



DENY YOURSELF

STEVE GALLAGHER

DENY YOURSELF

*examples of Christian self-sacrifice
to renew our hearts
for victory in Christ*

“If any man will come after Me,
let him **deny himself**,
and take up his cross,
and follow Me.”

Matthew 16:24

Examples of Christian Self-sacrifice

The story of the Church is woven in the following character studies of different Christians down through the centuries. The purpose for this is simple. As you read these stories, you will be deeply affected by the level of devotion of others who have served God. Their relationship with the Lord was all they had, and it showed by their lives. As you go through these stories, please ask God to show you what Christianity is really all about. What does our Lord speak to you, personally, when He says,

*“If any man will come after Me,
let him **deny himself**, and take up his cross,
and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life
shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life
for My sake shall find it.”*

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DENY YOURSELF

1

The Early Christians

It began with Stephen, stoned to death after a forceful sermon. Next, James the brother of John was beheaded. Then every other disciple except John was martyred. Since that time, millions upon millions have been put to death for claiming the name of Christ. For us who live in a time of peace and prosperity, it is often hard to imagine having to pay such a price for our Christianity. What is so startling isn't so much that Christians have been persecuted and martyred for their faith, but that so many have done so in such a joyful manner.

The following are but two of many stories of those who, faced with a choice of life without Christ or horrible death, joyfully chose the latter.

The Apostle Andrew, according to the early writer Jerome, went about preaching Christ all across the Roman empire. While in Achaia, he was called in by Aegeas, the governor of the region, to answer for his actions before a council of officials. He was accused by the council of attempting to persuade men to join the outlawed "sect" called Christians. Andrew readily admitted to this and went on to say that the deities the Romans worshipped were nothing more than devils.

The proconsul, infuriated by Andrew's comments, warned him that if he continued to preach such things he would soon be fastened to a cross with all speed. According to Jerome, Andrew replied, "I would not have preached the honor and glory of the cross, if I feared the death of the cross." Aegeas immediately sentenced him to be crucified.

Andrew, going to the place of crucifixion, didn't shrink back nor show any fear. But out of his heart came the following exultation: "O cross, most welcome and long looked for! With a willing mind, joyfully and desirously, I come to thee, being the scholar of Him which did hang on thee: because I have always been thy lover, and have coveted to embrace thee."

It was in the second century that the beloved Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, lived. A hot persecution broke out at that time against the church in Smyrna,

bringing to death many brave Christians. But it was Polycarp who the persecutors desired most. They searched and searched for him and finally found him late one evening. He could have escaped but refused, simply saying, "The will of the Lord be done." Hearing that the soldiers had come for him, he came out with a cheerful countenance and immediately ordered food to be brought for all of the men. They were amazed by the old man's calm composure and agreed with his request to allow him to spend an hour in prayer before departing.

He was then taken to see the proconsul of the region. At first the proconsul attempted to persuade Polycarp to denounce Christ by appealing to his age. When this proved futile, he attempted to threaten him into compliance. Polycarp answered him, "Eighty-six years have I served Him, and He has never done me any harm. How could I blaspheme my King and Savior?"

The proconsul threatened to let him be ripped asunder by wild beasts. Polycarp calmly replied, "Let them come." The proconsul then threatened to have him burned to death, whereupon Polycarp replied, "You threaten me with a fire that burns but for an hour and goes out after a short time, for you do not know the fire of the coming judgment and of the eternal punishment for the godless. Why do you wait? Bring on whatever you will."

It is said that while he spoke to the proconsul his face shone with an inward light, as he showed not the least bit disconcerted with the man's threats. He was then taken out to a stake while wood was piled around him. When the executioner attempted to nail him to the stake, he simply said, "Let me be. He who gives me the strength to endure the fire will also give me the strength to remain at the stake unflinching, without the security of your nails."

The story of Polycarp's calmness in the face of death spread quickly across the Church. His courage proved to be a source of courage for many others as well.

2

A Letter of Testimony

The following is part of a letter written by Christians who lived in France in the year 177.

"The servants of Christ who live as aliens at Vienne and Lyons in Gaul, to the brothers in Asia Minor and Phrygia... The Adversary has fallen upon us with all his might. He has given us a foretaste of the ignominy of his future when it breaks in

“Matures, Sanctus, Blandina, and Attalus were taken to the wild beasts in the amphitheater, to give the pagan crowd which was gathered there a public spectacle of inhumanity. They ran the gauntlet of whips. They were already used to this. They let themselves be dragged around and mauled by the wild beasts. Everything the raving, yelling mob wanted, now from this side, now from that, they endured. They sat upon the iron chair which roasted their bodies so that the fumes rose up. Yet they heard nothing from Sanctus beyond the confession of faith he had repeated over and over again from the beginning. When they were still found alive in spite of the terrible and prolonged torture, they were finally killed. Blandina was hung on a post, delivered up to the wild beasts for food. Hung up like this in the shape of the Cross, she could be seen from afar, and through her ardent prayers she aroused increased zeal in those who were fighting... As none of the wild beasts had yet touched Blandina, she was taken down from the post and thrown into prison once more, to be kept ready for a new fight...

“The glorified Blandina had already learned to know the scourging, the wild beasts, and the red-hot griddle. Finally they tied her in a fishing net and threw her to a bull. For a long time the animal tossed her about, and so she was killed.”

[Eberhard Arnold, *The Early Christians*, Plough Publishing, Rifton, NY, 1979, pp. 80-81.]

Foxe's Book Of Martyrs tells the following story about this servant girl who willingly suffered so much for her faith in Christ.

“(Blandina) dreaded that she would not be able to witness a good confession, because of the weakness of her body. Blandina was endowed with so much fortitude, that those who successively tortured her from morning to night were quite worn out with fatigue, owned themselves conquered and exhausted of their whole apparatus of tortures, and were amazed to see her still breathing whilst her body was torn and laid open. The blessed woman recovered fresh vigor in the act of confession; and it was an evident annihilation of all her pains, to say - “I am a Christian, and no evil is committed among us

“The blessed Blandina, last of all... hastened to undergo (sufferings) herself, rejoicing and triumphing in her exit, as if invited to a marriage supper, not as one going to be exposed to wild beasts. After she had endured stripes, the tearing of the beasts, and the iron chair, she was enclosed in a net, and thrown to a bull; and having been tossed some time by the animal, and proving quite superior to her pains, through the influence of hope... at length breathed out her soul.”

[W. Grinton Berry, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1978, p. 28.]

Roman Persecution Ends

For almost three hundred years, to be a Christian meant persecution, suffering and often death. This all changed in the year 312 when Emperor Constantine accepted Christianity as a legitimate religion in the Roman empire. During the fourth century, Christianity went from being a small, persecuted sect to being the official religion of the empire.

Although this was a major victory for Christianity at the time (comparable to the collapse of communism for Russian Christians), in the long run it proved to come at great cost. With the rise of religious freedom came many cultic teachings. Heresy abounded everywhere. But even worse than that was that suddenly being a bishop in the Church changed from being a position that usually ended in the mouth of a lion in the Coliseum, to being a position of tremendous influence in the empire. The gradual outcome of this was that soon, rather than the godly and meek rising to leadership, those who were filled with self-ambition fought their way to the top.

From the time of Paul's imprisonment, the church that met in Rome gradually became the most vibrant and important of the churches around the empire. This became all the more so when Constantine officially ended all persecution of Christianity. Suddenly being the bishop of the church in Rome became a very important position to have. The man holding this position eventually became known as the pope.

Another detrimental effect that Constantine had on the Christian Church were the pagan ideas he helped see integrated into the Church. Constantine had always believed in the worship of many gods. His favorite god was the Unconquered Sun. Although many believe he became a bona fide Christian, whether he did or not, it is still clear that he brought many of his old practices into the Church. The first day of the week became a holiday known as "the venerable day of the Sun." The birthday of the Sun, December 25, became the day Christ's birth was celebrated. Saturnalia, the Roman winter festival also celebrated around this time of the year, provided the merriment, gift-giving and candles typical of later Christmas holidays. The veneration of the Virgin Mary was also probably stimulated by other pagan religions. The idea of there being a "mother of heaven" goes back to the worship of the Phoenician goddess Ashtar (who had a baby son and yet was known as "the Great Virgin"). Easter (from Ashtar) became the holiday to celebrate Christ's death.

So, although at the time that the terrible persecution stopped there must have been a tremendous shout of joy heard in heaven, our Heavenly Father knew how it would hurt real Christianity. For the first three hundred years of its existence, Christianity was marked by red-hot persecution and red-hot fervency. As the persecution stopped, the fervency for God waned.

Over the next twelve hundred years, all the way to the Reformation, to be a Christian meant to follow the path laid out by the Catholic Church. Gradually, more and more unbiblical practices were added to Catholicism. The pope gradually came to be viewed as God's official spokesman to the world; thereby even giving his words the weight of Scripture.

During these "dark ages," lay people were not allowed to read the Bible. The only versions to be found were written in Latin so that only Catholic priests could read them. If people wanted to know of God, they could only learn what the priests taught them. Those who dared to question the system often found themselves in the hands of the "inquisition." The inquisitors had complete authority to act as prosecutor, judge and jury. People in their hands often spent years languishing in medieval prisons of torture. All of this began to set the stage for the coming Reformation.

