

“It has been my privilege to have known Paul Hattaway for nearly twenty years. I have not met anyone else with his knowledge and understanding of the Church and people of Asia. He has experienced missionary life first hand, his research is legendary, and he appreciates the challenges of going to the unreached. Paul has been an invaluable friend, partner, and advisor to AsiaLink since our inception. If you meet Paul, you will know that overriding all of this is his God-given desire to see Asia’s billions saved from eternal death.”

Colin Dudgeon, AsiaLink, United Kingdom

“We are grateful to Paul Hattaway and Asia Harvest for providing millions of Bibles to the people of China. We cannot find words to express our thanks for the unselfish giving of those who have provided the Word of Life to us.”

Brother Chen, senior house church leader, China

“I would like to express our sincere and heartfelt thanks to Paul Hattaway and Asia Harvest for their generous help in providing Bibles to untold thousands of poor Christians throughout India. They also support hundreds of native missionaries who are committed to spreading the Good News to the unreached people groups of India. Multitudes of Indian believers greatly appreciate their love and partnership.”

Brother Pankaj, ministry leader, India

“Paul Hattaway is a faithful servant called by the Lord. He is a God-fearing prayer warrior who studies the Bible carefully and walks in the ways of the Lord.”

Brother Yun, “The Heavenly Man”

“We are very blessed to have labored for a number of years with Paul Hattaway in providing support to hundreds of faithful and fruitful native missionaries. Paul is one of the great unsung heroes in God’s vineyard. His research into unreached peoples across Asia has impacted the work of many mission agencies, including ours. For a missionary who has worked quietly in the shadows, his ardent advocacy for native missionaries has been highly exemplary. We love and esteem our dear brother.”

**Carl Gordon and Bo Barredo, Co-founders, Advancing
Native Missions**

“Joining hands with Paul Hattaway and Asia Harvest has dynamically increased the speed by which remote unreached people groups throughout the Himalayas are being reached. Through their loving support, Asia Harvest has accelerated the gospel among those who have never heard of Christ at the top of the world.”

Sarwochcha Himal, The Footstool Project, Nepal

“Over the past twelve years we have seen the powerful and lasting impact Paul Hattaway and Asia Harvest have made for Christ Jesus among the Vietnamese people. Paul’s driving passion for being about his Father’s business, combined with his insight and deep understanding of the spiritual needs of our nation, are a great blessing that has resulted in much fruit for the kingdom of God.”

Joshua and Ruth Nguyen, ministry leaders, Vietnam

“Paul Hattaway is a man with a clear focus and passion for the lost. Even after experiencing some health challenges, he has continued to pursue the dream God placed in his heart. This book is the expression of his life calling. I am glad God brought Paul into our lives. Through our partnership, we have planted many churches throughout Indonesia.”

Paulus Wiratno, Founder, Mercy Indonesia

“Paul Hattaway and his co-workers have been a tremendous help to our young church planters among unreached people groups in Cambodia. They have aided our workers as they take the Good News of Jesus Christ to villages that have never heard the gospel even once. We thank you with all our hearts!”

Joni Wise, Paraclete Ministries, Cambodia

“Paul Hattaway and his ministry have been a great source of encouragement in empowering church planters among some of the most unreached people groups in the Philippines. Their partnership has been instrumental in major breakthroughs for the kingdom of God. May the Name of Jesus be praised.”

Paul Ignacio, HIS1040 Ministries, Philippines

“Our primary goal is to reach the unreached with the gospel of Jesus Christ as we shine God’s light to the 150 million people of Bangladesh. Together with Paul and his co-workers we have spread the Good News to the four corners of our country. We deeply appreciate our partnership.”

Brother Swapon, Ministry leader, Bangladesh

“The tens of thousands of Bibles that Paul Hattaway and his team have provided for the people of Myanmar are amazing to us and are of the greatest benefit. We have uncountable blessings because of the Scriptures we have received, as only the Bible can transform our country. We are deeply thankful for the blessing Paul has been to our nation for many years.”

Brother Joseph, Ministry leader, Myanmar (Burma)

“We are humbled by the support of Paul Hattaway and Asia Harvest to our ministry in Sri Lanka. Literally millions of Scriptures have gone out from here all over the Indian subcontinent because of Paul’s vision and heart to extend the kingdom of God.”

Daniel Kort, New Life Literature, Sri Lanka

“I first worked with Paul and Asia Harvest in 1992, delivering Bibles to house churches in China. We have increased our partnership together, as we intensify our commitment to providing God’s Word.”

