

October 8, 2026

Planting Seeds on the Roof of the World

From Johnny B (JB Dai)

On my most recent trip to Nepal, I went to help them. Instead, they ambushed me with a party. They couldn't have known our birthdays when we first arrived. David, a young Ugandan missionary traveling with me, happened to be sitting across the dinner table one evening high up in the Himalayas. We were eating together after a long day of travel, and I leaned over and asked him when his birthday was.

David smiled and told me his date. My eyes widened. "Oh my!" I said. "That's one day before my birthday—just three days from now!"

I had no idea anyone else at the table was paying attention. But two days later, on David's birthday, the young Nepalese members of the Shining Hill youth team caught us completely off guard. Up there in the mountains, they threw an ambush of love for the two of us. There were games and there was more laughter than I had experienced



in a long time. And over the next several days, that little mountain fellowship turned into an inspired time of singing, praising the Lord, and studying the Bible together—days that I will never forget.

By any Western standard, the people who live in the mountain region are poor. Life in the Himalayas is simple, without many of the conveniences and the thousand daily distractions we've built our lives around back home. Yet the genuine, simple joy radiating in the lives of the young people we're working with up there is something that I've rarely seen in Western churches.

As I stood in the back of the room on that party night, watching these young mountain believers sing their hearts out to the Lord, I thought: Somebody planted the seeds that grew into this room a long time ago. Long before my plane ever touched down on the runway in Kathmandu, long before anyone built the building we were standing in, someone else had labored, prayed, and wept over this ground.

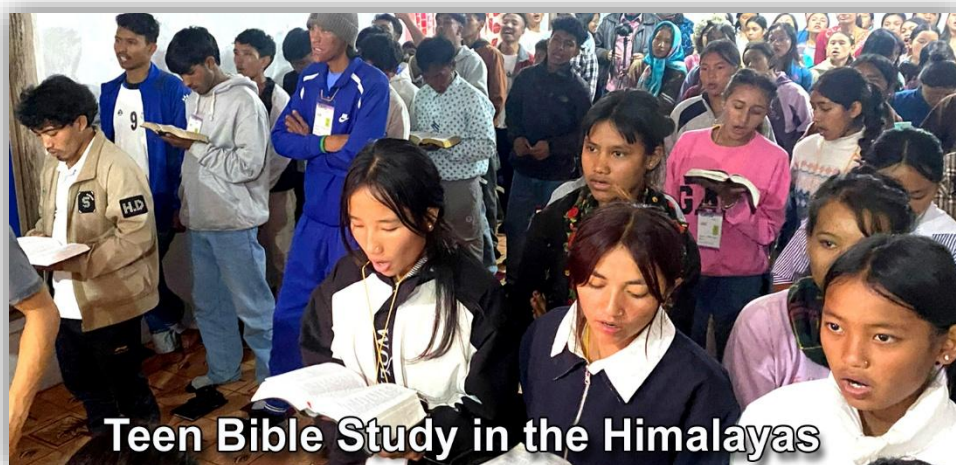


Jesus explained this principle to His disciples in a way that most missionaries eventually discover: “And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.” (John 4:37,38)

One person plants. Another waters. Another harvests. And most of the time, we don't get to pick which role the Lord gives us.

When we set out to do what Jesus asked us to do, our main job is scattering seed, and because human nature is often impatient, we want to see a full harvest immediately. Sometimes the Lord does allow us to see quick results. But far more often, the seed has to sit under the soil. It needs water. It needs sunshine. It needs faithful people quietly keeping watch over the soil. Then, long after you have stopped hovering over the plot, the green shoot suddenly breaks through the dirt, the branches spread, and the tree begins to bear fruit.

The seeds are the words of the Gospel dropped into the hearts of the people God puts in our path. Sometimes that seed is a little Gospel tract handed to



a stranger on a crowded street corner, along with a few words of kindness and a smile or hug. Sometimes it's a discussion or Bible class that you give to a person who wants to know more. Sometimes it's a song you sing with a message that brings someone closer to the Truth. Sometimes it's that prayer that you pray when a person is hurting or sick. Those are the seeds. The water is everything that follows.

In the world of discipleship, we have a very practical word for watering: we call it follow-up. It's a slow, deliberate work. Paul understood how our working together helps the seeds to grow. He writes: "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." (1 Corinthians 3:6,7)

And for those seasons when we look out over the dry soil and feel tempted to give up, the Bible encourages us not to quit. "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." (Galatians 6:9)

One of North America's best-known folk heroes is also one of its best examples of patient seed-sowing. We call him Johnny Appleseed. Most people only know him as a sort of cartoon character, but his real name was John Chapman. He was born in 1774, when the American frontier still lay far to the west, and he lived about 70 years.