4

The Reformation

Many things contributed to the coming about of the Reformation. Across Europe, seeds of change were taking root in the different people groups. The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were a time of great social upheaval. Explorers were traveling all over the world on behalf of the leading European nations. Interest in the arts, philosophy and science were renewed. In general, people were breaking out of the closed society that had typified life during the Dark Ages.

And it was in this time of great opportunity that God raised up special men to lead people to know Him in a way that wasn't possible before. There were several men who paved the way for the great reformers of the sixteenth century. John Wycliffe, who lived in the fourteenth century, tried himself to bring about reformation; but it just wasn't time yet. His teachings did pave the way for others, however.

One of Wycliffe's chief beneficiaries was Jan Hus, who was ordained as a priest in 1401. In his teachings he stressed the need for personal piety and purity of life. He also taught that only the Word of God could establish doctrine and that nei-

ther popes nor cardinals had this right. He fought against the worshipping of images, belief in false miracles and the selling of indulgences. In 1415 Hus attended the Council of Constance to defend his beliefs. Although his safety had been guaranteed by the Emperor, he was tried as a heretic and burned at the stake.

The Reformation began on the eve of All Souls day on October 31, 1517. On that day Martin Luther, a professor of biblical studies at an obscure university in Germany posted what has become known as the 95 Theses. It was common in those days for priests or teachers to post teachings or notices in a public place. The young monk simply wrote his concerns about the abuses in the Church in the sale of indulgences.

The people were taught during this time that if they had been forgiven and blessed by a priest before death, that they would then enter a place called Purgatory. The Church taught that before the person could enter heaven, he had to spend an indeterminate amount of time in Purgatory to be cleansed of the sins he had committed in life. If the person bought an indulgence from the Church, he could earn time off in Purgatory. It was nothing more than a papal scheme to raise money for the building of great cathedrals in Rome.

Nobody could have envisioned what would come about from this obscure monk's notice. Within a few days, every university and religious center in Europe knew about it. At first, the pope didn't take the matter seriously. But Martin Luther found himself being swept away in a movement he had no intention of beginning. Within three years he was excommunicated by the pope and the following year, outlawed by the Emperor.

The people were ready for a leader such as Luther. They were clamoring for reform; having grown weary of the many abuses and errors of the Catholic Church. Martin Luther became one of the most controversial men who has ever lived. There seemed to be no middle ground as his teachings split Europe.

But while he sheepishly enjoyed the popularity of his followers, he withstood tremendous opposition from his peers within the Church. It is no easy thing to stand up against one's peers, especially when one stands entirely alone. Martin Luther was a very brave man who continually found himself on his face before God, pleading for the strength to endure the incredible resistance he continually encountered.

Nevertheless, he refused to back down. For twenty-five years he wrote about the abuses of the Catholic Church and the necessity to come to God by faith alone. While his teachings were not that much different from some of the other reformers, his timing on the scene was perfect. Through his faithful obedience to his Savior, Martin Luther was used in a powerful way to change the entire history of God's dealings with man.

The Reformers

About the same time Martin Luther's actions were shaking Europe, an Englishman named William Tyndale quietly began translating the Bible into English. Tyndale had a burning desire to see Scriptures in the hands of lay-people. Once he commented to a priest, "If God spare my life, ere many years pass I will cause a boy that driveth the plow shall know more of the Scriptures than thou doest."

He set about the task by enlisting the financial support of merchants in London. William worked tirelessly on the project but in 1535, while in Brussels, he was strangled to death and burned. Nevertheless, before his death he had managed to translate the entire New Testament and part of the Old Testament into English. Several more translations came out during the next century, culminating in the King James Version which was published in 1611. Much of this version was taken from the work of Tyndale.

Another of the great Reformers of this period was a young Frenchman named John Calvin. While attending the University of Paris he came upon the teachings of Luther. It was about this time that he experienced a sudden conversion. He later said, "God subdued and brought my heart to docility. It was more hardened against such matters than was to be expected in such a young man."

After this, he left the Roman Catholic Church and lived in exile in Basel. While there he began to formulate evangelical theology which was published as *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Later he came to Geneva and managed to set up a Christian led government in the city. He attempted to bring every citizen under the moral discipline of the church, but met with much resistance. At one time, one of his critics was arrested, convicted of heresy, and subsequently burned to death. Nevertheless, Calvin's contributions to our understanding of Christianity were great. His main focus of teaching was on the sovereignty of God; that before the foundation of the earth God chose some for salvation out of all those who had rebelled against Him. Although Calvin too was fiercely opposed, he lived until illness took his life at the age of fifty-five.

While Luther led the spiritual reformation in Germany and Calvin in Geneva, a man named Huldreich Zwingli led the movement in Zurich. Zwingli was a contemporary of Luther, but would not go as far in his teachings. He worked with the city council of Zurich, combining church and state to run that region.

Out of this group of Christians came the *Anabaptist* movement. While the other Reformers saw all of "Christendom" as Christian, the Anabaptists believed that just because people loosely identified themselves with the Church did not

make them Christians. The Anabaptist movement wasn't organized, but was a loose affiliation of people who held the same basic views that Christianity was based on a person's relationship with Jesus Christ.

Even to the other Reformers their views were held with contempt. The Catholics hated them as dangerous heretics. They found themselves persecuted in Protestant controlled areas because some thought their ideas threatened the religious stability of those regions. Many of the most pious Reformers followed the Anabaptists, going deeper into Christianity than most of the Reformers were willing to plunge. For twenty-five years thousands of these pacifist Christians were burned to death in Catholic held territories and drowned to death in Protestant held territories. What Protestants did to the Anabaptists is an ugly reminder of what happens when misguided Christianity is mixed with the power of government.

6

William Carey

The pioneer of the modern day missionary movement was born in England in 1761. William Carey became a shoemaker as a young man but upon receiving Christ, he soon became very serious about the things of God. As a young Christian, Carey came across the writings of the famous explorer, Captain Cook. Young William became fascinated with the idea of taking the Gospel to these faraway lands. He and a couple of friends formed a "mission society" to study the idea of taking the Gospel to India. When they tried to take this idea to the local minister's meeting, they were ridiculed to scorn. They remained undaunted.

Before long William met a Mr. John Thomas, a doctor who had traveled to India. He offered to take young Carey with him back there. Carey accepted without hesitation. Not long before this William had married a young English girl. She knew of his heart for missions but when he announced that he was going to India, she refused to go or let their children go. But this wasn't to be all of the opposition he would face. His father wrote him a scathing letter rebuking him for such a fool-hearty idea. But he knew that God was calling him so he continued to go forward. He and Thomas traveled to London to try to book passage to India. While there, he wrote the following to his wife in a letter dated May 6, 1793: "If I had all the world, I would freely give it all to have you and my children with me, but the sense of duty is so strong as to overpower all other considerations. I cannot turn back without guilt on my soul."

As the two attempted to book passage, they ran into problem after problem. During the interim, his wife finally agreed to go with him. Once that happened, God miraculously provided and the small party was soon on their way. Six months later they arrived in Calcutta. Carey wrote in his journal, "I feel something of what Paul felt when he beheld Athens and 'his spirit was stirred within him.'"

But things did not go easy for them. The modern missionary movement was not going to be launched without many problems and demonic opposition. Within a few months, their money was gone. Mrs. Carey and their son both became seriously ill. One of his biographers tells of their plight: "They were in a strange country where they could scarcely speak the language. They were penniless, without food; Mrs. Carey was sick. There were the helpless children, and the little baby." But God intervened and the small band of people finally established themselves.

The first few years in India took its toll on the family. From the beginning his wife was unable to handle the hardships they encountered. She gradually began losing touch with reality. Things became even worse when their young son died. As if all of this wasn't discouraging enough, it was over seven years – seven years of hard work – before Carey had his first convert.

Nevertheless, he continued to press forward. Eventually he was offered a position as the president of a college which afforded him more latitude and credibility than he had before. But even this was no guarantee that things would go smoothly. As other missionaries began arriving on the scene from England to help, they were denied entry by the government. After Carey put up a battle, the governor finally relented. But there was much pressure on the group not to try to win converts.

On December 7, 1807, Carey's wife died. "While this might have seemed like release from a burden, still it grieved him. He had loved Dorothy for many years. He had cared for and protected her as a father would a child, for her mind had been affected during most of the time they had been in India. Friends had wanted Carey to put her in an institution, but he could never bring himself to do this, for she was his wife, the mother of his children. To the end Carey treated her with the greatest love and respect."

In 1809 William became deathly ill with a fever. He had worked tirelessly for years; teaching, preaching, running the mission, and his life's passion: translating the Bible into the many Indian languages and dialects. His body finally gave out.

