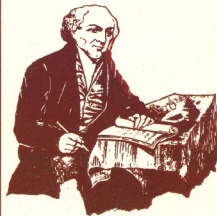


S O U V E N I R

WILLIAM CAREY BICENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

1793 — 1993

CELEBRATING
200th
YEAR OF
CAREY'S
ARRIVAL IN INDIA
CENTRAL INDIA REGIONAL CELEBRATIONS
10-14, November 1992



"EXPECT GREAT THINGS FROM GOD
ATTEMPT GREAT THINGS FOR GOD"

HOST

CONVENTION OF BAPTIST CHURCHES IN MAHARASHTRA

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WILLIAM CAREY

THE MAN WITH THE LORD'S MISSION

By Dr. T. M. Joseph

Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes, For thou break forth on the right hand and on the left, and thy seed shall inhabit the gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. (Isaiah 54: 2,3)

The date May 20th, 1792 on which William Carey preached a sermon on this text in Nottingham, England, will forever remain a red letter day in the history of the Baptist Church. Never has a sermon posed a challenge so stirring that denying its truth and urgency would mean disobeying God's command to preach the Gospel to the entire world. William Carey was truly the father of the modern missionary movement. He might have been a humble unlearned shoemaker but when the Lord anointed him and set aside for the definite task, He also made him learned and multiplied his capacities and abilities. But Carey never lost sight of the fact that he was only an instrument of God. He continued to remain poor in material terms but made millions of people spiritually rich. It was Carey who gave the wheels to the divine vision and command of our Lord Jesus, to go forth and bring the Good News to the entire wide world. "Can't we Baptists", he urged, "at least attempt some thing in fealty to the same Lord?". The Baptist Missionary Society which was formed has been described beautifully by various persons. James Montgomery called this "a spark dropped from heaven". Another said, "Thus the grand deeds grew that once were only dreams - dreams of a cobbler at his workbench with a crude map of the world fashioned by himself on the wall before him and his Bible by his side."

This dream became a reality in India by Carey's own efforts and by those who followed him, providing in addition a model of missionary enterprise for other countries to follow.

THE MAN

Born on August 17, 1761 at Paulerspury, a small village some ten miles from Northampton in England in a cloth weaver's family, William studied in the village school. His grandfather and later his father both became schoolmaster and parish clerk. Young William was a born naturalist and soon came to be regarded as an expert in natural history. From a very early age, books on any subject held a special fascination for William. When he began his seven year apprenticeship to be a shoemaker - which was considered to be a lucrative time - his master Clark Nichols not only was a regular churchgoer but was the owner of a large collection of books, which to the young apprentice was a veritable gold-mine. One of the books, a New Testament commentary had some strange characters, which William learnt was Greek. This led him to acquire a Greek glossary and grammar. Though inducted into the church of England he was drawn gradually towards the Dissenters or Non-conformists. At that stage in his life, Carey was really seeking God with all his heart and searching for "the Pearl of great price." And God was also pointing out the path for Carey, which would be impossible unless he was spiritually born again. A sermon Carey heard based on Hebrews 13:13, "Let us therefore go out unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach," and the

emphasis on following Christ entirely, catalysed him to become a new man, a man whose life thenceforth was enveloped with the destiny of the Gospel, first in England and then in India. It took eight years for Carey to produce his first pamphlet in 1791 entitled, "An enquiry into the obligations of Christians to use means for conversion...". He pursued the stated aims in the pamphlet before meetings with fervent appeals. The challenge which he placed before all was, "EXPECT GREAT THINGS FROM GOD, ATTEMPT GREAT THINGS FOR GOD."

After five months of sailing, Carey landed in India on November 11, 1793 with his wife Dorothy, their sons Felix, William, Peter and baby Jabez along with Dorothy's sister Kitty and John Thomas. The latter had been instrumental in giving firsthand information about India and had also managed to overcome the many hurdles prior to actual sailing.

