

# Biographies Year 4

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# Thinking about biographies

Use the Thinking Hats to write a summary of the biography.

## 1. The White Hat (The facts)

- What is the name of the person? (Write this as a heading)
- When was the person born and when did they die?
- Where were they born?
- Where did they work?
- What was the main type of work they did?



white

## 2. The Yellow Hat (The good points)

- How did this person help other people?
- Write about one good point that stands out to you in the biography.
- What were the strengths of this person's character?



yellow

## 3. The Black Hat (The bad points)

- What difficulties (hardships) did this person experience?
- Write about any sad events that happened in the person's life.
- What difficulties were the people of the country experiencing? What needs did they have?
- Were there any times in this person's life when they acted wrongly or made a wrong decision?



black

## 4. The Red Hat (Emotions)

- Write about one amazing event in the biography and explain how you felt when you read or heard it.
- Describe some of the emotions of the person and why they felt happy, sad, angry, worried or otherwise.



red

## 5. The Green Hat (The creative hat)

- What creative ideas did this person think of to solve problems?
- If this person did not choose to carry out the work they were called to do, what might have happened? (How would it have been different for people of that country.)



green

## 6. The Blue Hat (What we can learn from the biography)

- What did you learn from the life of this person?
- What does it challenge you to do?



blue

# Joni Eareckson

Joni was born in 1949 in Maryland, U.S.A. She was the youngest of four daughters.

Joni came from a Christian family. She knew about God and the Bible, but she didn't know how much God really loved her. When Joni was fifteen years old, she attended a Christian camp. It was then that she thought for herself about what the Lord Jesus had done for her, that He died on the cross for her. Before that, she believed in Jesus without thinking. But now a great flood of joy filled her as she realized that Jesus loved her so much that He died for her sins.

Her parents were very happy because they had prayed for their four girls since they were born.

As a teenager, she enjoyed riding horses, hiking, tennis, and swimming. One day, at the age of seventeen, Joni was swimming at the beach with her sister and a friend, Kathy and Butch. A big wave came and Joni went for a dive into the wave. Joni did not realize how shallow the water was. Joni did not surface. Kathy and Butch ran to find her.

Joni had not come up out of the water because she couldn't move, and she couldn't breathe. And still she couldn't rise. She could only hear a roaring noise above her head.

A wave came in and raised Joni a little from the sea-bed. Now Kathy and Butch could see her.

"Joni," she heard Kathy scream. Then Joni felt the strong arms of Kathy around her. Joni was filled with fear. Kathy's arms were around her, but she could feel nothing at all. Was her body there? She couldn't feel it.

Somehow, they got back to the shore.

"Can you feel that?" Kathy asked, touching her sister's leg.

"No," said Joni weakly.

"Or that?" Kathy's hand was moving up.

"No," said Joni again.

Then Kathy's fingers touched Joni's neck. Yes, Joni could feel something at the neck. But as she tried to reach out to hold Kathy's hand, nothing happened. She could not move her arms.

Then there was a screech of ambulance brakes. Joni found herself harnessed into a neck brace, lifted by the emergency team into the ambulance and, with siren wailing, they left the beach for the hospital. Kathy sat beside her sister in the ambulance holding Joni's hand. Butch followed in the car. He prayed as he drove. Kathy wept all her tears to God. Joni was paralyzed from the neck down. She said the only words that came to her: "The Lord is my shepherd."

“Can you Imagine what it is like for me,” said Joni to Kathy the next day in the hospital. I can’t wipe my nose or go to the toilet. I have to be fed, and washed and have my teeth cleaned.”

Joni spent months in hospital with other patients who had broken necks. Although her family visited every day and did all they could to help, Joni was desperately sad. “I’ve got nothing to look forward to,” she told her friends one day.

After her friends left, Joni prayed as she had never prayed before. “Nobody understands apart from you, Lord,” she prayed. “I can only get through the days in this hospital if you help me. And I just can’t imagine how I will get through life.”

And God did help her. Joni had to spend the rest of her life in a wheel chair, but God used Joni’s strong faith to help other disabled people. Although she could no longer do swimming and horse-riding, Joni set her mind to another skill. She became an artist, by learning how to paint with a brush between her teeth. Her paintings were very good and many people wanted to buy them.