But once again he overcame his obstacles and was soon back to work. He flung himself into his work with all the more passion. He translated all or parts of the Bible into the following languages and dialects: Bengali, Sanskrit, Orissa, Hindustani, Marathi, Sikh, Chinese, Pushtoo (Afghan), Kunkuna, Wuch, Assam,

Bikaneer, Nepalalese, Marwar, Kashmeer, Oojein, Jumboo, Kanoj, Khassee, Khosol, Bhutuneer, Dogura, Madjudha, Kumaoon and Judwal. It was an absolutely unbelievable feat for one man. True, he had helpers working on the various translations, but he still had to review and edit every single sentence to make sure that it was accurate. In 1825 Carey wrote, "The New Testament will soon be printed in thirty-four languages, and the Old Testament in eight, besides versions in three varieties of the Hindustani New Testament."

But his accomplishments did not come without severe setbacks. One of many happened in 1812 when a fire raced through their printing building. It was a devastation beyond description. Manuscripts and fonts that had taken years of hard work were lost. Although it was an unfathomable setback at the time, Carey wrote, "I wish to be still and know that the Lord He is God, and to bow to His will in everything. He will no doubt bring good out of this evil and make it promote His interests, but at present the providence is exceedingly dark."

Only in His providence can God know how these things will work out. None of them could have imagined what good could come out of such a calamity. But when news hit England of it, the Church leaped to their aid like never before. So much money started pouring in that in all good conscience they had to publish a statement saying that their needs had been met. But beyond this, it created a tremendous stir in England about his work.

Thus, with new help from home, he continued on his important work. It took several years to make up some of the lost work, but other projects were helped along the way. By his final days in life, William Carey had become full of the Personhood of Christ. George Gogerly, one of his contemporaries tells of visiting the old missionary days before his death.

"He was seated near his desk in the study, dressed in his usual neat attire. His eyes were closed and his hands clasped together... (His appearance) filled me with a kind of awe, for he seemed as one listening to his Master's summons, and ready to go. I sat there for about half an hour without a word, for I feared to break that silence, and to call back to earth the spirit that seemed almost in heaven. At last, however, I spoke, and well do I remember the very words that passed between us.

"Dear friend," said Gogerly, 'you seem to be standing on the very border of eternity. Do not think it wrong then that I ask your thoughts and feelings.'

"The question roused Dr. Carey. Slowly he opened his eyes, and then with a feeble though earnest voice he answered: "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day. But when I think I am about to appear in God's holy presence, and I remember all my sins, I tremble."

Two days later William Carey did indeed go into his Savior's presence.

[Basil Miller, *William Carey - The Father of Modern Missions*, Bethany House Publishers, Minneapolis, MN, 1952, pp. 54 and 149.]

7

Adoniram Judson

There has probably never been a missionary who has suffered more than Adoniram Judson, America's first foreign missionary. Born in 1788, he married Ann Hasseltine in 1812 and the two of them soon set sail for India. When they arrived, they found out that the government would not allow them to stay. It was the venerable old missionary William Carey who told them of the great need in Burma for the Gospel. But he warned them of the hardships they could expect, telling them of a priest who was beaten with an iron maul until he went insane. Nevertheless, the young couple was intent on going.

The first order of business was to master the Burmese language. But this proved to be a nightmare. He found that words stretched on endlessly, into sentences and even paragraphs. Adoniram ended up learning the Burmese language by the hardest way possible - pointing at objects and learning the sound of the accompanying word.

But, just as it had been for Carey in India, so the going was perhaps even harder for Adoniram and Ann. Not long after arriving, Ann got very sick. And then their baby boy died. At the same time, as Judson travailed over the Burmese language, his eyes began giving him excruciating headaches. He relentlessly continued his language study in spite of the pain. Then, three years after arriving in Rangoon, he finished his Burmese-English grammar.

As Judson learned the language he began preaching salvation. But to his discouragement, the people were too afraid of the authorities to listen to him. Ann's health problems also continued. She would get better for awhile, but soon the tropical climate would bring her down again. She was finally told that her only chance to survive was to take an extended trip back to America. Still, Judson continued his work.

It was two and a half years later before he would see his beloved wife. Not long after arriving back, Adoniram was arrested for spying. The British had just invaded Burma and anybody with white skin was suspect. He was tossed into prison, but even though he had been in Burma for several years, nothing could have prepared him for what he would experience there. "Every nerve shrank from the frightful smell of the squalid place... The floor was matted with rotting animals,

human filth, the infernal betel juice spit from the drooling mouths of a thousand or more prisoners.” For over two years Adoniram stayed in this prison, kept alive by eating vermin. During this whole time his beloved Ann persistently pestered every government official who would listen to release her husband. When he finally did get out, he came home to find her nothing more than a rack of bones, near death from sickness and exhaustion. He nursed her back to health but she soon had a relapse. At the age of thirty-seven, Ann Judson died.

Adoniram was heartbroken beyond words. He fanatically threw himself into his work, to the edge of insanity. And then, six months later, his third child died. Still he continued relentlessly on. He worked on his Burmese translation of the Bible, preached at every opportunity, wrote tracts in Burmese and continued to work with his small handful of converts. Then, after sixteen years in Burma, suddenly people began to get saved! For some time it was as if he could do nothing wrong. People began seeking him out to hear about salvation. His tracts were being distributed all over Burma. During this time another missionary couple had arrived, but soon the husband died. Three years later Adoniram married Sarah Boardman, the widow.

After twenty-two years of work in Burma, Judson developed a sharp pain in his throat that would stay with him the rest of his life. The tropical climate had destroyed his lungs and throat. Since he had to reluctantly agree to quit preaching, he took up the monumental task of developing a Burmese dictionary. This would prove to be invaluable to those missionaries who would follow him to this harsh, forgotten land.

After ten years of marriage and several children, his second beloved wife succumbed to sickness. Once again Adoniram buried his heartache in his work. He worked on tirelessly for another five years, when at the age of sixty-two, the battered old veteran missionary finally went home to his many rewards. Adoniram Judson suffered much for the sake of Christ. The loss of loved ones, constant bouts of sickness, deprivation and persecution had been his lifelong companions. But from the life he poured out, thousands were able to eventually come to Christ.

[Faith Coxe Bailey, *Adoniram Judson - American's First Foreign Missionary*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1955, p. 70.]

David Livingstone

David Livingstone, the great missionary/explorer who opened up the dark continent of Africa, was born in Scotland in 1813. By this time Carey had already been in India a number of years and Judson was just beginning his work in Burma. But Livingstone wasn't to arrive at his mission field until the year 1841.

Livingstone hadn't been in Africa but a couple of years before his first of many brushes with death occurred. He was ministering in an area that was being plagued with lions. As he was hunting one day he ran across one and shot it. But before he could reload again it attacked him. "The lion caught me by the shoulder and we both came to the ground together. Growling horribly, he shook me as a terrier does a rat. The shock produced a stupor similar to that which seems to be felt by a mouse after the first grip of the cat." The lion then turned on two others traveling with Livingstone before it finally succumbed to the bullets. The bone in Livingstone's left arm was shattered and was maimed for the rest of his life.

David Livingstone's great calling was to open up Africa for others to follow him. While he stayed with tribes and preached Christ continually, he had very little in the way of immediate results. His was a pioneering mission. And, while Christian missionaries did follow him later, his efforts were used at the time by Satan in a terrible way. Slave traders were at this time scouring Africa looking for victims to haul off to America and Europe. Livingstone had tremendous success with the tribes because they could see that he was indeed a sincere and loving man. But no sooner did Livingstone open up a trail into a new region than the murderous slave traders would follow in his footsteps; often claiming to be his children! This made many Africans distrust even Livingstone's motives. "It is hard" says he, "to work for years with pure motives, and all the time be looked on by most of those to whom our lives are devoted, as having some sinister object in view."

But regardless of the enemy's efforts to discourage him, Livingstone's great call was exploration. In his thirty-three years of service in Africa, he is said to have traveled some 29,000 miles - mostly on foot through thick jungle! His efforts made known some million square miles of previously uncharted land. He discovered lakes N'gami, Shirwa, Nyassa, Moero and Bangweolo. He also discovered the upper Zambesi River and the marvelous Victoria Falls.

In the year 1862 Livingstone's wife died of the dreaded African fever. Of this he wrote in his journal: "It is the first heavy stroke I have suffered, and quite takes away my strength. I wept over her who well deserved many tears. I loved her

when I married her, and the longer I lived with her I loved her the more. God pity the poor children, who were all tenderly attached to her; and I am left alone in the world by one whom I felt to be a part of myself. I hope it may, by divine grace, lead me to realize heaven as my home, and that she has but preceded me in the journey. Oh, my Mary, my Mary; how often we have longed for a quiet home... For the first time in my life I feel willing to die."

Still, he pressed on. Taking journeys into the interior time after time; looking for new tribes of peoples to share Christ with. But these important trips didn't come without great sacrifice and suffering. Livingstone would travel for months, literally too sick to walk. His men would carry him through the jungle. The following journal entry is but one of many that showed the typical price he paid to take the precious Gospel to the unsaved:

"January 27th. In changing my dress this A.M. I was frightened at my own emaciation.

"April 1st, '67. I am excessively weak; can not walk without tottering, and have constant singing in the head, but the Highest will lead me further... After I had been a few days here I had a fit of insensibility, which shows the power of fever without medicine. I found myself floundering outside my hut, and, unable to get in, I tried to lift myself from my back by laying hold of two posts at the entrance, but when I got nearly upright I let them go, and fell back heavily on my head on a box."

