

Nancy Prince – A Missionary Adventurer

Nancy Gardner was an African American woman, born free in Newburyport, Massachusetts, on September 15, 1799. She was known for her devout heart and lived an adventurous life in service to the Lord.

However, Nancy's life was not void of trials. Her mother was widowed three times. Nancy's father, her mother's second husband, died when she was just 3 months old.

Following her third husband's death, Nancy's mother, then responsible for eight children, suffered a nervous breakdown. Nancy was 8 when the family's three older children were put to work to earn their room and board. She and her brother George committed themselves to caring for their mother and their younger siblings.

Although she was tender to the things of God, Nancy did not find peace with Him through the forgiveness of her sins until 1819. On February 15, 1824, she married Nero Prince, who served in the court of the czar of Russia. That spring, they left for Russia, where they lived for 9-1/2 years.

Nancy learned all the Russian languages. She took in and cared for children and opened a clothing business.

Nancy was active in her Protestant assembly. She also helped to buy Bibles to distribute to the Russian poor.

For health reasons, Nancy returned to the United States in 1833. Her husband, Nero, remained in the czar's employ and, unfortunately, died before they could be reunited.

Later, Nancy's heart burned to go to Jamaica as a missionary.

The Lord opened a door for her in November 1840.

Upon her arrival in Jamaica, she taught in a mission society for a time. Then she decided to open a school for the young girls she found on the island.

Nancy came back to America to raise the necessary funds. But when she returned to Jamaica in 1841, the spiritual and political climate had shifted dramatically.

Many of her colleagues had either left or moved to safer parts of the island. After most of her donations and supplies were stolen by individuals pretending to be missionaries, Nancy returned to America almost destitute.

She wrote and published her memoirs, which detailed her life in America and her adventures in Russia and Jamaica. Not much is known about her after 1856.

Nancy Prince had a difficult life. But her total dependence on Christ allowed her to spend it fruitfully in His service and make a difference for eternity in both Russia and Jamaica.

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