THE PREPARATION

As one looks at Carey's early life, one is amazed to see how God takes a simple ordinary rustic youth and prepares him for responsible tasks. In the present time, we lay a great store on education. Parents are eager to get their children admitted to the best of schools and colleges. Career guidance clinics, aptitude tests and counselling sessions have been touted as means to make an individual to know his own self and his aptitudes and interest. We have unwittingly made ourselves masters of our own destiny and responsible for our actions. In all this we have unconsciously pushed God to the periphery and in the process, have misplaced our priorities and the very *raison d'être* of living. As T.S. Eliot has said:

Where is the life, we have lost in living.

Where is the wisdom, we have lost in Knowledge.

Where is the knowledge, we have lost in information ?

Modern educators teach us about time management and how to develop specific skills. We are told to be

selective in our reading and not "to browse and dwell, not to linger and lounge" over subjects that have no direct bearing on our profession. Religious education is way down on parents' list of priorities for their children. If Jesus is not introduced to the child in his formative years, it is difficult for him to depend upon Him completely and entirely.

Here was William Carey who had no promise of genius in his youth, forever poor and with meagre resources, but with a natural thirst for knowledge "deeply bent on learning all he could and determined not to give up a particle of anything on which his mind was set, until he had arrived at a clear knowledge and sense of the subject, neither diverted by allurements nor driven by his search by ridicule or threats". In later years Carey described himself as a "plodder" and said that he could persevere to all limits in any definite pursuit. He loved to do a task thoroughly. At one stage he had taken up gardening seriously but had to give it up on account of an allergy, as we now know it. However he said he learnt a valuable lesson that to drive a straight furrow your eyes must be fixed on a distant goal. Carey made the Master's call, "Go... preach the Gospel," as his personal goal in life and devoted himself to the evangelisation of India. Another example of how God works in the lives of men can be seen in Carey's propensity of mastering languages. Unaided he studied Latin, Greek and French. On his voyage he began picking up the rudiments of Bengali and by 1797 the New Testament was completed in that language. In Bengal, he soon realised all the north Indian languages were derived from Sanskrit and noting Max Muller's statement that, "the study of Sanskrit and literature is the best means of making any man who is to spend five and twenty years of his life in India, feel at home among Indians, a fellow-worker among aliens"; Carey betook himself to its study which he described as "perhaps the hardest language in the world". Side by side with his linguistic study and translating of the Bible went his preaching in India. By three to four years, Carey was delivering sermons in Bengali.

What a wonderful example for us Indian pastors to emulate. Though we are the sons of India we make no serious attempt to master other India languages. And often if we have studied in school and college in the English medium, we cannot preach in our mother tongue. What most of us lack is commitment to a definite goal and the willingness to plod on mercilessly till the goal is achieved.

EARLY YEARS IN INDIA

Life for Carey's family was hard and discouraging. There were no "mission compounds" with all the attendant accoutrements of modern living. Carey had to go through the crucible of God's testing. The modern missionary movement not to be launched easily and lightly. Serious illness, inhabitable shelter, without food and almost penniless, Carey fended for himself and family by selling timber, wax from the wild beehives and lime from the many shells which he found. Then he moved to Malda in May 1794, to work in an indigo plantation. With the salary of about 1000 pounds a year, Carey could not only support his family but could also save for the translation and publication of the scriptures. Carey soon realised the tremendous sacrifice which any Indian faced and faces even now, when he or she decides to accept Christ. Social ostracism and family pressures are strong enough to drive the new convert 'into the wilderness.' Carey soon realised that he would have to provide some employment to those who lost caste for the sake of the Gospel. Though people gathered in large numbers to hear Carey and many admitted that they wanted to follow the new teaching, in six years of mission work he had not won a single convert, though a number of Europeans were converted. He started a school and planned a college for the training of twelve young boys.