Livingstone continued on for several more years; some years spent more months sick with the fever than well. After many years of selfless service for his Master, David Livingstone died of the fever in the jungle at the age of sixty-two.

[Mrs. J.H. Worcester, Jr., *David Livingstone - First to Cross Africa with the Gospel*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1989, pp. 19, 32, 66-67, 89.]

9

Hudson Taylor

Hudson Taylor, the man with the heart for China, was born in England in 1832. As a young man, Taylor sensed the call of God on his life to the mission field. He entered medical school and spent the next several years being prepared for the Master's service. But, unlike so many others who answer that call with a partial response, young Hudson took this matter very seriously. He says of this time:

“Having now the twofold object in view of accustoming myself to endure hardness, and of economizing in order to be able more largely to assist those among whom I spent a good deal of time laboring in the Gospel, I soon found that I could live upon very much less than I had previously thought possible. Butter, milk, and other such luxuries I soon ceased to use; and I found that by living mainly on oatmeal and rice, with occasional variations, a very small sum was sufficient for my needs. In this way I had more than two-thirds of my income available for other purposes; and my experience was that the less I spent on myself and the more I gave away, the fuller the happiness and blessing did my soul become. Unspeakable joy all the day long, and every day, was my happy experience. God, even my God, was a living, bright reality; and all I had to do was joyful service.

“It was to me a very grave matter, however to contemplate going out to China, far away from all human aid, there to depend upon the living God alone for protection, supplies, and help of every kind. I felt that one’s spiritual muscles required strengthening for such an undertaking.”

Hudson continued on with his studies, working tirelessly both at a job and in service for the Lord. But the call on his life would be severely tested. While still in London he came down with a dreaded disease and spent months so sick that he could barely manage to get out of bed. He finally got better and the time was at hand to sail for China. But no sooner had the schooner set out to sea than she was buffeted by a savage storm. The ship was tossed to and fro until it was a stone’s throw from a rocky shore line. But even through this Taylor had a peace that God’s hand was in control and that everything would be all right. At the last possible moment the winds relented and the ship made it out to sea. Several months later, in 1854, young Hudson Taylor stepped off the ship into the city of Shanghai.

Hudson was able to stay with another missionary for several months while learning the difficult Chinese language. During this time, he quickly found out how unstable China was. As he showed up in Shanghai, the city was being sieged and fought over by rival bands of rebels. During one battle, two coolies who were traveling with him were killed by a cannon ball. Another time a cannon ball missed him by inches. But Hudson Taylor was on a mission for God and was being protected by His mighty hand.

But God doesn’t always protect His precious servants from adversity. On one evangelistic trip to another city, Taylor and his traveling companion were warned not to enter the city as they would most surely be killed by the soldiers there. They felt that God sent them there so they went anyway. As they walked into the city, people began calling them names, but otherwise didn’t bother them. Taylor tells what happened next:

“Long before we reached the gate, however, a tall powerful man, made ten-fold fiercer by partial intoxication, let us know that all the militia were not so peaceably inclined, by seizing Mr. Burdon by the shoulders. My companion endeavored to shake him off. I turned to see what was the matter, and at once we were surrounded by a dozen or more brutal men, who hurried us on to the city at a fearful pace.

“My bag began to feel very heavy, and I could not change hands to relieve myself. I was soon in a profuse perspiration, and was scarcely able to keep pace with them. We demanded to be taken before the chief magistrate, but were told that they knew where to take us, and what to do with such persons as we were, with the most insulting epithets. The man who first seized Mr. Burdon soon afterward left him for me, and became my principal tormentor; for I was neither so tall nor so strong as my friend, and was therefore less able to resist him. He all but knocked me down again and again, seized me by the hair, took hold of my collar so as to almost choke me, and grasped my arms and shoulders, making them black and blue. Had this treatment continued much longer, I must have fainted.”

At last they were taken to a magistrate’s office and were then treated with more respect. The magistrate felt so badly about the abuse they had endured that he sent men with them to protect them as they preached and passed out literature! Thus, God was able to use Satan’s attack to spread the Gospel.

Taylor spent the next several years preaching at every opportunity, passing out literature and showing his willingness to suffer for the cause of Christ. But just as he felt his work was being blessed by the Lord, he became deathly sick and eventually was forced to return to England. It was a heartbreaking setback for one with passion for souls. In his time there, he had developed a real passion to reach the interior of China where no other missionaries had gone. Now it seemed that all his plans and hopes were aborted. In great discouragement he made the long journey back to England.

His heart was still in China, however. As he slowly began to recuperate in England, he found himself having opportunities to share his vision for taking the Gospel into the inner parts of China. But he was afraid to share his vision out of fear that those who would respond might be killed over there.

“Yet, what was I to do? The feeling of blood-guiltiness became more and more intense. Simply because I refused to ask for them, the laborers did not come forward - did not go out to China - and every day tens of thousands were passing away to Christless graves. Perishing China so filled my heart and mind that there was no rest by day, and little sleep by night, till health broke down...

“On Sunday, June 25, 1865, unable to bear the sight of a congregation of a thousand or more Christian people rejoicing in their own security, while millions

were perishing for lack of knowledge, I wandered out on the sands alone, in great spiritual agony; and there the Lord conquered my unbelief, and I surrendered myself to God for this service.

Satan had meant his sickness for evil but God had used it for His own purposes. Out of his trip back to England came the formation of the China Inland Mission. For the next forty years God used Hudson Taylor and his followers to take the precious Gospel into the interior of China. Thousands would come to know Christ by their efforts, and maybe even more importantly, the interior of China was opened up for hundreds of other missionaries as well.

[J. Hudson Taylor, *Hudson Taylor*, Bethany House Publishers, Minneapolis, MN, 1937, pp. 21, 68-69, 145.]

10

Jonothan Goforth

Although not a house-hold name, Jonothan Goforth's life in China was a prime example of a life given over to the Savior's will. Born in Canada in 1859, Jonothan and his wife Rosalind didn't arrive in Shanghai, China until the year 1888. The young couple hadn't been there but a few days when a fire broke out in the house they were staying in and burned up almost all of their belongings. While it was a mere temporary setback for Jonothan to be endured with his customary cheerfulness, it meant the burning of the bridges for Rosalind in regard to material possessions.

After several months of language study, the Goforths were allowed to set out for their assignment: North Honan. The venerable old missionary (by now) Hudson Taylor wrote the Goforths a letter in which he said, "Brother, if you would enter that Province, you must go forward on your knees."

Several months after arriving there, dysentery broke out among some of the workmen, and then the Goforths' little daughter became ill. She died within a week. "None but those who have lost a precious treasure can understand our feelings, but the loss seems to be greater because we are far away in a strange land... We pray that this loss will fit us more fully to tell these dying millions of Him who has gained the victory over death."

It wasn't but six months later that their little son faced tragedy. While racing around a second story porch, the little boy fell off onto the ground below, striking his head on a flower pot. Though at first there was no apparent injury, gradually he began losing the use of his limbs and a few months later died also. But the Go-

forths weren't living for themselves, but for the unsaved multitudes they had been called to reach.

Ministering was made difficult in China at this time by the great mistrust the people had for Caucasians. Wild stories were circulated about the missionaries that the "miracles" they worked with medicines must be made of something precious. These troublemakers said that the "foreign devils" scooped out the eyes and cut out the hearts of children to manufacture their medicine. Placards were posted up all over the country calling for the death of all of the missionaries.

Preaching was very difficult as well. The missionaries would go into a city or village and draw a crowd by their presence and begin sharing Jesus with the people. Inevitably, someone behind them would kick them in the backside. The crowd would laughingly roar their approval. If the missionary made the mistake of turning around to see who did it, they would then be attacked by the others. Goforth learned that the key was to preach with his back to a wall, thus averting much of the problem.

After several years, the Goforths were allowed to go deeper into China into Changte. White people were new to the people of this region and so the missionary family would have hundreds of visitors a day. Jonothan felt it to be of great importance to take advantage of this opportunity while they had it. So day after day, stretching into weeks, the Goforths would literally preach all day, everyday to the throngs who came. When exhaustion really began taking its toll, they started praying that God would send them help. And soon thereafter they were joined in the work by an old opium addict who had become radically saved.

In 1898 the Goforths' little girl Gracie came down with malaria and succumbed to it not long after. Then their little boy became ill with dysentery and measles. As he began recovering, his worn out father came down with a bad attack of jaundice. For weeks Jonothan lay seriously ill in bed. While this was going on, Mrs. Goforth, who was pregnant and also very worn out, went into childbirth. She almost died giving birth but eventually managed to recover.

It was two years later before calamity struck again. This time it was their eldest daughter, Florence, who was now seven years of age. She developed meningitis and died shortly thereafter. It wasn't but a few days later that an urgent message came from the American Consul in Chefoo to flee to the south. A nationalistic movement that had been building up for years finally erupted into what is now known as the "Boxer Rebellion." Foreigners across the country were being massacred.