As the story goes, Johnny was a carefree wanderer strolling barefoot through the woods, randomly tossing apple seeds into the wind. The barefoot part was true, but the random tossing is pure fiction. The historical reality is far more compelling.

John Chapman had a smart, disciplined strategy. He walked out ahead of the westward settlers—past the last log cabins and deep into the frontier. He would select a fertile patch of ground, clear the brush, plant a fenced nursery, and place it in the trusted care of a nearby neighbor. Every year or two, Chapman circled back through the wilderness to tend the nursery, sell the saplings to incoming pioneer families, and collect new seeds for the next plot. He maintained this rhythm for fifty years.

So what are the lessons we can learn from Chapman's method? He planted where nobody was yet. He looked ahead to where the frontier was moving. He fenced what he planted. He protected the tender seedlings from being destroyed. He partnered with local neighbors. He did not try to do everything alone. He came back. He practiced faithful follow-up and he never stopped moving forward.

Those are the very habits I have watched at work in Nepal. The believers there planted where no one else had gone, partnered with their neighbors, protected the young in the faith, and kept coming back year after year.

Johnny Appleseed never saw most of those apple orchards reach full maturity. He never tasted most of the cider or picked the fruit from the mature trees. But the generations of people who came after him did — people who never met the man who planted the seeds.

And how do we decide where to plant our seeds? Where will we invest our time, our energy and our resources? If we take the time to stop and listen to that still small voice that the Holy Spirit speaks to us in, we can get our directions straight from the source.



Shining Hill Choir in the Himalayas

Three years ago that still small voice drew me to help several ministries in a country many people have a hard time locating on a map: Nepal. Nepal is a small, landlocked Himalayan country wedged between the two most populous nations on earth: China to the north and India to the south. It is steeped in deep religious traditions, predominantly Hindu and Buddhist; in fact, Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha) was born within its borders.

Yet right in the middle of that rugged landscape, I met a group of believers who have been faithfully planting seeds for decades. And when you see fruit like that, you are confronted

with a clear choice:
either step forward
and do everything you
can to help or walk
away. There is really
no middle ground.

Let me take you to two
places where God's
harvest is breaking
through the ground.



Inspiration Time at Children's Church

In the bustling capital city of Kathmandu, a pastor named Santosh oversees the Children's Church. Nearly every day of the week, between 40 and 50 children and teenagers enter its doors. They don't just gather for an hour on Sunday morning. They come after school. They sit down and do their homework together. They play games and sports. They learn to play guitars and drums. They open their Bibles, and they lift their voices in joyful songs to Jesus.

When I sat down to talk with these young people, I was astonished by their knowledge of the Bible and their unashamed love for the Lord. When they bow their heads to pray, they do not recite memorized words. They speak to Jesus as though He is standing right beside them in the room—because they truly believe He is. And here is the eye-opening detail you must understand: Every single one of those kids comes from a Hindu or Buddhist family.

Pastor Santosh understands their world well. His mother was Hindu; his father was Buddhist. Today, through patient love and the power of the Gospel, Santosh's entire family follows Jesus Christ.

When Santosh began opening the church doors during the week, many of the neighborhood parents were deeply skeptical. In Nepal's culture, sending your children to a Christian facility is viewed with suspicion. But then the parents began watching what was actually taking place.



Santosh's wife is a certified schoolteacher. Together, they began offering free after-school tutoring, helping the children with their academic studies. Because many of these families struggle financially, the church began providing the kids with a wholesome, hot meal. The children were learning music, making close friends, playing sports on weekends, and reading the Bible every afternoon.



The parents watched their children become respectful, diligent, peaceful, and joyful. The undeniable goodness of the fruit broke through their defenses. Today, several of those very same Hindu and Buddhist parents have received Jesus as their Savior. That is

what happens when faith moves beyond tradition and becomes a daily demonstration of Christ's love.

When we leave the valley of Kathmandu and travel high into the foothills of the Himalayas, we arrive at the mountain village of Deurali. Here, a 29-year-old leader named Samuel directs the Shining Hill Youth Evangelical group. Shining Hill uses music and the Gospel to share its faith in the villages throughout that mountainous region, traveling by motorbike from village to village.

Over the past two years, mainly through your prayers and donations, God has supplied the resources for Shining Hill to construct a brand new facility, featuring an audio recording studio, dedicated prayer and meeting rooms, and an evangelical training center. Today, the construction is nearing completion.

