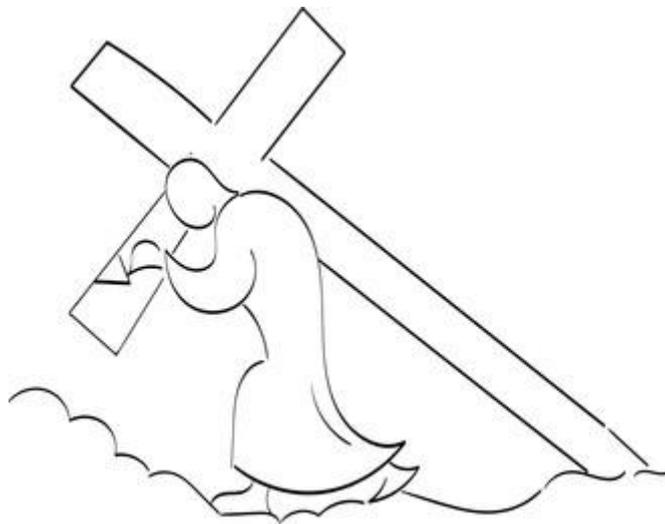


# Biographies of Famous Christians

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Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever would save his life[a] will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it” Matthew 16:24-25

## Aji Kumar

Each year in southern India, millions of fervent Hindu worshipers endure a dangerous trek up a holy mountain, called Sabarimala, to pay homage to the Hindu god Ayyappa. In the mid-1990s, a 15-year-old boy named Aji Kumar joined the treacherous journey to fulfill the vows his Hindu parents had made to their god.

Previously, the tedious worship of multiple gods proved unfulfilling for Aji. This pilgrimage, he hoped, would change that.

According to legend, Ayyappa, one of more than 30 million gods in the Hindu religion, is a protector from evil and giver of good fortune. In preparation for the trip, Aji fasted for 41 days. Weak and malnourished, the teenage boy hiked up the 3,000-foot mountain without shoes, in accordance with sacred tradition.

Aji was tired and afraid. Pilgrims literally fight each other to get to the shrine; in 1999 a stampede of worshipers killed 53 people.

Along the way, Aji bathed in the Pampa River, which is said to release a person from a lifetime of sins. When he finally reached the 18 stairs leading to the shrine, he was so exhausted that he dropped the sacred articles he was carrying, and a policeman had to help him.

“If you are the true God,” Aji prayed to Ayyappa, “then why didn’t you give me strength? Why didn’t you keep the sacred things from falling?”

For years, his family adhered to the meticulous Hindu traditions. They attended temple services and followed specific worship creeds. They routinely bathed, fed, and garlanded the idols. But they felt no peace.

Currently, Hinduism is the third-largest religion in the world. Hinduism can be traced back to ancient Indian seers who transmitted to their followers their ideas about ultimate truth. The earliest Hindu writings date from roughly 1500 B.C. There are a variety of sacred writings—the Vedas and Upanishads. The Code of Manu set down many prescripts for life, including the caste system—a social structure based on birth and wealth.

One day, a Christian explained how Aji could know Jesus personally, how Christ came to set people free. But Aji continued to worship Hindu idols. When he found his mother reading the Bible one day, he was furious.

“We have enough gods and goddesses,” he told her, snatching the Bible away. “If our relatives come to know that we have received Jesus, they will desert us.”

Tradition says that if a Hindu does not obey the stringent requirements of his gods, sickness and calamity will afflict him. Suffering is explained through karma, the idea that a person carries the collective force of his actions.

Hinduism literally means “religion of India.” Currently, 82 percent of India’s population are professing Hindus. The religion is so tied to the heritage of India that the idea of worshipping only one God, like in Christianity, is offensive.

Aji belonged to a political group that persecuted Christians, interrupting church services and other Christian meetings. During the Hindu festival of Onam, Aji and others from the political group set out to sabotage a Christian meeting at a local college. Armed with sticks and stones, they planned to disconnect the sound system’s power supply. Before they could cause a disturbance, a speaker announced, “Who is Aji Kumar, who has come to disrupt the meeting?”

The speaker continued, listing specific sins Aji had committed. Aji was astonished—and angry. He didn’t want to listen to the man and was embarrassed in front of his friends.

“Don’t be afraid,” the speaker continued. “Stand up, Aji Kumar.”

Aji felt a sensation of extreme heat in his body, “like I was sitting on fire,” he says. His heart tugged at him. Finally, he stood up, joined the speaker, and prayed and received Christ.

Soon after, Aji began studying the Bible. As a result of his faith, several in his family abandoned their idols and received Jesus. Today, Aji works as a missionary in India.

Hinduism is a difficult religion for Western Christians to classify. With a kaleidoscope of gods, there is no central creed or founder, and no universal text on which the faith is based. Instead, it is a religion of relativism, where few Hindus worship the same way. This actually appeals to many Americans, explaining why more than 1 million practice some form of the religion stateside.

Westernized Hinduism is often philosophical. It may include practices such as meditation, yoga and rituals. But Hinduism is also a way of life.

For Aji, it took a personal encounter with God to bring him out of that way of life. “In Christianity, I found there is a living God who loves me,” he says.

<https://www.cru.org/us/en/how-to-know-god/hinduism-to-christianity.html>

# Amy Carmichael

A common method for parents putting their children to bed is saying their prayers. As a child, Amy Carmichael wouldn't stop at prayers. She would also smooth out a space on her sheets; then invite the Lord to come sit down beside her. This was an early sign of Amy's willingness to talk and listen to what her Heavenly Father had to say.

## AMY CARMICHAEL'S EARLY LIFE

Amy Carmichael was the first Irish daughter born to David and Catherine Carmichael, December 16, 1867, in Ireland. There would be six brothers and sisters to follow her. Amy shared a bedroom with two of her sisters and was always having to shake her two brothers, Norman and Ernest from following her everywhere! Her father ran a flour mill, owned by Carmichaels for the last hundred years, and the family was never in need. Mr. and Mrs. Carmichael were devout Christians and raised their children in equal devotion to the Lord.