The party of thirteen adults and five children (four of which were the Goforth's) set out in carts for the south immediately. Almost everywhere they went, they heard the shouts, "kill, kill." Sometimes they were pelted with rocks but for a

time had managed to escape real harm. Then they came to a town where a crowd of several hundred men awaited them with arms full of stones and daggers in their belts. First a fusillade of stones came at them. Then some gunshots and a rush forward. The men attacked with a fury. Jonathan was struck several times with a sword, leaving gashes in his arm to the bone and one terrible one in the back of his head. As he lay on the ground, a man on a horse came at full gallop to trod him under foot but as Goforth looked up, suddenly the horse fell next to him and lay kicking furiously - creating a barrier between Goforth and his attackers.

As the small band of people tried to escape the mob, they were beaten and pelted with more rocks. The whole group managed to make it in one cart and got away from that mob only to run into another one. Word was sent to a local official that they desperately needed help. Soldiers were sent to protect them but it wasn't until later that they discovered that the soldiers were to massacre the small band of people themselves when they got to a certain place. As the band of Christians were riding in one cart and the soldiers in another, the soldiers fell asleep on the carts and, coming to a fork in the road, went the wrong way! Thus their lives were again spared.

Time and time again the little group was surrounded by wild mobs but strangely were never again attacked. They finally made it to safety. Before long things calmed down in China and once again the missionaries were back to work.

In 1902 the Goforths were given a region to evangelize that greatly excited Jonathan. He felt that the Lord gave him a plan that he would go to a city, open a center for the Gospel, start a church and establish leaders there, and then move on to another city. However, Mrs. Goforth, in her concern for her children, did not share his enthusiasm. Jonathan pleaded with her to change her mind. He assured her that the safest place for the children was in the Lord's work. He even said that he was so sure this plan was of God that he feared for the children if she didn't obey.

Then their little boy came down with a terrible case of Asiatic dysentery. Mrs. Goforth could only think of the four little graves they had already dug. She tells the story:

"For two weeks we fought for the child's life. During that time, my husband whispered to me gently, 'O Rose, give in before it is too late!' But I only thought him hard and cruel. Then, when Wallace began to recover, my husband packed up and left on a tour alone.

"The day after he left, my precious baby Constance was taken ill suddenly, as Wallace had been, only much worse. Constance was dying when Mr. Goforth arrived. My husband knelt next to Constance and I beside him. The little one was quietly passing when suddenly I saw in a strange and utterly new way the love of

God - as a Father. All at once, as in a flash, I knew that my Heavenly Father could be trusted to keep my children! This all came so overwhelmingly upon me, I could only bow my head and say, 'O God, it is too late for Constance, but I will trust.'"

The Goforths continued ministering in China for over thirty more years, literally being used by God to bring a multitude of unsaved souls into the kingdom. Although it came at great sacrifice, in the eternal realm, it was all worth it.

[Rosalind Goforth, *Jonothan Goforth*, Bethany House Publishers, Minneapolis, MN, 1937, pp. 45, 48, 82.]

11

The Massacre of Taiyuan

Taiyuan, the capital of Shansi Province in China, became the scene of one of the bloodiest massacres of modern-day Christianity. This happened because Yu-hsien, one of the chief conspirators of the Boxer Rebellion, had just become the governor of Shansi. He lived in Taiyuan.

Also living in this capital city was a group of various missionaries dedicated to bringing the Gospel to the Shansi region. Dr. William Wilson operated a hospital for opium addicts at his own expense. He lived there with his wife and young son. Although he was already due for furlough, he had put it off because of the many victims of the famine that was ravaging the area. While he tirelessly worked on, he came down with peritonitis, an inflammation of the membrane in the abdomen cavity.

Just after the killings started, Wilson traveled twenty miles to help a Chinese doctor who had been slashed by a Boxer sword. Although very sick, Wilson made the trip and was able to help the wounded man. On the way there, he penned his last letter. "It's all fog," he wrote a fellow doctor, "but I think, old chap, that we are on the edge of a volcano, and I fear Taiyuan is the inner edge." He wouldn't live to know how true those words were.

With Mrs. Wilson were two China Inland Mission workers who were single. Jane Stevens, a nurse who was in frail health at the time, had arrived in China fifteen years prior in 1885. During her last trip to England there were those who attempted to persuade her to stay in England. She replied, "I don't feel I have yet finished the work God has for me in China. I must go back. Perhaps - who knows - I may be among those allowed to give their lives for the people."

Mildred Clarke, her fellow CIM missionary wrote, "I long to live a poured-out life unto Him among these Chinese, and to enter into the fellowship of His sufferings for souls, who poured out His life unto death for us."

Also operating in Taiyuan in 1900 was the Sheo Yang Mission which operated a hospital for the people of the area. Part of this group were Thomas Pigott and his wife Jessie. One friend later wrote of him, "If ever a man lived in earnest, it was Thomas Wellesley Pigott." The Pigotts had been in China for years and had lost good friends in another massacre that had occurred five years previously. Since that time the Pigotts had felt that their time in China would be short and had worked feverishly to accomplish as much as possible while they had the chance.

It was late June when the trouble started. Boxer gangs roamed the streets, setting fire to the compounds of the Sheo Yang Mission and also of a British Baptist group. They all managed to escape those buildings and make it to the Baptist boys' school, about a half mile away. Edith Coombs, one of the Baptist missionaries, suddenly realized that they had left behind two Chinese schoolgirls in the compound. She ran back the half mile and into the burning building to rescue the girls. As they were rushing out, the one girl who was sick stumbled and fell. By this time the mob was converging on them, throwing rocks and bricks at them. She was forced back into the burning house where the last the young girls saw of her she was kneeling down in the flames.

For the next two weeks the remaining thirty-two missionaries stayed barricaded in the school building. Day and night stones were hurled at the door and walls, while the missionaries huddled inside, praying that the governor would rescue them. On July 9 soldiers showed up and escorted them all to the governor's courtyard. They were joined there by twelve Catholic priests. The dear people's hopes were dashed when the governor himself came out brandishing a sword and screaming, "Kill! Kill!"

He announced that the men would die first. George Farthing, one of the Baptists and a father of three, stepped forward. His wife tried to cling to him but he gently set her aside and knelt before the chopping block. One quick slash of the sword took his head. One by one the men were killed in like fashion. Then it was the women. Mrs. Farthing's children had to be pulled away from her, as she was forced to place her neck on the bloody block.

After the carnage was completed, their bodies were left out where they were stripped clean of valuables that evening. Their remains were placed in cages for all to see on the city wall.

The Boxer Massacre Continues

In the northwest part of China, a small group of Christian and Missionary Alliance missionaries carried on their work. When news of the Boxer Rebellion came to them, they attempted to flee to Mongolia on camels. Bandits intercepted them, however, and took everything they had, including their clothes. The experience was so traumatic that two of the women gave birth to babies. They lived for two weeks in the desert, without clothes and eating roots to stay alive.

No sooner were they rescued by some Catholic priests, when news came that a Boxer army was approaching. "Our way... is cut off," the Alliance's Carl Lundberg wrote. "If we are not able to escape, tell our friends we live and die for the Lord. I do not regret coming to China. The Lord has called me and His grace is sufficient. The way He chooses is best for me. His will be done. Excuse my writing, my hand is shivering."

A few days later they were all killed.

In Fenchow, a city of northern Shansi province, another group of missionaries were found by a local magistrate. He ordered them out of the city, under the pretense of protection by a group of armed guards. They were apparently expecting the worse. Lizzie Atwater wrote the following letter twelve days before they were all killed:

"Dear ones, I long for a sight of your dear faces, but I fear we shall not meet on earth... I am preparing for the end very quietly and calmly. The Lord is wonderfully near, and He will not fail me. I was very restless and excited while there seemed a chance of life, but God had taken away that feeling, and now I just pray for grace to meet the terrible end bravely. The pain will soon be over; and oh the sweetness of the welcome above!

"My little baby will go with me. I think God will give it to me in Heaven, and my dear mother will be so glad to see us. I cannot imagine the Savior's welcome. Oh, that will compensate for all these days of suspense. Dear ones, live near to God and cling less closely to earth. There is no other way by which we can receive that peace from God which passeth understanding... I must keep calm and still these hours. I do not regret coming to China, but am sorry I have done so little. My married life, two precious years, has been so very full of happiness. We will die together, my dear husband and I."

Another group of missionaries were also soon to meet a similar fate. Annie King and Elizabeth Burton, both young, attractive women from Britain, had been in China less than two years when the trouble began. Annie wrote home, "It is so

nice to be in the village, where the people trust us, and love to hear of Jesus, for whose sake and the Gospel's we have come. There are numbers of villages where the name of Jesus is unknown, all in heathen darkness, without a ray of light."

Elizabeth wrote, "Oh, I feel so inadequate, so weak, and yet I hear Him say, 'Go in this thy might, have not I sent thee?' Yes, He has sent me; if ever I felt God has called me in my life, I feel it tonight."

John and Sarah Young had been married only fifteen months. She had written in her application to China Inland Mission (CIM), "I want to be found in the battle when He comes, and I want to be an instrument in the hands of God in saving souls from death."