After the accident, Joni thought that she would never get married, never work, never travel and never be happy again, but she was wrong. Joni did get married, and traveled the world to tell her story of how God had helped her to live a happy life, even though she was in a wheel chair. She worked by helping other disabled people and painting. Joni told people that whenever she started to feel sad about not being able to do things, she would count her blessings. That means, to think of all the good things that God has done for you.

There is a Bible verse that says, “We know that in all things God works for good with those who love him.” (Romans 8:28)

God does not cause bad things to happen to people. But we live in a world where bad things sometimes do happen. But because God is very wise, He can turn the bad things to good when we pray.

**Questions:**

What good things did Joni do in her life with God’s help?

What good things did God give her?

What is the name for the good things that God gives us? (starts with ‘b’)

Reference: Irene Howatt, 2001, *Ten girls who changed the world*

# Gladys Aylward

Gladys Aylward was born at Edmonton in London in the year 1901. Her father was a postman and Gladys played in the street with her sister Violet, like the other children of the neighbourhood. At school and at Sunday School she learnt to know and to love her Bible and to trust in God. She loved hymn-singing best of all. When the war planes flew over London to drop bombs in the First World War, Gladys collected her young friends at her house. They sang hymns to drown the noise and to forget their fear.

When Gladys left school she became a parlour-maid. (That meant that she did house work for rich people.) One day she read in a magazine about the China Inland Mission which had been set up by Hudson Taylor. 200 missionaries were needed in China.

“That is what God wants me to do,” Gladys decided: At once she offered herself to the Mission and she went to train at its College. But after three months the Principal sent for her. “Learning is too hard for you,” he said kindly “Besides, by the time you finished the course here you would be thirty years old. You would find it very hard to learn a new language at that age. There are many other ways to serve God.” Gladys Aylward went back sadly to her old work but she could not give up her great ambition.

Had not Abraham obeyed God and gone out into a strange land? Did not Moses take up God’s call and lead his people out into the wilderness? “They trusted in God. I will too” she vowed.

Since the Mission would not accept Gladys, she knew she would have to find the money herself to get to China. She went to a new post in the household of a famous explorer in London. When she got there Gladys had two and a half pennies and her Bible. “O God,” she prayed, “here’s my Bible and my money and here’s me. Please use us!” It cost 90 pound to go to China by sea. But Gladys found that going by railway right across Europe would cost 47 pounds. “But Russia and China are at war and you might never get to China,” she was told. Nothing could put her off and she began to save hard, working even in her free time to earn extra money. One day she heard of Mrs. Lawson, a missionary in China, who was very old and wanted a helper. Gladys wrote to her at once and soon carne an exciting letter from China. “If you can get to Tientsin I will send a guide to meet you,” Mrs. Lawson wrote. Gladys saved harder than ever.

In October 1930, Gladys Aylward left London by train for China. She had 9 pennies in her pocket, a traveler’s cheque for 2 pounds, her passport and her train tickets, her Bible, one suitcase for her clothes and another full of food. A saucepan and a kettle were tied to a suitcase with string. For ten days the train rattled and jolted across Europe and Siberia. Then, near the borders of Manchuria, there came the sound of guns and the train could go no further. Gladys Aylward had to walk back many miles along the railway track to the last station, camping at night on the line in the bitter wind and blinding snow of Siberia. She got another train to Vladivostok and from there went by boat to Japan where the missionaries helped her to find a ship sailing to China. At last, after traveling for a month, Gladys Aylward

reached Tientsin in China. Then by train and bus and mule she went far inland to Yangcheng where she found Mrs. Lawson living in a tumble-down house.

Gladys Aylward soon found how difficult her work would be. Chinese peasants threw mud at her.

“You must not mind,” Mrs. Lawson said. “We are ‘Lao-yang-kwei’ (‘foreign devils’) to them. We must get to know them. Let’s turn this house into an inn for the Muleteers. (An inn is a place for travelers to stay.) Yang, my old cook, will give them good food. We will tell them Bible stories. Then they will carry the Good News of Jesus wherever they go.”

Soon the inn was repaired and opened. It was named ‘The Inn of Eight Happinesses’. People in this area traveled on mules. At first none of the travelers would come. Then one day Gladys met the train and dragged the first mule of a train into the inn. The other mules followed and the men who looked after the mules had to come too.

Before long good food and fine stories filled the inn every night. Yang taught Gladys the Chinese language and so she too could tell stories of Jesus. When Mrs. Lawson died, Gladys Aylward was left alone.