## AMY CARMICHAEL'S MINISTRY WITH THE SHAWLIES

Amy's family moved to Belfast when she was sixteen, and two years later, her father died. With his passing, and a fall through of the mill's finances, she would spend the next ten years being a right-hand helper to her mother and tutor to her younger siblings. But this wasn't enough to deter Amy from reaching out to help those less fortunate. She made weekly trips into the slums of Belfast with a local pastor to hand out tracts and food to the impoverished. It was there that she first discovered girls her age and younger who worked in the mills. Seeing their hunger for God's love and hope, she set up Bible studies, held at her Church. Some church members complained about the young girls from such poor backgrounds, but Amy didn't care. She was doing what God needed her to do and that was all that mattered!

The ministry with the girls grew and soon a building was purchased to seat the hundreds of girls gathering to worship the Lord. As much as at home Amy was at 'The Welcome', she now felt God's calling pulling her elsewhere; to the slums of Manchester, England. There she lived in an apartment with bugs and rats for neighbors! The conditions were terrible, the streets dangerous, but Amy remained to spread God's Word. Due to poor health she went to stay in the house of a family friend, Robert Wilson. It was in her two-year stay with Wilson and his sons that she first heard missionary Hudson Taylor speak. With his words, she felt the Lord drawing her to the same mission; 'Go into all the world and preach the Gospel'.

## CALLING TO GO OVERSEAS

Breaking into missionary work was no small feat for Amy. Her initial application for the China Inland Mission was rejected due to her health. She traveled to Japan in 1893, but was forced to return to England after fifteen months, due to illness. Her recovery was long and she struggled with understanding God's will for her life. If God had called her to missions, why would He block the road so heavily?

## AMY'S MISSIONARY WORK IN INDIA

In 1894, Amy received an invitation from a friend to join the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society in Bangalore, India. The climate would prove easier to her health and India was known as the British Empire's 'crown jewel'. But of course, Amy being Amy, was more interested of what she could do for the Lord. The 'missionaries' that she first housed with were nothing more than complainers, concerned more about keeping themselves pampered than sharing the Gospel. Amy was the odd one out, so it was only natural that she soon went to live with Reverend Thomas Walker and his wife in another district in 1896.

Thomas Walker was a gruff man, but a committed Christian. Through grueling sessions, she learned the Tamil language, studied the Hindu caste system, and began drawing in new converts. Especially young women and girls. They came seeking sanctuary from the temples where they served as prostitutes. Often, the girls' families or other women of the temple would track them down and demand the girls back. Unlike Amy's work in Japan, it was a great shame if a person converted to Christianity. The lucky ones would be shunned from their homes; others tortured or murdered. But Amy nor the Walkers could not be deterred. If a child came seeking refuge, they were instantly given a home and hope for eternal life.

Amy's time in India lengthened and so did her adoptive family. Not only did she have the women of the Starry Cluster, a group who helped her evangelize across the villages, but as word of their group had spread, more and more girls showed up at their doorstep. Eleven-year-olds, babies, teenagers, until the family was over fifty in number! Amy realized then that her time of travelling and evangelizing was over. It was time to settle and build a permanent ministry for children.

Her mission to the children of India lasted fifty-five years. She wore the traditional sari, dyed her skin with coffee or tea bags, and endured the hot and dry Indian atmosphere. In 1931 however, her race for Him was jolted by a fall in 1931. Her hip and back were badly damaged and she was unable to fully walk again. The last twenty years of her mission were directed from her bedroom. Amy's movements were limited, but her ministry was not. In twenty years, she wrote sixteen additional books of the missionary work in India. Presently, only a few of her books are still in print. When Amy passed away in January of 1951, no gravestone was planted per her request. However, her girls settled a bird bath over her burial site. On the bath was engraved one word: 'Amma', (the Tamil word for 'mother').

<https://www.inspirationalchristians.org/evangelists/amy-carmichael-biography/>

# Brother Andrew

Son of a blacksmith, Brother Andrew didn't even finish high school. But God used this ordinary Dutch man, with his bad back, limited education, without sponsorship and no funds to do things that many said were impossible. From Yugoslavia to North Korea, Brother Andrew penetrated countries hostile to the gospel to bring bibles and encouragement to believers.

## ANDREW'S EARLY YEARS

Andy van der Bijl, who became known as Brother Andrew, was born in 1928 the son of a deaf father and a semi-invalid mother. Andrew was the third of six children and they lived in the smallest house in the village of Witte in the Netherlands.

In the book God's smuggler, Andrew describes the impact that the death of his oldest brother 'Bas' had upon him. Bas, who was severely handicapped died when Andrew was just 11 years old. Andrew had wanted to die with Bas, but God hadn't let him.

## THIRST FOR ADVENTURE

As a child, brother Andrew was mischievous and dreamt of adventure. When Germany invaded, Andrew amused himself (and the rest of the village) by playing pranks on the occupying troops.

## NOTORIOUS COMMANDO WHO NEEDED GOD

His thirst for adventure led him into the Dutch army at the age of 18 where he became a notorious commando. Andrew and his comrades became famous for wearing yellow straw hats in battle, their motto was: 'get smart – lose your mind'.

The atrocities that Andrew committed as a commando haunted him and he became wrapped in a sense of guilt. Nothing he did – drinking, fighting, writing or reading letters helped him escape the strangle that guilt had upon him.

Shot in the ankle in combat, at the age of 20, his time in the army came to an abrupt end.

In hospital, bed ridden, the witness of Franciscan sisters who served the sick joyfully and the conviction of his own sin, drove him to read the Bible. Andy studied the bible while asking many questions to a friend (Thile), who had written to him throughout his time in the army. Andrew sent questions to Thile who searched for answers from her pastor and the library. His searching within the bible did not however lead him to give his life to God whilst he was still in hospital.

## ANDREW RETURNS HOME A CRIPPLE AND SEEKS GOD

Returning home a cripple to his old town, Andrew's life was empty. He had not found the adventure he had been looking for.

Somehow however, when he returned home, he developed a thirst for God. Every evening Andrew attended a meeting and during the day he would read the bible and look up bible verses mentioned in the sermons he had heard. At last, one evening he gave up his ego and prayed: 'Lord if You will show me the way, I will follow You. Amen'.

