

Heroine of the Faith: Amy Carmichael

Amy Carmichael was born in Ireland in 1867 to a well-to-do family. She decided to follow Jesus at the age of 13. At 18, her father died, leaving the family in a difficult financial situation. They moved to Belfast, where Amy became involved with the “shawlies,” mill girls who wore shawls rather than hats. She saw the appalling conditions in which they lived and worked. Starting with a small group class, the work grew until Amy needed a hall seating 500. Later she moved to Manchester, England, where she did the same.

A couple of interesting stories about Amy's early life ... She had brown eyes but as a child always wished for blue ones. She was very disappointed when God didn't answer her prayers for her eyes to turn blue. But she was very grateful later on when God revealed His call on her life. Amy also suffered from neuralgia, a very painful neurological condition that often had her bedridden for weeks on end. She was an unlikely candidate for the mission field.

In 1887, at the Keswick Convention, Amy heard Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, speak about the missionary life. Soon she felt God's call to go overseas as a missionary. Initially she went to Japan, but she never really felt at home there. From there, she went to Sri Lanka. Then, after a year at home, she set sail for India in 1895, where she did her life's work. She never returned home again, serving for 55 years without a furlough.

Amy did not fit into the missionary community in Bangalore—she hated the tea-drinking parties and gossip of the missionary wives. Soon she moved to join the Walker family on the very southern tip of India. Along with one of the Walker daughters and a few Indian Christian ladies, they began an itinerant

ministry, speaking about Jesus throughout the surrounding villages. Their motto? “How much can I do without that I may have more to give?”

Amy adopted Indian dress and lifestyle, sometimes dying her skin with dark coffee.

In 1901, a young 5-year-old girl named Preena was brought to Amy. She had been sold by her mother into temple prostitution and was being taught all the degrading practices of the Hindu temple prostitutes. She had run away twice before, only to be found, taken back to the temple and beaten. But this time, the lady who found her, rather than taking her back to the temple, brought her to Amy. From that time onward, Amy Carmichael set herself to rescue these young children from this terrible lifestyle.

This work became known as the Dohnavur Fellowship. The organization has rescued literally thousands of children, mainly girls, from the horrific lifestyle of the temple prostitute.

In 1931, Amy was crippled by a fall that left her bedridden for the nearly 20 remaining years of her life. She wrote many books during this time. Wheeled in a wheelchair onto the veranda outside her bedroom, the children would come and sing songs to her in the evenings.

The impact of Amy Carmichael’s life and writing continue to have an impact more than 50 years after her death—for example, her vision of Christians making daisy chains.

Information for this post came from [here](#) and [here](#). There is an interesting short video about her life [here](#).

*Adapted from **Felicity Dale**’s blog, Kingdom Women. Felicity*

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