In those days there was a custom in China to bind the feet of young girls so that their feet could not grow. The toes were bent downwards and tight bandages applied. It was thought that tiny feet were very beautiful, but of course it was very painful for the girls and they could not walk properly. One day the Mandarin (governor) of Yangcheng came to the inn with all his servants. “The Government has made a new law” he said. ‘Women must not bind their feet any more. We need a woman to see that this law is carried out. You can have wages, a mule and two soldiers. Will you do it?’ “Yes,” said Gladys, “so long as you realize that I shall teach my Christian religion wherever I go.” “That is your own affair,” replied the Mandarin. Gladys went round the villages, seeing the new law was obeyed and making friends with the women and children. Eagerly they listened to stories of Jesus, who came from God and died to win their love.

Gladys Aylward lived a busy life. One day she was summoned urgently to the prison where thieves and murderers were rioting. Boldly she went in, while frightened soldiers stayed safely outside, and she stopped the killing. They called her ‘Zhi-weh-deh,’ ‘The Virtuous One’, and she became well-known for her bravery. Another day she met a dirty child-dealer (someone who sold the children of poor families to wealthy people who wanted slaves). She bought the poor little girl that was being sold, out of pity. Before long Gladys Aylward had adopted four other orphan children.

In 1938 a war had broken out between China and Japan. It took some time for the fighting to reach the inland, but finally the bomber planes encircled the city where Gladys lived. They came again, and this time dropped bombs on the city. Gladys was beaten unconscious by soldiers with rifle butts and kicks. Later, the Japanese offered \$100 reward for her capture so she knew that she must flee from the city with the children to a village far away. There she knew of some Christians who could help her look after the children. By this time Gladys was looking after nearly one hundred children.

It was soon obvious that even the village would not be safe. She knew of a centre for homeless children far away beyond the mountains in Siam. She must take them there. They would have to go on foot. The Mandarin, who had now become a Christian, gave Gladys some sacks of rice and two men to carry them.

It normally took four days to cross the mountains, but because of the Japanese soldiers, they had to avoid the main road. They would have to pass through difficult terrain.

"It will take you at least twelve days," said the Mandarin.

The children walked and walked, without complaining for the first few days, but then they became tired. The sacks of rice started to get low. Every day Gladys read to the children from the Bible, and they asked God to help them. As the last of their food was used, Gladys knew that God would provide.

"We're hungry!" said the little ones.

"Look, some soldiers!" said Gladys. No, not Japanese soldiers. They were Chinese soldiers who gave the children some food. Soon this food was gone, and they were hungry again. God provided again as they came upon a mountain village.

"Please give us some food," begged Gladys. "The children are hungry."

The villagers gladly supplied them with food.

At last they reached the Great Yellow River. This was the final obstacle before reaching safety. When they reached the river bank they realized that there was no ferry to take them across. The Japanese soldiers had stopped all boats. If they waited here too long they would be discovered. They waited and prayed. Then a Chinese soldier came along.

"What are you doing here with all these children?" he asked.  
Gladys explained.

The soldier knew about a secret boat, hidden amongst the reeds on the other bank. The soldier gave a whistle. Quickly and quietly the boat made its way across the river. It collected the children and ferried them to the other side. Once again the Lord had provided for them, and protected them.

By the time they reached the town where the children would be cared for, Gladys was very ill. In this town there was a Christian mission hospital where Gladys stayed until she had recovered.

She then went home to England after 20 years in China. In 1957, with her health completely restored, she went back to the East, to the island of Formosa, (now called Taiwan), and continued her great work for God, spreading the Gospel of Jesus among the Chinese people until her death in 1970.

*Adapted from 700 Great Lives*

**Revision Questions**

1. In which country was Gladys Aylward born? (Ans: England).
2. On a map, trace Gladys's Journey from London, across the Channel to France, then through Europe to Siberia, to Manchuria, then to Vladivostok, then to Japan, to Tientsin, and then to Yangcheng.
3. Find the Yellow River and Sian (renamed Myanamar), where Gladys took 100 children on foot over the mountains.
4. How did God provide for Gladys and the children?
5. Find the island of Formosa where Gladys Aylward died.



# Hudson Taylor

Hudson Taylor was born in England in 1832. His parents knew and loved God, and at the age of 12 Hudson decided that he would one day become a missionary in China. However in his teenage years he turned away from the Christian life. One day he picked up a Christian story. He decided to read it, and was suddenly overcome by the need to ask Jesus for forgiveness, and once again became His follower.