### **GOD CALLS BROTHER ANDREW TO MISSION**

Soon after becoming a Christian, Brother Andrew attended an evangelistic meeting taken by a Dutch evangelist Arne Donker. At this meeting Andrew responded to the call to become a missionary. This call to share the good news of salvation started at home, with Andrew and his friend Kees holding an evangelistic event with Pastor Donker in their home town of Witte.

Before going away on mission, Andrew started work at the Ringers chocolate factory. Working in a female dominated environment which was smitten with filthy jokes, God used Andrew and another Christian, and future wife Corrie, to reach their lost co-workers. Through personal witness and inviting them to evangelistic events, many became Christians, including the ring leader of the women. The atmosphere at work changed dramatically and prayer groups were held.

Andrew excelled in his work despite being lame and Mr Ringers, the owner of the factory applauded his work and evangelistic efforts. Because of his high IQ, Andrew was trained up as a job analyst within the factory. But Andrew knew that God was calling him to mission. The big obstacle however was his lack of education.

Giving up smoking, Andrew was able to start saving to buy books. Andrew bought dictionaries and commentaries and so began studying in his spare time. One day Andrew learnt about the bible college in Glasgow run by the WEC mission. At Glasgow bible college Christians could be trained up for mission in 2 years.

Unsure of Gods will for his life, Andrew spent a Sunday afternoon alone with God, speaking aloud with God. Through this time, Andrew realised that he needed to say 'yes' to God who was calling him to mission. Before this, Andrew had been saying 'Yes BUT I am lame.' 'Yes BUT I have no education'. Andrew said yes. In an amazing instant, Andrew made this step of yes, and in God's grace he healed Andrew's lame leg.

### **ANDREW GOES TO ENGLAND**

Andrew applied for the Bible college in Glasgow and was accepted. Sponsored by no church, no organisation and lacking education, Andrew obeyed God and went despite being told by the love of his life at the time (Thile) that in going he would lose her.

Andrew's place at the bible college was delayed by a year. Despite receiving a telegram from WEC telling him not to come, Andrew believed God was instructing him to go. In faith he obeyed God and left for England in 1952.

Andrew spent the first few months in England painting the WEC headquarters building (Bulstrode). While living at Bulstrode, Andrew began spending time with God at the beginning of everyday – a Quiet Time. This was something that Andrew found helpful and

endeavoured to do every day of his life. Once Andrew had finished painting Bulstrode, he then moved in with Mr and Mrs Hopkins. Living with Mr and Mrs Hopkins, they developed a wonderful relationship. Andy learnt so much from the couple because they were utterly without self-consciousness and opened up their home to drunks and beggars.

In September 1953, Brother Andrew started his studies at the WEC Glasgow bible college. Over the entrance of the wooden archway of the college were the words 'have faith in God'. During the following two years whilst studying, Andrew learnt about having faith in God and put his faith into practice in numerous ways.

### **THE KINGS WAY**

Throughout his time at Glasgow bible college, Andy learnt of 'The Kings Way' in providing. Andrew saw God provide every essential need he had and always provide on time. In the book God's Smuggler, Andrew describes how it was exciting waiting to see how God would provide at his time of need. God always provided, but did so, not according to man's logic but in a kingly matter, not in a groveling way.

One example of God providing miraculously was when Andrew needed to pay his visa. When Andrew received a visitor the day before he needed to send off his application for a visa, he was confident that the visitor would have come to give him money to pay for the visa. But the visitor was Richard, a man who Andrew had met in the slums in Glasgow. Richard had not come to give, but to ask. Andy explained that he had no money himself to give to Richard, but as he spoke, Andy saw a Shilling on the floor. This shilling was how much Andy needed to pay for his visa which would mean he could stay at the bible school. Rather than keeping the Shilling for himself, Andrew gave the Shilling to Richard. Andy had done what he knew was right, but how would God provide? Minutes later, Andy received a letter and in it was 30 Shillings! God had provided in His way, a Kingly Manner of provision.

### **GOD CALLS ANDREW BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN**

Leaving bible college in 1955, God guided Andy to attend a Communist trip to Warsaw. This would be the first of many trips into Communist countries.

During his first trip to Warsaw, brother Andrew visited local churches, a bible shop and spoke with Christians in the country. Coming back to Holland, Andrew had lots of opportunities to share about his trip and how Christians lived behind the iron curtain.

Weeks later, the communist party arranged for him to attend a trip to Czechoslovakia. Andrew managed to break away from the organised trip to learn that the church was suffering and that bibles were very scarce. Officials were angry he had broken away from the official tour and had contact with Christians so he was prohibited from entering the country again. But his trip had opened his eyes to the needs of the church behind the iron curtain and this became his mission field.

In the following years, Andy dedicated his life to the needs of the church in the Communist countries. God provided Andrew with a new Volkswagen Beetle and with it, Brother Andrew smuggled bibles and literature into the countries in need. Working alone for the first few

years, Andrew worked tirelessly in serving the churches behind the iron curtain. When Andrew had finished one trip he would go back to Holland where he would share his experience and then go back to one of the countries. Each trip was full of stories of how God had miraculously provided and led Andrew to meet Godly believers.

### **ANDREW MARRIES AND HAS A FAMILY**

Although serving God in this way was exciting, Andrew felt alone and wanted a wife. In the book *God's Smuggler*, Andrew describes how he prayed about a wife three times. The first two times that Brother Andrew asked for a wife God spoke to him clearly through Isaiah 54:1 "The children of the desolate are more than the children of the married". But Andrew prayed a third time about it, and this time God answered his prayer, reminding him of a lady he worked with at the Ringers chocolate factory, Corrie van Dam. Andrew hadn't had contact with Corrie for a long time so went to visit her. By God's grace, Corrie was still single and over a period of several years Andrew and Corrie became great friends. Corrie and Andrew married on June 27th 1958 in Alkmaar, Netherlands.

Corrie was married to a missionary and Andrew very much continued to live like a missionary, smuggling bibles into countries closed countries. Over the years, God blessed Corrie and Andrew with five children, three boys and two girls.