Also with the four were George and Belle McConnell, who had just buried their daughter in Scotland two years before. As the group traveled on the road to Yu-men-k'ou, they were met by a band of soldiers who told them, "Our orders are to kill you unless you promise to stop preaching your foreign religion." When the missionaries refused to quit, they were all killed instantly.

[Quoted from James and Marti Hefley, *By Their Blood*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1979, pp. 18-21.]

13

Afraid? Of What?

During the next fifty years after the Boxer Rebellion ended, bloodshed continued throughout China. Although the ending of the riots marked a time of great evangelization across the country, the same fears and prejudices were still to be found amongst many of the people. In 1931, President Chiang Kai-shek declared himself to be a Christian. This was, of course, a great victory in one sense but with it came renewed attacks upon Christians from Kai-shek's enemies—the communists. In Kiangsi Province alone, the communists killed an estimated one hundred and fifty thousand Chinese in 1930. There was great political tension in China during this time and the Christians were caught in the middle.

To make matters worse, the decade of the thirties began with terrible famines and plagues. Dissidents often blamed the missionary doctors (who were giving their lives to the Chinese people expecting nothing in return) for spreading plagues with their poison (medicine). It was often also said that the "gods" were angry with the people because of the Christians which was the reason for the droughts and famines.

In Minchow, a town of the Kansu Province, an Assemblies of God school located there lost one hundred and fifty students out of five hundred from the plague. Bandits then struck the town, torturing and killing people to force them to give up their valuables. Hundreds were burned or beaten, amongst whom were many Christians. No sooner did the bandits leave town than an army of thirty thousand Muslims took over the town and made their headquarters in the front yard of the Assemblies mission house. The Muslims were there for eighteen days—looting, burning, raping and killing people. When missionary W. W. Simpson attempted to have a worship service, one of the General's staff members arrogantly sat on the platform and made motions with his sword of cutting off the missionary's head. Simpson continued to preach about the coming of Christ into the world and for some reason the officer didn't kill him.

In October 1931, widower Jack Vinson was captured by bandits while visiting churches in Kiangsu Province. A government force pursued the bandits and surrounded them in a small town. The bandits offered Vinson his freedom if he would persuade the army to leave. Vinson agreed only if they released others also held. The bandits refused and tried to shoot their way out. In the commotion many of them were killed and the survivors fled with Vinson, but because of recent surgery he could not run and was shot and beheaded.

One witness of the account reported that the bandit told him, "I'm going to kill you. Aren't you afraid?" Vinson simply replied, "Kill me, if you wish. I will go straight to God." A fellow Southern Presbyterian minister, E.H. Hamilton, was inspired by his courage to write a poem that became the theme of all of the missionaries in China.

Afraid? Of What?

*To feel the spirit's glad release? To pass from pain to perfect peace,
The strife and strain of life to cease? Afraid - of that?*

Afraid? Of What?

*Afraid to see the Savior's face, To hear His welcome, and to trace
The glory gleam from wounds of grace? Afraid - of that?*

Afraid? Of What?

*A flash, a crash, a pierced heart; Darkness, light, O Heaven's art!
A wound of His a counterpart! Afraid - of that?*

Afraid? Of What?

*To do by death what life could not - Baptize with blood a stony plot,
Till souls shall blossom from the spot? Afraid - of that?*

John and Betty Stam

John and Betty Stam met at Moody Bible Institute not long after Jack Vinson's death. Challenged by God through the poem *Afraid? Of What?*, John responded to a call by China Inland Mission (CIM) for single men to serve in a dangerous, communist-infested area of China. Chosen to give the Class Address for the Moody Class of 1932, he told the student body,

"Shall we beat a retreat, and turn back from our high calling in Christ Jesus; or dare we advance at God's command in face of the impossible?... Let us remind ourselves that the Great Commission was never qualified by clauses calling for advance only if funds were plentiful and no hardship or self-denial involved. On the contrary, we are told to expect tribulation and even persecution, but with it victory in Christ."

Since Betty had graduated from college a year prior to John, she had already gone over to begin her duty. Upon arriving in China, she was delayed from going to her assigned place as the missionary there, H. S. Ferguson, had been captured by bandits and was never seen alive again. John showed up a year later, they were married, and in September 1934, they were blessed with a baby girl.

Assigned to Anhwei Province, they went to the town of Ching-te where the district magistrate assured them that he would protect them. A few weeks later communists attacked the town, and the magistrate was the first to flee! The communists went directly to where the Stams were living. Betty served them tea and cake while John tried to assure them that they had only peaceful intentions. When they finished their tea, the leader simply said, "You will go with us."

John was forced to write CIM a letter asking for a \$20,000 ransom. He added in the letter, "The Lord bless and guide you, and as for us, may God be glorified whether by life or death." He later told his captors that he did not expect the ransom to be paid.

The "reds" withdrew from the town taking the Stams with them. Along the way they discussed killing the baby girl to save trouble. An old farmer who happened to be standing there protested and was told, "Then you will die for her." The farmer replied, "I am willing," and was killed instantly. John was taken to the postmaster and ordered to write another ransom note. The man asked him where they were going. John replied, "We don't know where they're going, but we are going to heaven."

A little later they were painfully bound with rope. After a sleepless night they were marched through the town as the communists ridiculed them. All the

townspeople were led out to watch the execution. Suddenly the town physician, a Christian by the name of Dr. Wang, ran up and pleaded with their captors to release them. He was led away to be killed. As John himself sought mercy for the doctor's life, he was ordered to kneel. The bandit flashed his sword and took off his head. Betty quivered and dropped, and the same befell her.

Somehow during the excitement of it all, the baby girl was found alive in a house by a Chinese evangelist who had just arrived. At great risk to himself and his family, he took the baby home and buried the bodies. The town people were moved by it all and gathered to hear the funeral sermon. The evangelist fearlessly preached Christ, and told the people that they too must repent.

After the funeral, the evangelist and his wife carried the baby hundreds of miles in a rice basket to the home of another missionary. This missionary took the baby to Betty Stam's parents, Dr. and Mrs. Charles Scott, who were also missionaries to China. Upon hearing of his daughter and son-in-law's death, Dr. Scott said, "They have not died in vain. The book of the martyrs is still the seed of the Church. If we could hear our beloved children speak, we know from their convictions that they would praise God because He counted them worthy to suffer for the sake of Christ."

The report of their martyrdom and survival of the "miracle baby" was widely publicized in the United States. Hundred of letters came in to the Scotts. Many volunteered to take their places on the mission field. Students back at Moody began holding student prayer meetings for missionaries. A CIM missionary wrote Betty's parents, "A life which had the longest span of years might not have been able to do one-hundredth of the work for Christ which they have done in a day."

[Quoted from James and Marti Hefley, *By Their Blood*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1979, pp. 56, 58-59.]

15

Africa: The Whiteman's Graveyard

"Called the Dark Continent in the nineteenth century because Americans and Europeans knew so little about Africa, this second largest continent on planet earth was known among missionary societies as 'the white man's graveyard,' because the average life expectancy of a missionary was only eight years. 'Our God bids us first build a cemetery before we build a church or dwelling-house,' wrote an early missionary, 'showing us that the resurrection of... Africa must be effected by our own destruction.'"

Faithful unto Death

“Twenty missionaries died at the London Missionary Society’s central African station before the twentieth convert was baptized. A book published in 1902 listed 190 martyrs from ten North American missionary societies who succumbed to disease since 1833. A sampling from the Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church reveals the life span of fourteen missionaries.

Miss Isabella	1 year
Rev. J.C. Auer	21 years
Miss Phebe Bart	4 months
Miss Marha D. Coggeshall	3 months
Mrs. C.C. Hoffman	3 years
Rev. C.C. Hoffman	16 years
Rev. H. H. Holcomb	1 year
Rev. G.W. Horne	2 years
Rev. E.J.P. Messenger	3 months
Rev. Launcelot B. Minor	7 years
Mrs. Catherine L. Parch	2 years
Mrs. Jacob Rambo	2 years
Rev. Robert Smith	3 months
Dr. T.R. Steele	6 months

“Nothing deterred the early pioneers of the gospel. Wrote Willis R. Hotchkiss: ‘I have dwelt four years practically alone in Africa. I have been thirty times stricken with the fever, three times attacked by lions, and several times by rhinoceri; but let me say to you, I would gladly go through the whole thing again, if I could have the joy of again bringing the word *Savior* and flashing it into the darkness that envelops another tribe in central Africa.’”

[Quotations from James and Marti Hefley, *By Their Blood*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1979, pages 339-340.]