When he was 17 years old, Hudson heard a clear voice from God, saying, "Go to China." He went to see a minister about it. The minister told him that going to China would be a very foolish thing to do.

"There are so few missionary societies working there, and the climate is unbearable!" he said.

However Hudson did not give up. He read all the books he could find about China, and even tried to teach himself the Chinese language. After writing to several missionary societies, he finally received an answer from one. It was the Chinese Evangelization Society. They arranged to pay for his training as a doctor at a London hospital.

At the age of 21, he boarded a sailing ship bound for China. It was a dangerous journey, around the Cape and through the East Indies. At one point they were almost shipwrecked. After 23 weeks the ship finally arrived in Shanghai. In those days Hudson was the only missionary in Shanghai and he was often homesick. He missed his family and friends in England. He also missed the food that he was so used to. The Lord sent to him a Chinese Christian to help him in his medical work. His helper had a long pigtail, almost reaching the ground.

Hudson travelled as much as he could, not only to give medical help, but also to preach the Gospel. Hudson had no trouble in attracting a crowd. People were very curious. In fact the listeners did not take their eyes off him. Then one day he was asked, "What can be the meaning of those buttons in the middle of the honourable back?"

Hudson realized how amusing his 19th century English costume was to the Chinese. In fact they probably paid more attention to his clothes than the words he preached! Hudson realized that before the Chinese could really understand the Good News, he must become like them. He must show them that he was not someone so unusual, but an ordinary person, just like themselves. Hudson threw away his English clothes and chose Chinese dress. He even grew a pigtail.

In 1858, Hudson married Maria. Together they worked to bring the Good News to the Chinese people. Life was difficult as they battled against hardship and disease. The summers were extremely hot and their health suffered. Two of their children died from disease, and then one day, Maria died also. Hudson did not stop trusting in God. He continued to serve God through difficult circumstances knowing one thing... that God had called him to preach the Good News to those who had never heard. Through his work, Hudson opened the way for other missionaries to come to China. Hudson Taylor started one of the most successful missions to China. It was known as the China Inland Mission.

## Hudson Taylor Activities

1. Put these in the right order:
  - a) Hudson turned away from God
  - b) Hudson came back to God after reading a book
  - c) At the age of 12 Hudson decided to become a missionary.
2. Why did the minister think that going to China was foolish?
3. How did Hudson train and prepare for being a missionary?
4. Use an atlas and trace with your finger, the route that Hudson took to China.
5. What were some of the things Hudson missed about home?
6. Who did the Lord send to help Hudson?
7. Why did Hudson change his way of dressing?
8. What sad events did Hudson experience?
9. How do you think Hudson kept on going, even when sad things happened?
10. Hudson's work was only the beginning of a much larger work. What was it?
11. Find out about a missionary who has gone to another part of the world to preach the Gospel.

# Colin Marsland: Saved From the Sea

*A true story told by Colin Marsland of South Australia*

Schnapper fish live in the seas around Australia and New Zealand, and are excellent for eating. In December the Schnapper are plentiful. Each year Colin and his cousin would go on a camping trip with their boats, to catch fish.

They began fishing early in the morning. This day the waters were calm and clear, but by 9 am the wind began to get stronger and by 10 am they decided they should set out again for shore.

By this time the wind was near gale force, so Colin reefed down his main sail and began running before the wind, heading for the shore. He had only been under way a few minutes when he heard the eerie hissing of a freak wave about to break over him.

In a moment the boat was filled with water. The boat slewed against the seas and immediately went down by the stern. In a matter of seconds only the bowsprit was visible. Colin was flung out of the boat. Filled with a dreadful fear, he screamed out to God, above the howling wind. Immediately, he was conscious of a wonderful peace of mind and the feeling of the power of God.

For two hours Colin clung to the boat, which was reasonably air-tight, kept afloat by an airlock in the bow. He had hoped that the wind and swell of the waves would carry the boat towards the shore. But he realized that an under-current was carrying him further out to the open sea. Finally, he decided to remove his clothes and try to swim to the shore, since by this time the boat was beginning to slowly sink.