Carey was soon to realise that it would be more economical and effective if there was a mission station comprising of eight to ten families of missionaries. As a result of his efforts Joshua Marshman, William Ward, William Grant, Daniel Burson and Miss Tidd, some with their families,

landed at Serampore on October 7, 1799. When the authorities of the East India Company came to know that this group comprised of missionaries, they refused them permission to enter their territory in which Carey's indigo factory was located. It is a historical fact that the East India Company were very strict about not allowing mission work on their territories for fear of affecting their commercial interests. Serampore, on the other hand, was a Danish settlement and would welcome them and permit them to preach, establish schools and print the Scriptures. So after six years in the indigo factory, the party left for Serampore on January 10, 1800. By this time Carey had translated almost the entire Bible in Bengali, so Ward who was a printer, set up a printing press.

Carey, Marshman and Ward were destined to establish the Serampore mission. They were men of insatiable appetite for learning, of practical ability, dismayed by no difficulties and boundless in energy and patience. They and their families lived as a commune or what we call a joint-family system. Though Carey could well legitimately assume the role of leader or *Karta*, he believed in the dictum, equality for all and pre-eminence for none, rule by majority, and rotation of duties. In course of time the school flourished and the profits were used in the printing press and in May 1800, the first leaf of Carey's New Testament in Bengali was printed. However, it was only in November 25, 1800, that an Indian named Sakira accepted Christ as his Saviour and asked to be baptized. However, Sakira never returned from home after his baptism. Probably he was murdered as were many of the early converts after him.

On March 5, 1801, the Bengali New Testament was released which was the first printed book in Bengali. This Bengali New Testament was "the first stroke of the axe levelled at the banyan tree of India's superstition." Following this, hundreds of new translations have been given to various people all over the world. Mr. Lars B. Dunberg, the President of the International Bible Society in a

remarkable coincidence some days back in West Bengal said that the Bible was now available in 1,628 languages.

In April 1801, Carey a Non-conformist missionary, was invited to join the staff of Fort William College which was established in the territory of the East India Company by Lord Wellesley, the Governor General of India. Carey himself doubted his ability to teach, never having been to a college. He accepted it with much "fear and trembling". His resourcefulness, passionate love for learning and supreme faith in God helped him in his post as Professor of Bengali.

THE PROGRESS OF HIS MISSION

Although Carey was appointed to teach Bengali, he soon added Sanskrit and Marathi to his courses. Then evolved a Bengali grammar. In 1806, Carey became a member of a Asiatic Society, bringing him in closer contact with the intellectual Europeans in India. His proposal to print Indian classics in Ward's press was readily accepted and there was a renaissance of Bengali literature. Ram Komal Sen, Secretary of the Asiatic Society wrote: "I must acknowledge that whatever has been done towards the revival of the Bengali language and its improvement must be attributed to Dr. Carey and his colleagues". As full Professor, Carey served for nearly thirty years in the College and his rooms were the hub of literary activity attracting the best minds of India and England. Through Carey's efforts, grammars were produced in Bengali, Marathi, Punjabi, Telugu and Kanarese. Carey also compiled dictionaries in Bengali, Marathi and Sanskrit. This literary output included translation from Sanskrit as well as stories, essays, law book that pictured the whole life and culture of India.

On September 20, 1804, Carey was invited to make an address in Sanskrit before Lord Wellesley and several dignitaries. In his wildest dreams while working as a cobbler Carey had never envisioned such a scene. Carey realised that it was only by the direct beneficence of God that he had attained his

present position.

Some nine months after Carey had taken up his work at Fort William College, Lord Wellesley asked him to report on the tragic practice of throwing babies into the Ganges river during the annual festival near the island of Saugor. This eventually led to an official ban of the practice. Carey initiated the movement of banning Sati (burning of the widow on the husband's funeral pyre). Though Wellesley was unable to act, as his authority was not strong enough then, Carey's persistence finally won when it was abolished some decades later.