16

“Smiling Bill” of Africa

In the early sixties, six WEC missionaries ran a station in a dangerous area of the Congo. The sunbeam of the group was a young bachelor named Bill McChesney or “Smiling Bill,” as everyone called him. Although only five foot two and a hundred and ten pounds, he made up for it with his exuberance. Shortly before leaving the states for the Congo, he wrote a poem which expressed his commitment:

My Choice

I want my breakfast served at eight, With ham and eggs upon the plate;
A well-broiled steak I'll eat at one, and dine again when day is done.
I want an ultramodern home and in each room a telephone;
Soft carpets, too, upon the floors, and pretty drapes to grace the doors.
A cozy place of lovely things, like easy chairs with inner springs,
And then I'll get a small TV - of course, "I'm careful what I see."
I want my wardrobe, too, to be of neatest, finest quality,
With latest style in suit and vest: Why should not Christians have the best?
But then the Master I can hear in no uncertain voice, so clear:
"I bid you come and follow Me, the lowly Man of Galilee."
"Birds of the air have made their nest, and foxes in their holes find rest,
But I can offer you no bed; no place have I to lay My head."
In shame I hung my head and cried. How could I spurn the Crucified?
Could I forget the way He went, the sleepless nights in prayer He spent?
For forty days without a bite, alone He fasted day and night;
Despised, rejected - on He went, and did not stop till veil He rent.
A man of sorrows and of grief, no earthly friend to bring relief;
"Smitten of God," the prophet said, Mocked, beaten, bruised, His blood ran red.
If He be God, and died for me, no sacrifice too great can be
For me, a mortal man, to make; I'll do it all for Jesus' sake.
Yes, I will tread the path He trod, no other way will please my God;
So, henceforth, this my choice shall be, my choice for all eternity."

The Congo during this time was tense with strife. The Simbas, a tribe rebellious to the white rule in Africa, was attacking and killing people all around the area. They repeatedly put the missionaries at the little compound through terrifying trial runs of coming to kill them; only to leave without harm.

On November 14, 1964 they came and took little Bill McChesney away—even though he was ill with malaria. Also being held captive were four missionaries from another compound. One of them, James Rodger was the opposite to the effervescent "Smiling Bill" in every way. Though solemn and staid, his love for the Lord was unquestionable. During their ten days together there the two became dear friends.

One day an arriving rebel officer turned livid when he saw Bill McChesney. "Why is this man still free?" he demanded. "Take him to prison at once!" When Bill was pushed into a truck, Jim Rodger jumped in to accompany his new friend. During the trip, the soldiers beat Bill mercilessly. Weakened by the malaria, the little guy couldn't stand under the attack and upon arriving, Jim had to carry him into the prison.

The next morning a colonel arrived and demanded to know their nationalities. Bill acknowledged being American, Jim British. Upon hearing this the colonel was about to have just Bill killed but Jim stood next to him saying, "If you must die, brother, I'll die with you."

The colonel motioned for the mob of rebels to attack them. They came at them swinging club and fists. Bill was killed quickly. Jim caught him and gently laid him on the ground. The mob then knocked him down and kicked and trampled him to death also.

[James & Marti Hefley, *By Their Blood*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1979, pp. 18-19.]

17

The Ten Boom Family

Life in Europe in the 1920s and early 1930s was very simple for most folks; especially so for a simple Dutch family who operated a watch repair shop in Haarlem. All of Europe watched Germany with suspicion as Adolf Hitler came to power. When he began his march on various countries, the others knew it would be only a matter of time before theirs too would fall. In 1939 the inevitable German blitzkrieg came. The small Dutch army fell within five days.

At first, occupation wasn't so bad. Gradually though, the grip of the German forces grew tighter and tighter. Rules became stricter, rations smaller, curfews earlier. The Ten Boom family calmly went about their normal routine as most other Dutch families did. It all began to change when the Germans started arresting and harassing Jewish families. These simple folks loved their Lord and couldn't just shut out the need of those who were hurting.

What began as simply trying to help some Jews out gradually grew into a full-blown "underground railroad" for getting Jewish people to safety. To do this was no simple matter. Corrie, who had inadvertently become the leader of the work, had to have contacts with underground workers from around the country. She needed ration cards, food, and places to send the hunted people.

And then there was the matter of what to do with those Jews who nobody would take for various reasons. The Ten Booms couldn't just send them away, so they had a secret room built into the house for the people to hide in if the dreaded Gestapo raid ever happened. And one night it finally did. There was a pounding at the door and in rushed the Gestapo.

The seven Jews managed to make it into the secret Hiding Place without getting caught. But the Germans had enough evidence to know that the Ten Booms were involved with the underground. Corrie, her sister Betsie, their father, and several others were all hauled off to a prison. As time went on the inmates could hear the rumble of war getting closer and closer. One night they were all roused out of their beds and told they were to evacuate. The inmates could hardly contain their excitement as they anticipated freedom. But their hopes were soon crushed as they were loaded onto trains and taken farther away from the war front.

Late the next night they arrived at a prison camp named Vught. Life was hard but at least Corrie and Betsie were together. They soon settled into a boring, predictable routine of working on aircraft instruments. The Germans made them work eleven hours a day and fed them only a piece of hard bread in the morning and a bowl of colored liquid for supper. The camp at Vught was split between male and female prisoners. Many of Betsie and Corrie's fellow inmates had husbands in the other side of the prison. These poor women were in a constant state of worry over their husbands.

Soon the war-front again caught up with them. As it did, the guards became more and more brutal. Inmates who were late for roll call or had any other problem were beaten mercilessly. Then the firing squads began in the men's prison. Every day the shootings increased.

Then again, they were all suddenly rounded up for another move. The women were herded into box cars so tightly they couldn't sit and taken on a trip that lasted several days. Deep into Germany they had gone. The women weren't given any food or water and weren't allowed to use a bathroom during this whole trip.

Finally the train came grinding to a stop. As the weakened pack of women fell out of the car, they were again herded into marching formation. After a walk through a small town they finally came to the pale gray walls of a place they had only heard horrible rumors about: Ravensbruck concentration camp.

Life here was more horrible than either of them could have dreamed in her worst nightmare. Corrie tells about it in her own words:

"Morning roll call at Ravensbruck came half an hour earlier than at Vught. By 4:30 A.M. we had to be standing outside in the black predawn chill, standing at parade attention in blocks of one hundred women, ten wide, ten deep. Sometimes after hours of this we would gain the shelter of the barracks only to hear the whistle.

"Everybody out! Fall in for roll call!"

"Barracks 8 was in the quarantine compound. Next to us - perhaps as a deliberate warning to newcomers - were located the punishment barracks. From there,

all day long and often into the night, came the sounds of hell itself. They were not the sounds of anger, or of any human emotion, but of a cruelty altogether detached: blows landing in regular rhythm, screams keeping pace. We would stand in our ten-deep ranks with our hands trembling at our sides, longing to jam them against our ears, to make the sounds stop.

“The instant of dismissal we would mob the door of Barracks 8, stepping on each other’s heels in our eagerness to get inside, to shrink the world back to understandable proportions.

“It grew harder and harder. Even within these four walls there was too much misery, too much seemingly pointless suffering. Every day something else failed to make sense, something else grew too heavy. ‘Will You carry this too, Lord Jesus?’

“But as the rest of the world grew stranger, one thing became increasingly clear. And that was the reason the two of us were here. Why others should suffer we were not shown. As for us, from morning until lights-out, whenever we were not in ranks for roll call, our Bible was the center of an ever-widening circle of help and hope. Like waifs clustered around a blazing fire, we gathered about it, holding out our hearts to its warmth and light. The blacker the night around us grew, the brighter and truer and more beautiful burned the word of God. ‘Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?... Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.’

“I would look about us as Betsie read, watching the light leap from face to face. More than conquerors It was not a wish. It was a fact. We knew it, we experienced it minute by minute - poor, hated, hungry. We are more than conquerors. Not ‘we shall be.’ We are! Life in Ravensbruck took place on two separate levels, mutually impossible. One, the observable, external life, grew every day more horrible. The other, the life we lived with God, grew daily better, truth upon truth, glory upon glory.

“Sometimes I would slip the Bible from its little sack with hands that shook, so mysterious had it become to me. It was new; it had just been written. I marveled sometimes that the ink was dry. I had believed the Bible always, but reading it now had nothing to do with belief. It was simply a description of the way things were - of hell and heaven, of how men act and how God acts. I had read a thousand times the story of Jesus’ arrest - how soldiers had slapped Him, laughed at Him, flogged Him. Now such happenings had faces and voices.”

And such was life for these two dear saints in Ravensbruck concentration camp. Before long, Betsie’s feeble body began deteriorating; she had to be taken into the “hospital.” To Corrie’s utter horror Betsie died. But God is good. It wasn’t

but a couple of weeks later that, through a clerical error, Corrie was released and sent back to Holland. For forty years after Ravensbruck Corrie Ten Boom told the marvelous story of how God's presence could even be found in a hell on earth.

[Corrie Ten Boom, *The Hiding Place*, Bantam Books, New York, 1971, pp. 194-195.]

18

Deitrich Bonhoeffer

Born to a prominent German family in 1906, Deitrich Bonhoeffer entered seminary upon finishing college. What he found there was a dry and cynical formalism. Although only a student, he opposed the liberal teachings of some of his professors. He contended that the essential nature of the church should be viewed through the gospel of Jesus Christ, not through sociological reasoning.

In 1933 the Nazis overtook the parliament. This same year, the German Lutheran bishops issued a statement that said in part, "We German Protestant Christians accept the saving of our nation by our leader Adolf Hitler as a gift from God's hand."

On January 31 of that year, young Deitrich spoke over Berlin radio on the "concept of leadership." He pointedly asked Germans to consider their perceived need of a strong leader. He also asked them to consider when is leadership healthy and when is it pathological and extreme. The message was cut off the air half way through it.