Colin had never swum any distance and only considered himself a good 50-metre swimmer. He doubted if he could reach the shore under these extremely difficult circumstances. But he kept thinking of his wife and daughter and would not give up the fight. With an unusual feeling of great strength and power in his body he noted a land-mark on the shore and set out to swim towards it. The crest of each wave gave him a glimpse of the coast line gradually drawing nearer, and by the time he was half-way there he knew in his heart that he was going to reach the shore.

Suddenly his heart sank. Quite close by he noticed a dorsal fin. Sharks are always often seen in these waters at that time of year, because they love schnapper and often take them off a fishing line. He remembered the time a huge, hungry eighteen-footer attacked my boat. It reared itself out of the water and snapped at the side of the boat, only a metre from where he was standing. He could see straight into its great jaws with its rows of evil-looking teeth. It left its teeth marks on the water line of the boat, and one of its teeth was left embedded in the timber.

So you can imagine his relief when I realized that the dorsal fin belonged to a friendly dolphin. Colin was greatly comforted for some distance by three dolphins that swam with him. He firmly believed that the dolphins helped to save his life. Sharks do not come near to where dolphins are.

As he neared the coast, he could see the great waves breaking over the reefs in a long, white line. Colin knew he could be dashed to death on them; but eventually he found himself in calmer water beyond the reefs. Then, to his relief, a wave swept him up on to a patch of golden sand.

However, the same wave that brought him in also swept him out again. He had completely lost the use of his legs, so that each time a wave carried him up on shore, the powerful under-tow drew him back again into the water. Colin began to panic. Had he been saved from the reef only to be drowned in the shallow water? But in that moment of panic he received a clear thought from God. "Dig your elbows into the sand and this will hold you against the tremendous strength of the under-tow." As he obeyed that instruction, each wave carried him further up the beach, until he was out of the water. There he lay for a full hour in the baking sun. He was safe at last, three hours after leaving the boat.

After regaining some strength in his legs, he set out on a seven-mile trek along the beach to their camp, two and a half hours later. You can imagine the reaction of his cousin and our other fishermen friends when they saw him alive. They had kept been watching and searching the coast-line for Colin. They had given up hope of ever seeing him alive again.

They gave him clothing, food and hot drinks and took him home to his wife and daughter. After recovering from his ordeal Colin returned from the place where he had been swept ashore, because he could not understand how he had escaped being dashed to death on the reefs. Colin discovered that he had been guided through the narrow gap, only 7 metres wide, which was the only break in the reef on that particular part of the coast. He knew that God, who gave him the super-natural power in his body to swim to the shore, had also guided him to the one gap in the reef where he could swim through safely.

A week later, after recovering the use of his legs, the local fishermen asked Colin if he knew where his boat had sunk. It had not been washed ashore, and there was no sign of any wreckage along the shore, so it was assumed it was still out there where it had sunk.

A few days later, thirty fishermen in twenty-two boats formed a line, each towing small grappling hooks and schnapper lines in the area where Colin was clinging to his boat. The boats moved forward together dragging the lines in the hope of striking the boat. On the very first run a schnapper line hooked the boat! Excitedly, the men worked together to raise the boat to the surface. Imagine our surprise when we found that the schnapper hook had caught in a small ring on the very tip of the mast! How amazed they were at this further miracle of God. There was no damage to the hull at all, except that a little paint had scraped off.

Up to the time of Colin's ordeal, he was not concerned about God. He knew God was "out there somewhere", but did not know Him personally. Yet God cared for Colin and heard his desperate cry for help. That adventure changed his life. Colin decided that if God cared enough for him, to not only save his life and his boat, but enough to send His Son, Jesus, to save us for eternity, then he wanted to love and serve Him for the rest of his days.

## Activities – Saved from the sea

### PART A

1. When was the schnapper season?
2. Who was fishing with Colin?
3. What did Colin do when his boat went down?
4. How was he kept afloat?
5. Why did he decide to swim for the shore?
6. Why was the presence of dolphins a good sign?
7. Explain several ways in which God showed his care and protection.
8. How did this adventure change Colin's life?

### PART B - God is protector

#### Read:

God knows everyone in the world by name. He even loves those who do not love Him. He wants everyone to come to know Him. Sometimes God does special miracles for people who do not know Him. The way in which God protected this fisherman was a miracle. It made him understand that God is real, and cares for each one of us.