Gary Russell, Founder, China Harvest Inc

“Paul Hattaway’s zeal and dedication for reaching the unreached has highly motivated us. His fervent pursuit of God’s call, even in very difficult circumstances, is exemplary. The many years of collaboration with Paul have expanded our vision and helped us see God’s big picture. We count it a tremendous privilege and blessing to represent Asia Harvest in Europe.”

Jürgen and Ruth Rintz, Stiftung SALZ Germany and Switzerland

“It is our honor to have worked with the author for more than a decade, bringing the love of Christ to unreached people groups in China, India, Nepal, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Myanmar. We cannot find words to express our gratitude to the unselfish giving of Paul and his team, and all who have supported their work.”

John Chiang, Founder, Minorities for Christ International

AN
ASIAN
HARVEST
AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

PAUL HATTAWAY

MONARCH
BOOKS

Oxford, UK and Grand Rapids, USA

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Published by Monarch Books
an imprint of
Lion Hudson plc
Wilkinson House, Jordan Hill Road,
Oxford OX2 8DR, England
Email: monarch@lionhudson.com
www.lionhudson.com/monarch

ISBN 978 0 85721 848 3
e-ISBN 978 0 85721 849 0

First edition 2017

Acknowledgments

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A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Printed and bound in the UK, xxx (date inc. month), LH26

Agent: Piquant. For all enquiries concerning translation rights please contact info@piquant.net

*Dedicated to the many Asian Christians I have
been privileged to serve.*

*Thank you for walking the way of the Cross,
and for willingly risking your lives so that
people may hear about Jesus Christ. Although
many have already experienced extraordinary
things as the Spirit of God swept millions into*

His kingdom, the best is yet to come!

*“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and
no mind has conceived the things God has
prepared for those who love him.”*

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FOREWORD

A beloved Christian speaker once said that if the Lord's majesty, grace, and power are not being manifested in and through us, He holds us responsible.

Over the years I have come to appreciate that our amazing God, the Creator of heaven and earth, has obviously and graciously chosen Paul Hattaway to be a precious vessel of His majesty, grace, and power.

I first met Paul twenty years ago when I visited his home in Asia. From the start, I saw love, integrity, humility, brokenness, giftedness, and most of all the authenticity of a childlike resoluteness to follow only God's agenda in his life – all the major ingredients for the makings of a champion advocate in the Lord's work.

Paul is indeed a vessel of grace, one that is easily entreated. This is only possible when a heart is permeated with God's love.

The pathway God has laid out for Paul and his family has not been easy. They have shown God's majesty by humbly taking the high road many times when their flesh and natural instincts shouted the opposite.

God has chosen Paul and his precious wife, Joy, to display the might of His power, to impact world missions, and in so doing has sent many of the mighty and the highly credentialed of world ministry scrambling for answers to their own degree of usefulness to the kingdom.

The enemy has never rested in trying to hinder God's plan and to cause Paul and Joy to swerve from their God-given course, but they have faithfully endured through many storms. The fruitfulness of their ministry has grown tremendously as a result of their perseverance and trust in the Lord.

I pray this book brings much glory to God and great encouragement to His people. In this day when many feel discouraged and cynical, may this testimony become a success for His glory.

Bo Barredo, Co-founder, Advancing Native Missions

INTRODUCTION

A few years ago I was asked to share my testimony in a home fellowship meeting. About forty Christians crammed into a large living room, many of them hoping to glean a spiritual secret to propel their lives forward. The pastor began the meeting by giving me a flattering introduction which made me squirm with discomfort. Feeling I needed to bring the atmosphere back down to earth, my first words were, “Good evening. My name is Paul, and I am scum.”

Strained smiles and nervous laughter filled the room. The pastor looked concerned, wondering what was about to come. Perhaps he thought my opening statement was a new kind of speaking technique or reverse psychology, but he soon realized I was just telling the truth. After more than twenty-five years serving Jesus Christ among many nations, I was not ashamed to view my life in a similar vein as the Apostle Paul, who wrote, “We have become the scum of the earth, the garbage of the world” (1 Corinthians 4:13).

While I know that in myself I have absolutely nothing to boast about, there is another component to my story that I like to share. A great miracle occurred in my life when I was still a teenager. Totally unexpectedly, I met Someone who completely transformed me from the inside out, giving my life a powerful sense of purpose and direction. His Name is Jesus Christ.

About fifteen years ago, friends who are familiar with my story first encouraged me to write a book so that others might be inspired. I hesitated, not least because my risky work requires me to maintain a low public profile. For years I pushed all thoughts of writing an autobiography to the back of my mind and I concentrated on my work.