Four weeks later communists burned the Reichstag building, which gave Hitler the excuse he needed to restrict free speech, free press and a number of other liberties. A couple of months after this Hitler began his systematic terrorization against German Jews.

Hitler attempted to exercise control over the Lutheran church by appointing one of his stooges in leadership over the entire denomination. Bonhoeffer and a group of reformers who called themselves the "Confessing Church" refused to go along with the bishops who aligned themselves with Hitler. The church split.

In the fall of 1934 the first arrests of Confessing Church ministers began. Little by little the Nazis began tightening their grip on the country and on the church. In 1937, Hitler's minister of church affairs Hans Kerrl, gave a speech wherein he said that belief in Christ as the Son of God was "laughable." As Nazism rose, the real church went further underground.

In March 1939, Bonhoeffer went to New York to attempt to warn Lutheran leaders of the serious situation in Germany. While there, he was offered a position

to minister to German refugees. He was tempted to stay but his conscience called him back to his own people. Not long after returning, his activities were restricted by the Gestapo. Leaders in the resistance got the order rescinded and got him a job in the counterespionage department known as the Abwehr. This was a wonderful cover for his real work which was to warn Christians outside the country of what Hitler was doing.

Bonhoeffer was eventually asked to participate in a conspiracy to have Hitler assassinated. He struggled with this question for months and finally agreed to help. The attempt was unsuccessful and in April of 1943 he was arrested.

For two years young Deitrich was held in German prisons. Three weeks before the double suicide of Hitler and Eva Braun, Bonhoeffer was taken with some other inmates into a forest outside their prison. They were ordered to strip and subsequently shot.

Probably the most profound legacy he left behind was his book entitled *The Cost of Discipleship*. In this heavily challenging work Bonhoeffer called on Christians to repent of “cheap grace” that has no cost and no substance. The man who paid the ultimate price for his Christian witness pleaded with others not to delude themselves into thinking they were saved when they weren’t. He said:

“Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate

“Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man must knock.

“Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of His Son ...”

[Deitrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, Collier Books, New York, 1937, pgs.47-48.]

19

Jim Elliot

*“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep,
to gain what he cannot lose.”*

In January, 1956 the most publicized missionary massacre of the twentieth century occurred in the jungles of Ecuador. Jim Elliot, a graduate of Wheaton College and four other young missionaries were ambushed and killed by the Auca Indians they were trying to bring the gospel to. While still in college Elliot had written, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

None of the missionaries had come to Ecuador to minister to the Auca tribe. While there ministering to other tribes, they began hearing stories of a fierce tribe of Indians who murdered any white man who stumbled into their territory. As the five missionaries would often meet and discuss various things of mutual interest, the idea of reaching out to the Aucas began to gradually intrigue them more and more. As they continued to seek God on the idea, it became evident to all that God wanted them to push forward with the project. Knowing full well the danger, Jim Elliot told his wife Elizabeth, "If that's the way God wants it to be, I'm ready to die for the salvation of the Aucas." Undaunted, they carefully laid out a game plan to share the gospel with the Indians.

The first step in the project was for Nate Saint to fly over the Auca territory until discovering one of their villages. After several days of flying, Nate spotted a large thatch house in a clearing. The next step was to try to establish communication with the people. Nate had devised a way to let things down to the ground by rope, by flying in tight circles high up in the air. By this method, he was able to give them machetes, flashlights and other presents in an attempt to win their friendship.

For the next several months, the missionaries continued to drop gifts to the Aucas. They would also fly low and speaking over a loudspeaker in the Auca tongue say, "We like you! We like you! We have come to visit you." The people began looking forward to their visits and were soon smiling and waving at the missionaries in the strange flying machine. Then the Indians actually began sending their own gifts back up in the bucket that was lowered down to them. One time it was a squirrel, another time a parrot.

The missionaries finally felt that the time was right for them to see the Aucas in person. They found a sand bar on the Curaray River that Nate felt he could land safely on and the little crew picked the date of January 3. That morning Nate flew the other four into the spot they had christened "Palm Beach" and made another trip over to the Auca village. "Come tomorrow to the river!" he called out over the loudspeaker. Nothing happened until three days later when three Aucas suddenly appeared on the far bank of the river: two girls and a young man. The missionaries tried to speak to them as well as they could, in the few phrases they had managed to pick up. The Indians jabbered away. The man kept touching the Cessna, so Nate

opened the door and coaxed him to get in. Incredibly, Nate was able to take the young Indian on a flight over his own village. The man laughed and shouted with glee.

They stayed for some time and finally departed. The missionaries were ecstatic over their unexpected success. The next day, no Indians came to visit. Nate went up in the plane the following day and spotted a group of men walking toward the camp. He radioed his wife of the good news, "A commission of ten is coming. Pray for us. This is the day!" He set the next scheduled transmission at 4:30 p.m. and signed off.

At 4:30 Nate's wife turned on the radio and tried to reach her husband. She didn't receive a response. That night all five of the wives tossed and turned in worried sleep. The next day another missionary pilot flew over the area. He radioed back that the plane had been stripped of its fabric and the men were nowhere to be seen. Something was wrong.

The following day a search party was issued. The men were discovered speared to death. While burying the bodies, a Life magazine photographer arrived. The story he told made it the missionary story of the century. It touched multitudes of people, with many offering their lives in service to reach the Aucas. Incredibly, through a series of miraculous events, one month after the massacre, two of the wives were able to bring Christ to the killers of their husbands. Every one of the killers came to Christ, with one later becoming a martyr himself as he attempted to bring the gospel to another tribe of Aucas.

20

Richard Wurmbrand

In 1965, the Christian western world was stunned with the story of a simple, Lutheran pastor from behind the Iron Curtain. He had been released by the government of Romania to the Hebrew Christian Alliance for the price of \$10,000. What he brought out of that closed country was a stunning and tragic story of severe persecution of Christians by the Communist government. Pastor Wurmbrand testified to a Senate subcommittee what was happening to Christians behind the Iron Curtain. He stripped to the waist, showing deep scars inflicted over the fourteen years he spent in various prisons.

Although raised an avowed atheist, Richard accepted Christ as a young man. In 1945, the Communists seized Romania, and began a crackdown on all churches in the country. For the next three years Richard and his wife Sabine secretly

began ministering to the people of his area and also to the Russian soldiers who were so prevalent in Romania in the forties.

In 1948, Richard and Sabine were both arrested. Sabine served three years as a slave-laborer, leaving their nine year old son to fend for himself. Two Christian ladies attempted to help him. For this kindness they were arrested and beaten so badly that one remained crippled for the rest of her life. Another lady tried to take care of him and was arrested and sentenced to eight years in prison for helping the family of a prisoner. In the process of her arrest, her bones were broken and all her teeth kicked out.

It would be eight long years before Richard would see “freedom” again. His wife was told that he had died in prison, and she existed this whole time thinking he was dead. His sufferings were horrible. He tells of being hung upside down on ropes and beaten so hard that his body swung back and forth. Sometimes they would put him in a large ice-box until the point that he was ready to freeze to death. Then they would pull him out, warm him up and do it again - over and over again. Other times he would be put in a wooden box just slightly bigger than he, with dozens of sharp nails driven into every side. He would be left in there for hours upon hours. If he remained absolutely straight, he would be O.K. But if he relaxed even a little, the nails would pierce his flesh.

Wurmbrand tells the story of a pastor named Florescu who was tortured with red-hot iron pokers and knives. After being beaten senseless, starving rats were driven into his cell through a pipe in the wall. He could not sleep or relax as the rats would attack him as soon as he let down his guard. He was forced to stand like this for two weeks, day and night. When he still refused to betray his brethren, they brought in his fourteen year old son. They began to whip the boy in front of this dear pastor until he was half-mad. Finally he yelled out to his son that he must comply with them. His son answered him, “Father, don’t do me the injustice to have a traitor as a parent.” Enraged, the torturers beat the young boy to death, splattering blood all over the cell in the process. The pastor was never the same again.

Wurmbrand also tells of another time that Christians were tied to crosses for four days and nights. The crosses were put on the floor and hundreds of other prisoners had to fulfill their bodily functions over the faces and bodies of the Christians. Then the crosses were erected again while the Communists mocked and jeered their “savior.”

After eight and a half years of such treatment, Wurmbrand was finally released. Upon being released, he went right to work ministering again to the underground church in Romania. For over three years he ministered in this fashion, until again, he was arrested. This time he spent five and a half years in prison.

It was strictly forbidden to preach to other prisoners, and if caught, the preacher would be unmercifully beaten. Richard and several other prisoners struck up a deal of sorts with their torturers: they would preach and the Communists would beat them! He tells of the time one prisoner was caught in the middle of a message, taken out and beaten to a pulp and thrown back into the cell. He picked himself up again and said, "Now, brethren, where did I leave off when I was interrupted?"

Richard Wurmbrand and countless others have withstood unspeakable tortures for their faith in Christ. Their rewards will be great in heaven for what they have endured!



*"So likewise, whosoever he be of you
that forsaketh not all that he hath,
he cannot be My disciple."*

Luke 14:33

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