### **ANDREW STARTS WORKING WITH OTHERS**

Andrew kept serving God behind the iron curtain but the work had become difficult to do alone. Andrew thought about how helpful it would be to have a co-worker. This began with a man called Hans and slowly grew until a number of them were smuggling bibles into the communist countries.

### **SERVING THE WORLD-WIDE CHURCH**

When the doors to communist Europe were opened in the 1960's, Brother Andrew began to serve and strengthen the churches in the Middle East and Islamic world.

### **BROTHER ANDREW RECEIVES RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AWARD IN 2007**

On Andy van der Bijl's 69th birthday, he was honoured by being awarded 'The Religious Liberty Award' which was presented by the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF). The chairman of WEF's Religious Liberty Commission stated:

"Brother Andrew has been the preeminent example of those from the outside who have excelled in the ministry of encouragement – the many years he has devoted himself to serving the oppressed. His exploits have become legendary as he has crossed borders carrying Bibles, which were liable to confiscation. Time after time God has blinded the eyes of the border guards, and the Bibles got through.

<https://www.inspirationalchristians.org/evangelists/brother-andrew-biography/>

# Brother Yun – The Heavenly Man

Liu Zhenying, known as Brother Yun, literally "Brother Cloud"), born 1958, is an exiled Chinese Christian house church leader, evangelist, and proponent of the Back To Jerusalem movement. Brother Yun was involved in the Christian house church networks in China during the 1980s and 90s. Accounts about his life and ministry are to be found in his autobiography, The Heavenly Man.

## Life in China

Brother Yun's book tells both of great persecution, and a surprising series of miracles of deliverance very similar (though often even more 'extreme') to those found in the Bible. Despite a life of poverty in China, he since has spoken to thousands internationally with the Gospel message. Seen as a rebel among some Chinese for not joining the government-controlled Christian organization, he was imprisoned and tortured by the government authorities. His book reports that he became a highly wanted man across several provinces. He was finally arrested and sentenced to many years in prison. However, Brother Yun continued his ministry while in prison, with more claims of miraculous results. As a result, many prisoners and even prison officials are reported to have become born-again Christians. While he gained increasing favor from some officials, he also became a target of increased persecution by others. He was repeatedly beaten and became severely malnourished. While in prison, Brother Yun writes about undertaking a total fast without food or water for 74 days.

After many years in prison, he escaped from Hangzhou from which it is reported that nobody had previously escaped. He described how he heard the voice of the Holy Spirit, telling him to simply walk out the heavily guarded prison gate. Despite the risk of being shot, he wrote later that he obeyed the voice, and walked straight through several closed prison doors in front of many prison guards, across the prison yard and finally out of the main gate. Brother Yun stated that it was as if he had become invisible to the guards who stared straight through him. Although many expressed doubts that such a thing could happen, some prison guards have lost their jobs for this 'embarrassing mishap.' It is claimed that the official investigation by the Chinese Government concluded that Brother Yun received no human help in his escape and therefore should remain free. These reports have been corroborated by prisoners who occupied the same prison cell as Brother Yun. He remains the only person to claim to have escaped from this notorious maximum-security prison.

## Life in exile

Chinese Christians were fearful of providing accommodation for him because of the potential repercussions from government authorities. After escaping from China, Brother Yun took asylum in Germany. From there he traveled to different countries telling his story. In 2001 he was imprisoned in Myanmar for seven months!

The Heavenly Man is an autobiography of Brother Yun detailing his life from the age of sixteen, through his three accounts of imprisonment, and ending in his exile to Germany.

# Corrie Ten Boom

## The Dutch Watchmaker Who Saved 800 Jews from The Holocaust

From 1940 to 1944, Corrie ten Boom and her family used their home in the Netherlands as a hiding place for Jews who were fleeing the Nazis.

The watchmakers had a secret. In their home above the family shop on Barteljorisstraat in the Dutch city of Haarlem, they had built a safe room. There, Corrie ten Boom, her sister, and their father would save the lives of some 800 Jews fleeing the Nazis.

The ten Boom family joined the Dutch resistance after Germany invaded the Netherlands in 1940. Guided by their religious beliefs, they quietly funneled desperate Jewish refugees to safety. But in 1944, an informer would send the Nazis straight to their door.

Corrie ten Boom survived her time in concentration camps — barely — after her father and sister died.

Once the war ended, she set up a rehabilitation clinic for Holocaust survivors, preached the power of forgiveness, and wrote books about her experience.

This is her remarkable story.

Corrie ten Boom was born Cornelia Arnolda Johanna ten Boom on April 15, 1892. The youngest of four children, ten Boom grew up in a tight-knit religious family. They were Calvinists in the Dutch Reformed Church, which emphasized service to others.

The entire ten Boom family — aunts included — lived above the watch shop run by ten Boom's father, Casper. As ten Boom grew older, she became fascinated with the mechanics of watchmaking.

"I had always felt happy in this little shop, with its tiny voices and shelves of small shining faces," ten Boom wrote in her postwar memoir, *The Hiding Place*.

After her mother's death and a failed romance, ten Boom decided that she wanted to follow in her father's footsteps. "I was finding a joy in work I'd never dreamed of," ten Boom wrote. She had long helped her father with the administration of his shop, but now decided she wanted to learn the mechanics of watch repair itself.

She had no better mentor than Casper ten Boom. "Father's patience, his almost mystic rapport with the harmonies of watchworks, these were things that could not be taught," ten Boom remembered.

Alongside work with her father, ten Boom also enrolled in school to become a watchmaker. In 1922, she became the first licensed female watchmaker in Holland.

“And so was established the pattern our lives were to follow for over twenty years,” she wrote. In addition to helping her father run the shop, she established a youth club for young girls which offered religious instruction and classes.

But the peaceful existence of the ten Boom family was fragile. War clouds were on the horizon. Soon, visitors to the watch store came with worries about a looming invasion by Nazi Germany.

Over a stretch of seven days in May 1940, everything changed for Corrie ten Boom and her family. The Nazis invaded on May 10th. By May 17th, Germany occupied the Netherlands.