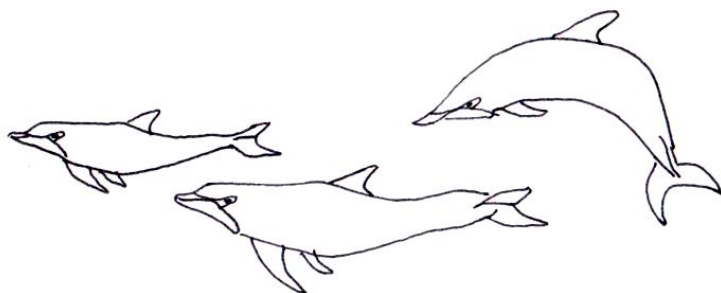
#### Copy and fill in the missing words:

#### How do I know that God loves and cares for me?

The \_\_\_\_\_ tells me that He does.

When I make Jesus my \_\_\_\_\_ I can feel His love.

Missing words: friend Bible



# Mary Jones and her Bible

Mary Jones was a girl who lived in Wales more than 200 years ago. If you look at a map of Great Britain you will find Wales next to England. In those days the people of Wales didn't speak English. They only spoke their own language, Welsh.

Mary started school when she was nine years old and soon became a very good reader. At school there was a big Bible written in Welsh. One day she was asked by the teacher to read aloud from the Bible. Mary was excited. She loved the Bible stories and was now able to read them for herself.

She told her parents about her opportunity to read the Bible at school, but at the same time felt sad that there was no Bible at home. Her family was poor and could not afford to buy a Bible.

Mary decided that she would save up to buy one, no matter how long it took. Mary worked hard. She collected fire-wood and helped her neighbours with cleaning and baby-sitting. Every job earned her a few pennies. Finally, after six years she had enough money.

Mary was fifteen now. She knew of a man who sold Bibles in a village 40 kilometres away. Mary decided to go to see this man.

"How will you get there?" asked her parents.

"I'll walk," said Mary. "I know I can walk that far."

"We will pray that God will keep you safe," said her parents.

Mary had only one pair of shoes. She knew that she couldn't afford them to wear out, so she decided to walk barefoot. It was rough and stony. Mary's feet became sore but she pressed on. Finally she arrived at the village.

"Can you direct me to the house of Mr. Charles?" she asked a friendly minister. The minister took her to the home of Mr. Charles.

"I'm so sorry, Mary," said Mr. Charles, "but I only have one Bible left and I have already promised that to a friend."

Mary started to cry. Mr. Charles felt sad too.

"Mary," he said, "I will let you have the Bible. My friend can have an English Bible while I am waiting to get some more."

Mary's tearful face quickly changed to a happy one.

The next day she started the long journey home with her Bible under her arm. After some days she arrived home. How happy her parents were to see her. God had protected Mary and helped her to get the Bible. Now they too could read the Bible.

Meanwhile Mr. Charles thought of Mary's eagerness to own a Bible.

"I'm sure there are others who would like to have their own Bibles as well," he thought. Mr. Charles went to London, and with a friend started working to produce Bibles for the many people

who needed them. This involved translating and printing. It was his aim that one day there would be enough Bibles for the whole world. The work started by Mr. Charles in 1804 later became known as the British and Foreign Bible Society.



### **Activities – Mary Jones and her Bible**

#### **PART A**

1. What language did Mary speak?
2. Where is Wales?
3. How did Mary save enough money for a Bible?
4. How far did she have to walk to get the Bible?
5. Why did she walk barefoot?
6. Why was she disappointed when she got to the village?
7. What did Mr. Charles do for Mary?
8. What work did Mr. Charles start in 1804?

#### **PART B - God is truth**

##### **Read**

When we know the truth, then we must not turn away from it, even when things get difficult. God shows us His truth in His word, the Bible. Having the word of God in our hearts helps us to stay with the truth.

**Look up the Bible verses and write sentences to explain how God's word can help us when we are:**

angry.....James 1:19-20

sad.....2 Corinthians 1:3-5

afraid.....Psalm 27:1

# Don Richardson

This is a true story of a whole group of people who changed their life-style from one of killing and cheating to a life of peace and happiness as they came to know the true peace-maker, Jesus Christ.

In 1962, Don and Carol Richardson went to live among the Sawi people of West Paua (New Guinea). West Papua is the western part of New Guinea. The Sawis had only occasionally seen white people. These were the men sent by the Dutch government to observe the area. The Sawis lived in deep tropical jungle on the edge of the crocodile infested Kronkel River. The Sawis stood in awe of white people, with their planes and helicopters, their jet-propelled rafts and their precious gifts of steel axes and razor blades.

