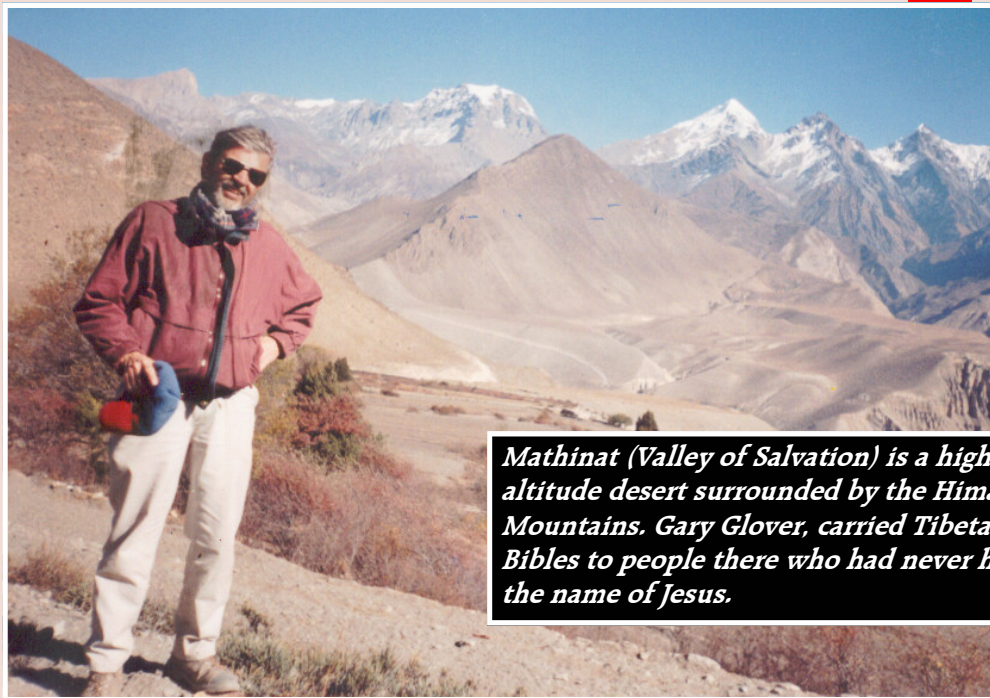


Stories of Faith

Gospel Carried to Himalaya Region

by Gary Glover



Mathinat (Valley of Salvation) is a high altitude desert surrounded by the Himalaya Mountains. Gary Glover, carried Tibetan Bibles to people there who had never heard the name of Jesus.

THE HIMALAYA MOUNTAINS NESTLE KHATMANDU, THE LARGEST CITY IN NEPAL, IN A VALLEY OF HER FOOT-HILLS. Walking at night through the city streets, I enjoyed a symphony of color, lights and music mixed with chatter in strange languages and fragrances of marigolds and other flowers crushed and smeared on idols by dutiful worshippers. Hindu and Buddhist culture engulf every street. Everywhere, in pictures and statues, idols of grotesque gods and goddesses glare out of hollow eyes; and colorful, noisy crowds of people ebb and flow through the streets, all in the darkness of Eastern idol worship.

I have recently returned from a most extraordinary journey in the Himalaya Mountains of Nepal. That journey began in Khatmandu in September of 1998. I visited for only one day and was preparing to leave the next. I felt the Spirit of the Lord envelop me and mandate, "Come back and carry my Word to the Tibetans."

Back in the States, I began asking, "Lord, what are you doing in missions?" He spoke to my heart

and showed me He is using godly, dedicated men and women to carry His message to their own people—He is using indigenous missionaries. I spoke to a few of my mission-minded friends about an organization I felt burdened to form whose primary focus would be to support indigenous missionaries. In April 1999, we formed a board of directors, developed our mission statement, and started a bank account with \$100—thus starting Co-Mission International Incorporated (www.comission.com). We are already forming cooperative ministries with missions in India, Nepal, Turkey, and Paraguay.

Why indigenous missionaries? My family and I served for several years on foreign mission fields—that is, foreign to us. From experience I found that nationals have tremendous advantages over foreign missionaries. First, they don't have to spend months and years learning the language. Second, they are at home in the culture. Third, they don't have to worry about building up a ministry only to be told by the government one day, "Your visa is up. Go home!"

Financially, most native missionaries live on a fraction of what it costs a Westerner to live in the same area. For these reasons Co-Mission was founded.

I left on a journey to Turkey, India, and Nepal on the first of October to interact with ministries for Co-Mission. It was the most extraordinary six weeks of my life.