Before long, the country became a dangerous place for its Jewish citizens. Throughout the early 1940s, thousands and thousands of Jews were sent to concentration camps, leading Adolf Hitler acolyte Adolf Eichmann to state with satisfaction: “In the beginning you could say that the trains from the Netherlands were really rolling; it was quite wonderful.”

Corrie ten Boom vividly recalled how the mood of the country changed. Arrests of Jewish citizens became and more and more frequent. When ten Boom had Jewish customers, she delivered their watches so that they didn’t have to risk going out.

“At any minute there might be a rap on this door,” she remembered thinking while visiting with Jewish friends. “These children, this mother and father, might be ordered to the back of a truck.”

As members of the Dutch Reformed Church, the entire ten Boom family believed firmly in the equality of all human beings before God. They especially respected Jews as “God’s ancient people.” So when a Jewish woman named Kleermaker came to their door looking for help, they opened their arms.

“In this household, God’s people are always welcome,” Casper ten Boom said. He, Corrie, and her sister Bestie agreed to shelter her.

Before long, word of the ten Boom’s generosity spread. More and more people showed up at their doorstep looking for help. And as conditions in the Netherlands grew more dangerous, the family even built a secret room in Corrie ten Boom’s bedroom.

The room was no larger than a closet but could hold about six people. It had a crude ventilation system so they could get fresh air. The ten Booms also installed a buzzer in the house in order to quickly alert anyone there to hide during security sweeps. Some people stayed for an extended period; others moved on after a few days.

Despite the peril that lurked nearby, conditions within the ten Boom house were often light and merry. People hiding in the house played music together. At one point, everyone got together to rehearse a play.

But the danger outside was present — and growing nearer. On Feb. 28, 1944, it made its way to the ten Boom’s door.

Corrie ten Boom and her family had been betrayed by a Dutch informant. That day, the Gestapo raided the ten Boom home.

After a search of the house and an interrogation of the family, Corrie, Bestie, and Casper were arrested — the Gestapo never found the Jews hiding in the secret room.

The Gestapo ultimately arrested 30 people who had been in the ten Boom home that day. Eventually, they sent everyone home — except for Casper, Betsie, and Corrie ten Boom.

“I’d like to send you home, old fellow,” one of the guards at the Scheveningen prison said to Casper, who was then 84-years-old. “I’ll take your word that you won’t cause any more trouble.”

“If I go home today,” Casper responded, “I will open my door again to any man in need who knocks.”

Ten days later, he grew ill and died in prison.

After a few months in prison, Bestie and Corrie ten Boom were transferred to the Vught concentration camp in June 1944. That September, they were transferred again, to the notorious Ravensbrück concentration camp, which had been constructed specifically for women.

There, Betsie and Corrie lived under brutal conditions. They were among so-called “inferior beings” — social outcasts, Gypsies, resistance fighters, Jehovah’s Witnesses, political enemies, prostitutes, the disabled, and the mentally ill. The Nazi guards would routinely use their prisoners for twisted experiments. Between 1939 and 1945, more than 100,000 women would die there, including Betsie ten Boom.

Although Betsie and Corrie were able to find solace in their faith during their time in the camps, Betsie became ill at Ravensbrück. On December 16, 1944, she died at the age of 59.

“We must tell people what we have learned here,” Betsie said shortly before her death. “That there is no pit so deep that He is not deeper still. They will listen to us, Corrie, because we have been there.”

Due to a stroke of extraordinary luck — a clerical error — Corrie ten Boom was released 12 days after her sister’s death. She didn’t learn about the mistake until later. After ten Boom left, all the women in her age group were sent to the gas chamber.

After leaving Ravensbrück, Corrie ten Boom made her way home. Everything had changed. Her sister and father were dead. The city she’d known was utterly transformed.

But Corrie ten Boom hadn’t lost herself. After the war ended, she opened up a rehabilitation center for concentration camp survivors. She took the last words of her sister to heart, and spread the message that “there is no pit so deep that God’s love is not deeper still” and that “God will give us the love to be able to forgive our enemies.”

In 1947, Corrie ten Boom even forgave one of her former captors at a church in Munich.

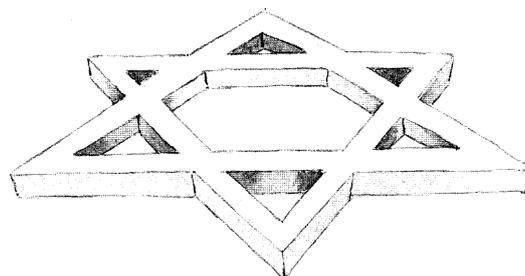
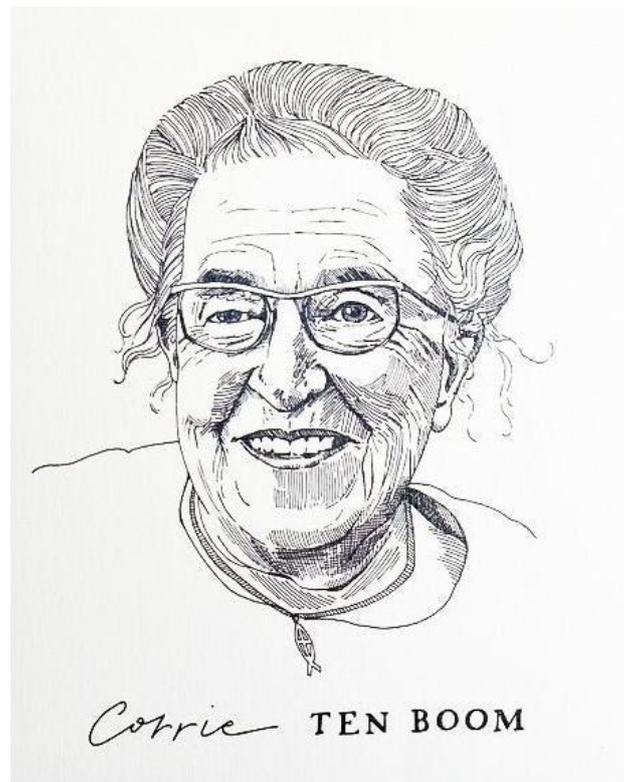
“You mentioned Ravensbrück in your talk,” he told her. “I was a guard in there.” He didn’t recognize his former prisoner. But ten Boom recognized him. Although she remembered the trauma of her captivity, she gave forgiveness when he asked for it.