It was a great privilege to have Don and Carol as their very own white residents in their small village. However, for Don and Carol, life was unpredictable, completely foreign to their own way of life, and very dangerous. Only their faith in God gave them the courage they needed to live among the Sawis. They had an inner certainty that Jesus had sent them on a special mission... to bring the Good News to people who lived a life of violence and fear.

At the foundation of all Sawi life was treachery and mistrust. Children were brought up to hold in high esteem the killing of another human being. The Sawis, along with their surrounding tribes, were head-hunters. At least this was the case until the mid-sixties, when Don and Carol penetrated the world of the Sawi.

The Sawis used a tactic of 'fattening with friendship'. To befriend a member of the enemy tribe, gain his confidence, and then kill him when he was not suspecting it, was a deed highly honoured among the Sawis. It was not surprising then, that as Don started to share the Gospel story, Judas was the hero, not Jesus. Judas had done the very thing that the Sawis honoured. That is, to become a friend of Jesus, and then later, turn Him over to the enemy to be killed.

"How can the Gospel be shared with these people?" thought Don. The whole foundation of their society would have to change before the Sawis could even begin to understand why Jesus had to die for them. It was a task too difficult for Don and Carol. They knew that only the Lord could open the minds of the Sawi people by some enormous miracle.

Don and Carol concentrated their work on three Sawi tribes. These were the Haenam, Kamur and Yawi tribes. To these tribes they gave medicine, supplied implements and worked at learning their language so that they could share the Gospel with them. They also taught some of the Sawis to read, in their own language, for the first time.

Working with the three tribes, however, brought about some problems. Don and Carol's work brought the three tribes into closer contact. This meant that fighting among them was becoming more common, and contagious diseases were spreading more rapidly. Don concluded that their past habit of living in small isolated groups had been the key to their survival. Before Don and Carol arrived, potential enemies were out of sight and there were fewer occasions to shed blood. Don and Carol decided that for the good of the people they should leave them. Otherwise the three tribes could die out altogether.



The leaders from two of the warring groups confronted Don.

"Tuan," as they called him, "don't leave us!" they pleaded.

"But I don't want you to kill each other," replied Don.

"Tuan," one of them said, "We're not going to kill each other." "Tomorrow we are going to make peace!"

Don and Carol hardly slept that night, wondering what daybreak would bring. Few of the Sawis slept either. All through the night voices could be heard. Then as daylight broke all was deathly quiet, just as it had been before previous battles.

Then one of the tribe members, Mahaen, and his wife climbed down from their houses. Mahaen was carrying a child, one of his own sons on his back. His wife Syado was sobbing violently. The people of the tribe also started descending from their houses. All eyes were on Mahaen, Syado and the child. Suddenly Syado wrenched the boy from her husband's shoulders and ran off with him. She was not going to give him up. Now all the other women of the Haenem tribes clutched their babies close to their breasts. Someone had to give up their baby.

Finally a man named Kaiyo decided that he would be the one.

"It is necessary," Kaiyo reminded himself. "There's no other way to stop the fighting. And if the fighting does not stop, the Tuan will leave."

Kaiyo reached down and picked up his only child, six-month-old Biakadon. He held the soft, warm gurgling body of his son close to his chest one last time. Kaiyo's wife, Wumi, did not yet know of the decision. Then her eyes flashed towards her husband, who, with Biakadon in his arms, was running towards the other tribe. Wumi screamed and ran after Kaiyo, but Kaiyo did not look back. Wumi felt her feet sinking into the bog. She had missed the trail. There was no hope now. He was too far ahead.

As Kaiyo reached the Haenam tribe his heart was breaking. The men of the village were grouped together waiting to receive the child. The peace ceremony began.

"I give you my son, and with him my name," Kaiyo said as he held forth little Biakadon. Mahor, of the Haeman tribe received him gently into his arms.

"It is enough!" said Mahor. "I will surely plead for peace between us."

Then a father from the Haenam tribe held up one of his sons.

"Will you plead peace among your people?" Kaiyo was asked.

"Yes!" replied Kaiyo.

"Then I give you my son and I give you my name," said the father.

Kaiyo took his newly adopted son, Mani, into his arms and ran quickly back to his own tribe. In each village young and old, male and female, filed past the babies and laid their hands upon them, sealing their acceptance of peace with the other tribe. The adopted babies were then decorated, ready for a peace celebration.

