, I was the biggest swaggering atheist that could be found in all of the world.

But Stanley could find no fault in Livingston's life. His compassion, his earnestness, the quietness with which he went about his work, the sympathy he showed to all about him quickened the sympathy in Stanley's own heart, and he said, Finally, after all these months, Livingston converted even me to Christ. Livingston, however, would not return to civilization, but plunged deeper into Africa, and for him the end was approaching.

His diary says, Lord, help me to finish thy work this year to thine honor. And so he did. He came to the place where his strength was completely spent.

His feet were lacerated with boils. All his teeth loosened and fell out. He could neither walk nor stand.

He could not go another step. Livingston commanded his friends to put him on a stretcher and carry him onward. Deeper and deeper into Africa he plunged on a stretcher.

Propped up, he proclaimed the riches of the gospel of Jesus Christ to all with whom he came into contact. Finally, during a night of prayer, Livingston passed from this life into the presence of Jesus Christ. Livingston died on his knees.

He lived his life, and he left his life in the presence of Him who said, Lo, I am with you always. Thirty-nine years he trudged twenty-nine thousand miles upon the face of the continent of Africa. Light shined in the darkness.

Two million Africans were brought the gospel, and the light continues to shine today. Adapted from a pamphlet by Dr. James Kennedy, The Secret of Commitment. God bless you.

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