“For I had to do it — I knew that,” ten Boom wrote. “The message that God forgives has a prior condition: that we forgive those who have injured us.”

In the next 30 years, Corrie ten Boom spent her life spreading that message. She traveled to over 60 countries to speak about the power of forgiveness.

By the time she died at the age of 91, on April 15, 1983, ten Boom had been recognized as one of Yad Vashem’s Righteousness Among Nations, an honor given by Israel to non-Jews who helped Jews during the Holocaust. Casper and Betsie ten Boom were recognized as well. Through their efforts, they’d saved some 800 lives.

Corrie ten Boom died on the same calendar day that she was born on – born April 15<sup>th</sup> 1892 and died April 15<sup>th</sup> 1983. In Judaism, this symmetry is considered a blessing for those who have completed their mission on Earth.



## David Brainerd

He died when still a young man. Only 29. But David Brainerd, a young Puritan who ministered to the Indians, was one of America's most influential missionaries. Though his life was brief, Brainerd's intense, passionate devotion to God affected countless Christians for many generations. Born in 1718 to a devout Puritan family in Haddam, Connecticut, USA, David Brainerd was orphaned at the age of 14. At twenty-one, swept up by the Great Awakening, he had a conversion experience and enrolled at Yale. Though an excellent student, Brainerd was dismissed in 1742 for criticizing one of the tutors, saying he had no more grace than a chair! Brainerd's regret over his rash statement could not secure his reinstatement. He ever afterward remained sensitive about criticism and maintaining Christian unity.

Brainerd studied with pastor Jedidiah Mills to prepare for the ministry and was soon licensed to preach. He went to work among the Indians at Kaunameek, about half way between Stockbridge, Massachusetts and Albany, New York. He diligently learned the Indian language but had little missionary success. So he moved on.

After being ordained by the Presbytery of New York, David began a new work among the Delaware Indians of Pennsylvania. Here too Brainerd saw little success in his ministry. Though often despondent because of his ineffective ministry, loneliness, and repeated illness brought on by tuberculosis, Brainerd determined to live wholly for God, whatever his outward success.

During 1745-1746, David Brainerd traveled to minister to the American Indians (First Nations People) near Trenton, New Jersey and was amazed at the immediate responsiveness of the Indians to the Christian message. Over 100 Indians at a time came to him in the region. Brainerd poured out his life in ministry to these Indians, writing that he wanted "to burn out in one continual flame for God." He helped secure land for the Indians when theirs was threatened and soon constructed a church, school, carpenter's shop, and infirmary.

By the fall of 1746 Brainerd was increasingly coughing up blood. The famous theologian-pastor, Jonathan Edwards, brought him to his home in Northampton, MA. There David Brainerd spent his last months, succumbing to tuberculosis on October 9, 1747.

Jonathan Edward's daughter Jerusha nursed Brainerd during his last illness, and a deep love developed between them. Edwards once overheard Brainerd tell Jerusha, "If I thought I should not see you, and be happy with you in another world, I could not bear to part with you. But we shall spend a happy eternity together." Jerusha contracted tuberculosis and died a few months after David, at the age of eighteen.

After David Brainerd's death, Jonathan Edwards edited and published his diary, describing it as an example of a devotional life "most worthy of imitation." This diary was to influence many missionaries in future generations, including William Carey and Henry Martyn, who went to India and Jim Eliot, the twentieth century missionary who gave his life ministering to the Auca Indians.

## David Livingstone - 39 Warriors

A Scottish missionary, after a long time in Africa, returned to his sending church in Scotland to report on his work and the ministry and to call more laborers to go to Africa. He arrived at the church; it was winter, cold, and raining. There were not many people who came, and he was a little disappointed.

Many of the people present were elderly. It was great that they were there, but they were not suitable for the mission field. He still felt that he should give the same message, so he proceeded with the message.

He explained they needed more laborers and ended the talk. This is how he ended it:

“Who will go? Who will go? Who will go?”

He didn’t know that the organist had a little boy assistant. As the organ music played, the boy stood up and shouted, “I will go! I will go! I will go!” The name of that little boy was David Livingstone.

He then advised David, “If God has called you to Africa, I suggest you become a medical doctor, and you can go to Africa as a medical missionary.” David grew up, went to medical school, and became a doctor. He then went to Africa as a medical missionary and labored tirelessly.

There was one particular tribe they were trying to reach, and it was very difficult. The chief sent him a message saying, “We are going to come tonight, and we are going to murder you and everyone in your compound.”

Now, the reason we know every detail of this story is that I’ve researched it. David Livingstone kept diaries, and all of this is written in them. In his diary, he wrote, “Lord, we’ve labored so faithfully. Please, please protect us.

Please help us.” He was fearful of what might happen, concerned that their ministry would be obliterated and everyone would die. But they didn’t kill them. A couple of years later, they eventually introduced the chief of the tribe to Jesus, and the entire community converted and followed Him.

David Livingstone later said to the chief, “You sent me a message that you were going to come and kill me and everyone in the compound.” The chief replied, “Yes, we came.” David asked, “Why did you not kill us?”

The chief said, “When we came to the compound, we saw 39 giants surrounding the compound. We counted them — they were big warriors, and there were 39 of them surrounding the compound.”

A couple of years later, David Livingstone returned to his sending church in Scotland and told that story. At the end of the meeting, the church secretary approached him and said, “Doctor Livingstone, do you remember the date when the chief was going to come and kill you?”

He replied, “Of course I know the date.” She gave him the date. The secretary of the church opened the church diary and showed him that on that date, there were 39 people in the church in Scotland praying for him — and there were 39 warriors surrounding the compound.

“Do not say that’s a coincidence.”

Adapted from YouTube presentation by J. John —

<https://www.facebook.com/jjohnglobal/videos/1147787133532264/?vh=e&fs=e&mibextid=wwXlfr&rdid=8Jc8GDIHzxUN62qa>

# Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was born in 1906, in Germany. He was one of six children, and a twin. As a child he was full of questions, about Heaven and about God.