It must not be imagined that the efforts at Bible translation received universal applause. Critics both in England and India were not lacking in numbers. The British government was very sensitive to Indian feelings in matters of religion and once when someone inserted a pamphlet containing some offensive comments in one of the Serampore publications, there was a riot which led to the Serampore press to be closed and preaching to be stopped on September 11, 1807 under orders of the government. This was a big blow to the efforts of Carey. To put it in his own words:

"Many would rejoice to see us expelled. We have no security but in God. The experience of Abram who was alone when called, supports me. I have for many months had my mind drawn to Isaiah 40:28, He fainteth not, neither is weary. I have no doubt but that our troubles will tend to the furtherance of the Gospel; but to what extent they may be carried it is impossible to say. We mean to inform Lord Minto that we are prepared to suffer in this cause rather than abandon our work; but we hope to do all in the most respectful manner possible."

Lord Minto granted an interview to Carey and Marshman and was convinced that he was misinformed. He permitted the press to operate again. Thus these "low-born and low-bred mechanics", as Carey and his friends were described disparagingly by their critics and detractors, had in addition to earlier translations

also brought out the New Testament in Sanskrit, Oriya, Marathi, Hindi, Gujrathi, Persian, Telugu, Kanarese, Chinese, Punjabi and Burmese. Carey was honoured by Brown University with the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

In 1812, a huge fire broke out destroying the printing press and many manuscripts. But the Churches in England irrespective of denomination, contributed handsomely and with the resoluteness of Carey, the work soon picked up. Carey's genius lay that he multiplied himself through the efforts of others. By 1817, Carey felt the need for an institution for advanced training of the new-Christians. In 1821, the King of Denmark gave a large house for the college and five years later the Charter, under which Serampore College could confer degrees.

It is significant that till the end Carey led the life of a poor man. He wrote: "I have devoted my all to the cause. I am now in my old age, destitute of a rupee. Were I to die today I should not have property enough for the purchase of a coffin". Though his first wife was mentally unsound, he took care of her till she died. His sons were all in the mission field. When Alexander Duff who later

started the Scottish Church College in Calcutta met Carey for the last time, Carey said: "Mr Duff, when I am gone say nothing about Dr. Carey - speak about Dr. Carey's Saviour".

On June 9, 1834 at the age of seventy two, William Carey, son of God, famed missionary of India, went to be with his Master. In his will he said that his funeral be as plain as possible and the inscription on the stone as follows:

WILLIAM CAREY

Born August 17, 1761 : Died _____

**"A Wretched, poor and helpless worm,
On thy kind arms I fell."**

Carey wrote: "May I but be useful in laying the foundation of the Church of Christ in India. I desire no greater reward and can receive no higher honour".

REVEREND DOCTOR T.M. JOSEPH is Principal of Wilson College, Bombay and Honorary Presbyterian in the Church Of North India.

CAREY'S COUNSEL

Trust always in Christ. Be pure of heart. Live a life of prayer and of devotedness to God. Be gentle and unassuming yet firm and manly. Behave affably to all, cringingly and unsteadily to none. A gentleman is the next best character after a Christian, and the latter includes the former. Money never makes a gentleman, much less does a fine appearance, but an enlarged understanding joined to engaging manners. Shun all indolence and love of ease, and never try to act the part of the great and gay in the world. Your great work is that of a christian minister. God has conferred on you a great favour in committing to you this ministry. Take heed to fulfill it.

(Letter dated Jan. 24, 1814 to Jabez)

WHERE ARE THE BAPTISTS ?

The top twelve countries with the largest Baptist population are these :

1. United States	30,000,000
2. India	1,088,000
3. Brazil	850,000
4. Zaire	535,000
5. Mynmar (Burma)	478,000
6. Korea	323,000
7. United Kingdom	210,000
8. Soviet Union	208,000
9. Philippines	181,000
10. Canada	128,000
11. Malawi	124,000
12. Zimbabwe	109,000