What makes this center special is its vision. Shining Hill is not just gathering new converts; they are training and launching a dynamic generation of young Nepalese musicians, videographers, and storytellers. These young people are writing and recording original worship songs in Nepali and producing video testimonies that depict how Jesus is transforming lives across the Himalayas.

These young mountain believers are not sitting around waiting for foreign teams to fly in and evangelize their nation. They are doing it themselves. We are simply coming alongside them to supply the tools, equipment, and encouragement that allow them to accelerate the work God has already put in their hearts.

Then, unexpected disaster struck. The glacier high in the Himalayas broke, causing the tsunami-type of flood that you've no doubt seen in the news. We have also featured a firsthand account of the situation on our YouTube channel: The Bible for You.

Deurali sits roughly a 30-minute motorbike ride from the epicenters of the devastating recent floods that swept through Nepal. Torrents of mud and water ripped through mountain communities, washing away entire homes, ruining crops, and destroying the critical bridges that connect these isolated villages to the outside world. Families lost everything in a matter of hours.

Yet in the middle of that catastrophe, something remarkable happened.

Nobody had to scramble to organize an emergency relief organization from scratch. The structure was already standing. The Shining Hill center was there. The young believers were already organized, united, and grounded in faith. These young people knew every



Aftermath of the flooding in Nepal

winding footpath and ridge in those hills. They knew exactly which families were stranded and whose doors needed an immediate knock.

Within hours, the youth of Shining Hill were strapping food, clean drinking water, and vital emergency relief supplies onto motorbikes and carrying packs across washed-out trails to rescue families in distress. That is what patient seed planting produces when the storm hits.

Because the floodwaters wiped out the primary bridges leading into the region, transporting food and supplies became an immense challenge. Under those grueling conditions, our leadership team initially made the logical decision to cancel the annual teen retreat scheduled for Deurali later this year. It seemed like the only sensible choice.

Then we gathered to pray with our local team on the ground. As we sought the Lord together, our hearts changed and we realized: If there was ever a time when the young people of this region needed hope, strength, and encouragement, it is right now. Not next year when the bridges and roads are rebuilt, but right in the middle of their difficulty.

So we reversed the decision and are moving full steam ahead. We are gathering hundreds of teenagers in the Himalayan foothills for a special Gospel retreat. Our goal is threefold: to carry the Good News deeper into that mountain region than it has ever reached, to build up and equip the young believers who are already standing strong for Christ, and to welcome the many Hindu and Buddhist teenagers who are asking deep questions about the Man who lived 2,000 years ago and “went about everywhere doing good” (Acts 10:38).



Consider the huge harvest field standing before us. Nepal has a population of approximately 30 million people, and close to half of them are under the age of 25. That means there are well over 10 million young people in one small nation who are very

curious to know more about the Gospel, which is very new to them.

The young Christians in Nepal are burning with a passion to share the joy of Jesus with their generation. I haven't seen this kind of spiritual fervor in years. It reminded me vividly of our own Jesus Revolution, which exploded more than fifty years ago! Jesus looked at the multitudes and said, “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.” (Matthew 9:37,38)

God is the wisest investor in the universe. He always knows where to put His resources, and when He invests, He looks for an eternal return. In Nepal, the return on the Lord's investment is unfolding before our eyes. “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that

goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.” (Psalm 126:5,6)

Pioneering believers sowed Gospel seeds in Nepal decades ago with tears and hardship, and many never lived to see the full harvest. Today, we have the privilege of walking up those mountain trails while the fruit is hanging ripe on the trees.

I went to Nepal to help them. In the end, they were the ones who showed me what faithful sowing looks like, and they are not waiting for anyone to rescue them. They are already reaping, and we are invited to come alongside.

Here is how you can join us: **PRAY** for the young people of Shining Hill and the teen retreat in Deurali during the month of November. **GIVE** to one of our Nepal Projects: Flood relief; The new Children’s Center in Kathmandu; Equipment for the Shining Hill studio. You will find a donation link on our website: www.thebibleforyou.com. **VISIT** our brand new sister website, www.LostHorizonFound.com which features all things Nepal!

Here’s the link to our latest video “Nepal’s Hour”:

<https://youtu.be/oyhaw33qRpE?si=3BfO6wUE7tzCeE16>

Thanks for taking the time to share in this journey with us! If anything in our YouTube video inspires you, please be sure to “like” and leave a comment with your thoughts or prayers.

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