At the age of fourteen he decided that he wanted to become a theologian. That is, someone who studies about God and the Bible and then teaches others. He found the old family Bible and started reading it, even though his family didn't go to church.

He worked hard and eventually graduated as a teacher and pastor. Then he was given the chance to study in America for a year. He didn't realize how much more he had to learn!

Dietrich watched in confusion in New York City where a waiter would not take an order of a black person. Dietrich went up and spoke to the black person named Frank.

"Frank, if they won't serve you because of the color of your skin, then none of us will ever eat here again!" With that, Dietrich and his friends left the restaurant in protest.

Walking home that evening, Dietrich was deep in thought. America was great, but why were people so prejudiced against blacks? Blacks were even attacked on the street for no reason. It was so unfair! God looked at a person's heart, not the color of his skin!

Experiences like this taught Dietrich things he hadn't learned in all his years of study. Living out his faith meant more than just attending church, reading books and teaching about God. Dietrich wanted to truly live out Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount, "God blesses those who work for peace." He returned to Germany determined to treat all people as equals and teach them that peace was always better than violence.

"What is different about you? What happened in America?" asked Dietrich's friends when he returned to Germany.

His answer was simple. He told them, "I became a Christian in America." Little did he know that his decision to promote peace and equality would soon be put to the test.

World War 2 began, and Hitler was scheming his evil plot to kill all Jews.

Dietrich's brother-in-law, Hans, approached him.

"Dietrich, we need your help. We're going to do it-- we're going to assassinate Hitler!"

Dietrich was shocked speechless. He looked at Hans, as his mind raced. As a pacifist, Dietrich believed in peace, not violence. How could he consider killing someone, even a monster like Hitler?

Adolph Hitler was Germany's leader. Hitler hated Jewish people so much that he wanted to get rid of them all. At first Jews lost their jobs, then their homes and businesses were

destroyed. Eventually, many were crowded into filthy concentration camps and forced to work without enough food or warm clothes. Many Jews were sent to extermination camps, where they were killed just because they were Jews.

But Hitler and his Nazi party didn't stop there. Anyone who opposed their evil plans would be treated like a Jew. Dietrich did all he could to show other Christians that they needed to stand up for the Jews, but many refused to listen. Now he was being asked to help kill Adolph Hitler.

"Hans, you know my beliefs! I hate what Hitler is doing, but I could never plot to kill somebody. I would be just like him! We've helped Jews escape and called the church to stand firm-- surely that is the most we can do."

"No, Dietrich. It's not enough. Thousands of Jews are dying each week and Germany is being destroyed. Hitler must be stopped!"

Dietrich remembered the verse that had challenged him back in America: "God blesses those who work for peace." He finally decided that removing the leader who was killing so many defenseless people would be the best way to work for peace. But the assassination attempt did not succeed. Dietrich, Hans and several other members of their family were arrested. He spent the last two years of his life in prison and concentration camps. Even under those awful conditions, Dietrich continued to challenge other Christians to stand against Hitler through his powerful writing. Those who were imprisoned with him looked to him as a pastor as they faced those dark days.

After five long days in the back of the transport truck, the weary prisoners were locked in a small schoolhouse for the night. The next morning was Sunday, so Dietrich led them in a church service. Following worship and prayer, Dietrich comforted the other prisoners with words from the book of Isaiah, "With his wounds we are healed." As Dietrich finished his last prayer, the door to the schoolhouse burst open. Two evil-looking men entered and pointed at Dietrich.

"Prisoner Bonhoeffer. Get ready to come with us." Just a few words, but everyone in the room knew what they meant. A hush fell over the little group as the room filled with a sudden tension.

As the prisoners said goodbye to Dietrich, he had time to whisper a last message. "Please don't worry about me. This may be the end of my life, but it's really just the beginning for me."

He died in 1945, at the end of World War 2.

## Jim Elliot

The Auca Indians who lived in the jungles of Ecuador were a fierce tribe, feared by all other tribes. In the 1950s they were still living in their traditional tribal way. The only contact with white people they had ever had was that of the rubber traders some years before. The rubber traders had come with guns, which had terrified the Aucas. When the five young American missionaries, Nat, Jim, Peter, Ed and Roger decided to make contact with the Aucas, they were really exposing themselves to great danger.

Ed, Jim and Peter had already spent three years working with another tribe of Indians in Ecuador. These were the more friendly Quichas. The Quichas territory bordered that of the Aucas. There they had got to know Nat. He was a pilot with Missionary Aviation Fellowship. His work involved flying a single-engined plane over the jungles and landing on tiny air strips which were merely small clearings in the jungle. He helped other missionaries with transport and supplies. He enjoyed his work, even though it was dangerous.

The four missionaries began praying about going into Auca territory. God would have to open the way for them, as the government had made things so difficult. One day they came across an Auca girl called Dayuma who had run away from the tribe. They were able to make friends with her and learn some of her language. Once a week they would fly over the Auca village and drop gifts using a canvas bucket on a long rope. Their first gift was a shiny aluminium kettle filled with coloured buttons. Other gifts included salt, axe-heads, plastic combs, clothing and little parcels of food wrapped in banana leaves.

Each time they flew over there were more and more Aucas waiting to receive their gifts. They started flying lower with the hope of broadcasting a message to the Aucas through a loud speaker. With the help of Dayuma, they were able to translate the message into the Auca language. "We like you. We have come to pay you a visit," was the message. The Aucas seemed to be responding. They started sending gifts back to the missionaries using the bucket and rope. They sent a black bird in a cage and some cotton thread.

By now, a fifth missionary, Roger, had joined the four. It was time to make a landing in Auca territory. Nat, the pilot landed the plane safely on a sandy beach four miles from the Auca settlement. They set up base here and prepared to stay for two weeks. They kept up their routine of flying over the settlement delivering gifts. It was not long before the Aucas realized that the plane was landing on the beach and their curiosity overcame their fear. Three Aucas came to investigate. The missionaries made friends with the three Aucas and one of them even agreed to have a ride in the plane. A couple of days later the men radioed their wives as usual, saying that they had seen ten Aucas heading towards the base. That was the last message they sent. A search party some days later found their bodies in a shallow river. The five missionaries had been killed by the Aucas.