In 2013, I realized that twenty-five years had elapsed since I first launched out in Christian service. At the same time, various people wanted to know how our organization had been founded, and asked us what principles had spurred our growth over the years. After receiving a number of these enquiries, I began to seek God more earnestly about whether or not I should share my story. It gradually became clear that the time had come to write my autobiography. I am honored to share it with you, and I hope the Living God will use it to encourage you on your own journey through life.

William Carey, who was dubbed the “Father of Modern Missions,” was once asked to share the secret behind his decades of fruitful missionary work in India. Carey replied, “I can plod. I can persevere in any definitive pursuit. To this I owe everything.”

Biographies tend to be highlight reels of what has taken decades to unfold in a person’s life, and readers may gain a skewed impression that every day has been exciting. The reality, however, is that like William Carey, much of my life and service has consisted of “faithful plodding.”

I am greatly honored to have witnessed some marvelous things on my adventure with God, but please don’t think for a moment that I am special, or that I have achieved anything meritorious by my own abilities or knowledge. Anything useful that may have sprung from my life has been the direct result of God’s grace and mercy to me in Jesus Christ.

May Jesus receive all the glory, for He alone is worthy.

CHAPTER 1

THE MAN WITH HALF A BRAIN

MAY 2013

I slipped into bed on the night of 29 May 2013. After enjoying a good night's sleep, I awoke the next morning feeling dizzy. When I attempted to get up, I discovered that I was unable to stand or walk. My left hand was as cold as a block of ice and I knew something serious was taking place.

My wife Joy called for an ambulance, and a short time later I was being driven two and a half hours along bumpy and windy roads to the nearest hospital. I could only imagine what Joy and our two young sons, Dalen and Taine, were going through as they followed by car, uncertain what was happening to me in the back of the ambulance.

Upon arrival at the hospital, my bed was wheeled inside and I was given a CT scan. After a while, a doctor with a grim look on his face came to break the news: "Mr Hattaway, you have suffered a massive stroke. I'm sorry to inform you that half your brain has died, and the left side of your body is paralyzed."

My first thought after receiving this grim diagnosis was, "This is not a problem for Jesus! One hundred percent of Lazarus's brain was dead, but the Lord completely healed him and raised him up!" I knew that from a medical viewpoint my situation was dire, but Jesus operates on a supernatural level, and He declared, "What is impossible with man is possible with God" (Luke 18:27).

I have always had an ability to see the funny side of most situations, so with my right index finger I motioned for the doctor to come closer. He leaned forward and I told him, “Don’t worry, Doc. If I only have half a brain left, that still gives me an advantage over many people!”

Although I retained my sense of humor, in the following days I had to face my own mortality. Although I had suddenly gained a new appreciation of the fragility of life, most people live as though they will never die, not realizing they are just a heartbeat, a blood clot, or an accident away from standing before the judgment seat of the Almighty God. The Bible says, “Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:13).

Jesus taught, “If you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Matthew 6:14–15). If it was my time to die, I didn’t want to appear before my Maker with any unforgiveness or bitterness in my heart. I made a mental list of people I needed to forgive, and prayed for each one by name.

It was a pivotal time in my life as I lay there in the hospital bed, unable to move the left side of my body. Somehow it was both horrible and glorious at the same time. As I listened to my audio Bible in the still of the night, faith began to rise up in my spirit, and my lips expressed what was bubbling up within. I asked the nurse to close my door as I wanted some privacy. As I poured out my soul to the Living God, I proclaimed the Scriptures out loud: “I am under vows to you, my God; I will present my thank-offerings to you. For you have delivered me from death and my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before God in the light of life” (Psalm 56:12–13).

A deep revelation flooded my soul that it was not my time to die! My work on earth was incomplete and God had much more for me to do. From my bed I declared, “I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the Lord has done” (Psalm 118:17).

THE MAN WITH HALF A BRAIN

In the first few days after the stroke I was only able to concentrate for a few minutes at a time before I needed to rest my brain.

Although the hospital staff would have disapproved if they had known, late one night when all was quiet I managed to pull my laptop out of its bag and painstakingly typed an email message with my right index finger. In it I summarized what had occurred and asked for prayer for me and my family. I pushed the “send” button and it went out to friends around the world. In part, my message said:

First and foremost, I love Jesus, and I am not ashamed to say I also love serving Him. He has given direction and value to my life. Everything good that has ever come out of me has been the work of Jesus. I'm hoping and praying for a full recovery. I don't believe God has finished with me yet, and I would be incredibly thankful if He would allow this time to pass so that I may once again serve Him. There are still more than 5,000 unreached people groups in Asia waiting to hear about God's plan of salvation. We only have this life to reach them.