I first ministered in Bombay, India, for a few days, then took trains and buses to Nepal. In the early morning of November 7, 1999, I, along with two Indian brothers, landed on the little dirt landing strip of Jomson, a village in the Himalayas in northern Nepal. The pristine heights of the Himalaya Mountains, "alabaster set in azure" surrounded us. The sky glowed bright and clear, the air cold and sharp. We hoisted our backpacks and briskly began the 15-mile walk to Muthinat, which means in Tibetan, "Valley of Salvation."

Nine hours and 12 miles later, I was completely exhausted. The oxygen content of the air was at 65 percent of sea level. Altitude sickness, the scourge of Himalaya backpackers, gripped me. (I was told

that the only way to recover was to go back down to a lower altitude.) We had come only to the beginning of Muthinat Valley to a small village called Khingar. Our destination beckoned us still three long, uphill miles away.

The first dwelling we came to in Khingar was a little inn. It was as far as I could go. I stumbled into the tiny dirt-floor kitchen. We negotiated a room for \$3 a night for me and my two companions. They half carried me to a cot. I took off my boots and hat, curled up in my sleeping bag, and lamented, "So close to what I have been dreaming of doing for over a year, and now I am beaten."

The sun fell quickly behind the ice-entombed 25,000 foot peaks. I lay in the dark; almost delirious with fever, nausea, and a splitting headache. I asked the Lord, "Why Lord, when I am so close?" My interpreter came into the room and softly asked, "Gary, where are the New Testaments?"

We had six New Testaments, three Bibles, five audio cassettes, and a couple hundred tracts with us, all in Tibetan. I pointed to one of the pockets of my backpack. "There," I whispered.

A little later, he came in again and took another New Testament, and again later. My head cleared a little, and I heard, ever so slightly, my interpreter speaking to someone in the dirty little kitchen. My fever and delirium increased. I fell asleep.

Late in the night, my two companions came into the room. They laid their hands on me and prayed—then told me all that had transpired that wonderful evening. The inn where we stopped is the first resting place for anyone entering the valley. Many people sit by the fire to warm themselves from the frigid Himalayan night air and enjoy a cup of Tibetan hot butter tea in the little kitchen, just as we had. Then they make their way on up the valley, and even through the pass to other villages deeper in the Himalayas. My interpreter not only witnessed to many people that

evening hut also gave away several New Testaments, cassettes, and tracts. He gave them to people who had never once heard the name of Jesus Christ or knew of His gospel—people who still would not have heard if I had not come down with fever and been required to stop at the little inn in Khingar.

I raised my hands, looking at the dried mud and stick ceiling through hot tears that pooled and ran down the sides of my face and into my ears. "Why me, Lord, why do I get to go to such wonderful places, meet such wonderful people, and be led by You in such an amazing way, even against my will? People have heard the gospel

tonight who have never heard it before. Oh, God, I love this. Don't ever let me quit."

I fell asleep; and when I awoke, I was completely well. We then journeyed to our intended destination, the village of Muthinat. We gave away only one New Testament and a few tracts. Not once did we get to sit with folks and tell them about the gospel. But the Word was planted throughout the Valley of Salvation because the night before the Lord had stopped us exactly where He wanted us. He knew where the people would be, where the open ears and hearts would be. His will was accomplished.



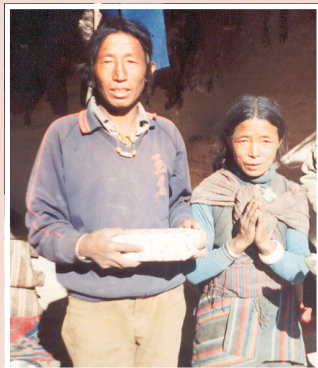
■ I first saw the Tibetan Buddhist monk (pictured above) sitting in a dirty cell before a low altar chanting his prayers. Small idols decorated each end of the altar and incense curled up into the beams of sunlight filtering through a dingy little window behind him. In the middle of the altar before him lay strips of paper from which he read his Buddhist scripture. He got up from the altar and came to

the door, smiling. "Who are you and where are you from?"

My interpreter said to him, "We are Christians, servants of the Lord Jesus Christ."

The monk said, "I have never heard of this teacher. Who is he?" We gave him a tract and explained a little of the gospel. He read the tract aloud and looked up. "This is good." He read on, then lifted his eyes to us again. "I will read this to the people in the village."

I dug into my backpack and found our last New Testament. It was wrapped as a gift in pretty paper. "I have a gift for you. It is the words of Jesus Christ." The monk held the package for a moment then reverently unwrapped it. The last time I saw him he was sitting crossed-legged in front of the low altar in his cell. Idols still glared up at him from the altar. Incense still curled up into the sunbeams. But now, on top of his Buddhist scriptures, lay open the Word of God, and he was reading it.



■ We had hiked for three hours to a very remote village. This man and his wife offered to be our host. They took us home and gave us the best they had to offer—fresh hot milk and apples. We gave them a Bible. They can't read, but their children can; and the Word will be heard in that village.