Don tried to comprehend what had just taken place. He questioned one of the men.

"Why is this necessary?" he asked.

"Tuan," was the reply. "Don't you know that it is impossible to have peace without a peace child?"

"What will happen to Biakadon and Mani?" asked Don. "Will they be harmed?"

"They will not be harmed, Tuan," was the reply. "In fact both our villages will guard the lives of these children even more carefully than they protect their own children."

The exchange of the two babies did actually cause the two warring groups to cease fighting. But for Don and Carol, the peace child illustration meant so much more. Now, finally a way of explaining the sacrifice of God's son had been demonstrated before their very eyes. Don was now able to explain the Gospel in a way in which the Sawis would understand.

"Like Kaiyo," said Don, "God had only one son to give, and like Kaiyo, He gave Him away. The son you gave was a son you loved. The Son that God gave was a son He loved even more. God has sent me to tell you that God has sent a peace child. His name is Jesus. From now on, let Sawi mothers keep their own babies. God has given His Son for YOU! Ask His Spirit to live in your hearts and He will keep you in the way of peace."

For three months Don kept telling the Sawis about the Peace Child of God, but still no one had committed their life to Christ.

"What else will it take to draw these men and their families to Jesus? he thought. And then it happened.

One afternoon Don and Carol and their two baby boys took a boat trip upstream with their Sawi house-boy. Suddenly the boat hit a submerged log and the boat capsized. All four were thrown into the strong currents of the crocodile infested Kronkel River. Both parents holding the babies, they managed to grab hold of the up-turned boat. Then, by a miracle, a man in a canoe came by and rescued them before they were swept away. The Sawi people could see from this experience that God really did give peace and protection. As a result, one whole family gave their lives to the Lord.

"When I saw that God could give you peace, even when your two sons almost drowned, I knew that everything you said about the Peace Child was true," said one of the Sawi leaders. "I decided that He could take care of us too."

As Don and Carol continued to live among the Sawi people, they saw more miracles as people gave their lives to Christ. Gradually old customs and evil practices gave way to a new life of peace and happiness. Because of the Peace Child story, the Sawis had a new hope. Instead of hate and mistrust between villages, they developed a bond, which kept them from war. That bond was peace through Jesus Christ.

*Story retold from 'Peace Child' by Don Richardson, (Used by permission).*

### **Discussion**

How was the Sawis experience of giving up the peace child similar to God's sacrifice for us?

The parents of the peace child made a great sacrifice to bring about peace. As each gave their son, and the peace-child was received by the other tribe, the people were able to experience peace. We could also say that receiving the peace child was a kind of promise that they would stop fighting and instead, be friends with the other tribe.

God our Heavenly Father made a great sacrifice in giving His only Son, Jesus. As people receive God's Son, they experience peace in their hearts and lives. Receiving God's Son, Jesus, is making a promise that we will, from this point on, to stop going against God, and instead, become His friend. Being a friend of God means doing what HE wants us to do, and not always what WE want to do.

*2 Corinthians 5:19*

*For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. (NLT)*

Imagine two friends who have a fight or argument. They are no longer friends. They stop speaking to each other. The friends gradually become strangers. To become friends again there must be reconciliation. To be *reconciled* is to be restored to friendship. When old friends forget about their differences and restore their relationship, reconciliation has happened.

Now let's think about the broken friendship between people and God that occurred in the Garden of Eden. Every person born after that event has sin in their life. One of God's laws is, "no one who has sinned can be a friend of God". But God sent Jesus to give people an opportunity to become friends again with God. When people receive Jesus, and ask Him to take their sin, He looks on us as if we have no sin, and therefore we can be friends with God.

*2 Corinthians 5:18*

*And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. (NLT)*

Who has the job of telling the world that they can be reconciled to God?

### **Activities**

1. Find West Papua on a map. Name a country that borders it.
2. Why did the Sawi tribe stand in awe of white people?
3. Why do you think the Sawis wanted Don and Carol to live with them?
4. How did the Sawis "fatten with friendship"?
5. Why do you think the Sawis saw Judas as the hero in the gospel story, and not Jesus?
6. Why did Don and Carol almost decide to leave?
7. What stopped them?
8. What had to happen for peace to be made between two tribes?
9. How was the practice of giving up a baby similar to God's great sacrifice?