Within days, hundreds of supportive messages poured in. The Lord seemed to be raising an army of intercessors from a host of diverse locations. News reached me that numerous church leaders in China and India were fasting and praying for my healing. A missionary friend even informed me that a gathering of 13,000 believers in South Korea paused their conference to cry out in prayer for me. Intercessors in diverse locations like Papua New Guinea, Russia, Ethiopia, and America wrote to say they were storming God's throne of grace on my behalf. As unworthy as I felt of all this love and prayer, I began to experience as never before the inexpressible blessing of being part of the global Body of Christ.

As soon as people began to pray, my spirit was revived and my mobility started to improve. One of my siblings, a non-Christian, called to speak with me. After a brief conversation, he called my wife to express his concern because I “sounded far too happy.”

Although my left arm and leg remained numb, God was performing a progressive miracle. Each day I was able to move a little more.

When I first arrived at the hospital they wheeled me around in a bed. After a few days I graduated to a wheelchair. A couple of days after that I was able to shuffle about by myself with the help of a frame. The frame was soon replaced with crutches. The left crutch wasn't much help so it was put under my bed and I made my way around the hospital on a single crutch, making sure I stayed close to the wall so I could lean against it for balance.

Another few days passed and I decided the single crutch was a bit pointless. It was discarded and I began walking around the hospital unaided, much to the amazement of the doctors and nurses!

Perhaps the greatest miracle was that my mind remained almost as sharp as before. At no stage was my speech affected. I was transferred to a rehab facility in another city, where I was taken to see a psychologist. He put me through a series of mathematical and memory tests to see how much brain damage I had suffered. He read a complex story and asked me to repeat as many key parts of the story as possible, in the same sequence. I repeated the entire story flawlessly. He then fired lists of numbers at me which I added and subtracted with ease.

Unaware that dealing with numbers had always been my strong suit, the psychologist struggled to record my accurate answers that flowed almost as quickly as he was able to ask the questions. Finally, he asked me to divide 391 by 17. When I thought about it for a few seconds and told him, "23," a confused look came across his face and he abruptly concluded the session.

One afternoon I attended a group meeting with other patients who had recently suffered strokes and brain injuries. That was when I recognized the extent of the miracle God had performed in response to the fervent prayers of His children around the world. Most of the other patients, including some who were much younger than I was, were in terrible shape. Some didn't have the ability to lift their heads or to speak. Others couldn't remember their names.

I was told I would need to stay in the rehab facility for at least five or six weeks; however, after just fourteen days there, I returned to Joy and the boys, fewer than thirty days since the stroke had occurred. Although there was still a tough path ahead to full recovery, I was overwhelmed with thankfulness for what God had already done, and confident that He would carry it on to completion.

The only explanation the doctors and nurses could find for my dramatic recovery was that I had been “very, very lucky.”

I knew that luck had had nothing to do with my rapid improvement. It was all because of the power and grace of Jesus in my life. The Lord once said of those who serve Him,

“They will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him. And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.”

Malachi 3:17–18

The weeks and months following my stroke were very difficult for my dear Joy and our sons. At the time Dalen was aged sixteen and Taine twelve. Although God was restoring my health, it was a humbling experience to go through the rehabilitation process. I had to be retrained in simple things like how to go to the bathroom, how to shave, and how to cut vegetables without slicing my fingers off.

The best purchase we made to aid my stroke recovery was a table tennis table. At first I could hardly make contact with the paddle and the ball, but little by little my hand–eye coordination returned, until I was able to compete in long rallies with the ball flying back and forth across the net at a furious rate. In fact, I became a much better table tennis player after the stroke than I had been before it!

* * *

Several months had passed since the stroke and I felt a strange disconnect in my soul. My heart yearned to be among the people whom God had called me to serve, so at my insistence our family boarded a flight. A few days later we were crammed into a cable car with about twenty other people, heading up the side of a mountain overlooking the Indian Ocean.

Our fellow passengers included two Muslim women from Bangladesh, adorned in traditional attire with silver jewels rimming their brown dresses. Beside them was an Indonesian family from the island of Sumatra – one of the most fascinating places on earth and home to dozens of Muslim and animistic tribes. Other travelers included Chinese, Indian, and Thai tourists, a honeymooning couple from Nepal, and a Tibetan Buddhist monk from the heart of the Himalayas.

No doctor would have recommended the hustle and bustle of Asia as the ideal place to recuperate from a major stroke, but tears welled up in my eyes as I realized my soul was again at peace. Inside the crowded cable car that day my heart overflowed with gratitude to Jesus, the Great Physician. For the first time in months my body, heart, and mind were all in sync. I was home, where I belong, among the people I love.