Although the death of the men was tragic, they had pioneered the way for others to spread the gospel. Many other brave Christians continued their work. Two of these were Jim's wife Elisabeth, and Nat's older sister. Other missionaries from the U.S.A. also joined them. To share the Good News with the Aucas. Many Aucas eventually gave their lives to Jesus, and they will always remember the five men who gave their lives to bring them the Good News of Jesus.

# Elisabeth Elliot

## ELISABETH'S EARLY YEARS

Elisabeth Elliot was born on December 27, 1926 in Brussels, Belgium, where her parents served as missionaries. Before she was one year-old they moved to America to Germantown, Pennsylvania, outside of Philadelphia

## CALLING TO ECUADOR

A true pioneer in the world of Christianity, Elisabeth went to Wheaton College and studied Greek, because she desired to translate the Bible for the remote regions in the world. While at the college, she met Jim Elliot. After graduation, Elisabeth went on a missionary expedition to Ecuador with other students from Wheaton, including Jim Elliot.

In the first year of their missionary journey, Jim and Elisabeth worked in different regions. A year after entering Ecuador, Jim joined Elisabeth in the Quichua Indian tribe. In 1953, Jim and Elisabeth were married and continued to serve in Ecuador. They had a daughter, Valerie. Tragedy struck one day, when 5 of the men in their team, including her husband Jim, were killed by Auca Indians. Elisabeth refused to give up on the people in that tribe. She continued to live in the region with her daughter and Rachel Saint, the sister of another one of the missionaries that the Auca tribe killed. They lived among the Quichua tribe.

While living in the Quichua tribe, two Auca women lived with Elisabeth for one year. During that year of living with the two Auca women, Elisabeth came to understand why the tribe killed her husband and the other missionaries. The tribe feared that outsiders were going to come into their tribe and take away their freedom. With that understanding, Elisabeth and Rachel Saint were able to go to the Auca tribe and build relationships with them. They led the people of the tribe to Jesus. The tribe saw and understood the forgiveness and grace that Elisabeth and Rachel extended to them.

Elisabeth wrote two books while she lived in Ecuador that contained her experiences and Jim's experiences with the Auca tribe. She wrote *Through the Gates of Splendor*, which gives an account of her and Jim's experiences with the Auca tribe.

## ELISABETH'S RETURN TO AMERICA

After spending two years with the Auca, Elisabeth returned to America with her daughter in 1963. Elisabeth and her daughter, Valerie lived in New Hampshire when they returned to America. Elisabeth met Addison Leitch, a theologian professor at Gordon Conwell University, and married him in 1969. During their marriage, Addison and Elisabeth toured the United States with speaking engagements. Elisabeth never limited her message to women. She would inspire other Christians to live their lives, both men and women, with a passion to live for God.

Four years after they were married in 1973, Addison lost his battle with cancer and died. Valerie was thirteen when Elisabeth married Addison and was excited that God gave her a "Daddy." When he died, Valerie was devastated to lose the father that she knew. She knew

about Jim Elliot her biological father, but she knew Addison as a father who was present with her.

### **ELISABETH'S LOVE REDEEMED**

After Leitch's death, Elisabeth invited two lodgers (guests) to live in her home. One of the lodgers married Valeria, and the other lodger, Lars Gren, married Elisabeth. Lars Gren was a hospital chaplain. Lars and Elisabeth were married until her death.

At the age of 89, on June 15, 2015 Elisabeth Elliot died. As her soul resides in heaven, her legacy lives on earth with her writings and stories.

### **BOOKS WRITTEN BY ELISABETH ELLIOT**

In her lifetime, Elisabeth wrote and published twenty-four books. She continued to travel and speak all over America sharing her story, her knowledge, and wisdom of God's Word until her health stopped her in 2004. One of her most popular books is *Through the Gates of Splendor*. This book tells the story of Jim Elliot and their encounter with the tribes in Ecuador that eventually took his life.

### **QUOTES FROM ELISABETH ELLIOT**

"God never denies our hearts' desire except to give us something better."

"I have one desire now—to live a life with reckless abandon for the Lord, putting all my strength and energy into it."

"Leave it all in the Hands that were wounded for you."

"Fear arises when we imagine that everything depends on us."

"We cannot give our lives to God and keep our bodies to ourselves."

"And underneath are the everlasting arms."

<https://www.inspirationalchristians.org/evangelists/elisabeth-elliott-biography/>

## **Richard Wurmbrand** (1909 – 2001)

“He stood in the midst of lions, but they could not devour him.” – Philadelphia Herald

Richard Wurmbrand was born the youngest of four boys in a Jewish family on March 24, 1909, in Bucharest, Romania. Gifted intellectually and fluent in nine languages, Richard was active in politics and worked as a stockbroker. On Oct. 26, 1936, Richard married Sabina Oster, who was also Jewish. They placed their faith in Jesus Christ in 1938 as a result of the influence of a German carpenter. Richard was ordained as an Anglican, and later Lutheran, minister.

During World War II, Richard and Sabina saw opportunities for evangelism among the occupying German forces. They preached in bomb shelters and rescued Jewish children out of the ghettos. Richard and Sabina were repeatedly arrested and beaten and, at least once, nearly executed. Sabina lost her Jewish family in Nazi concentration camps.

In 1945, Romanian Communists seized power and a million Russian troops poured into the country. Pastor Wurmbrand ministered to his oppressed countrymen while engaging in bold evangelism to the Russian soldiers.

Between 1945 and 1947, Richard distributed 1 million Gospels to Russian troops, often disguising the books as Communist propaganda. Richard also helped arrange the smuggling of Gospels into Russia.

On Feb. 29, 1948, the secret police kidnapped Richard as he traveled to church and took him to their headquarters. He was locked in a solitary cell and labeled “Prisoner Number 1.” He was tortured for his faith, but he stood firm and did not deny Christ. In 1950, his wife, Sabina, was also imprisoned. She was forced to serve as a laborer on the Danube Canal project, leaving their 9-year-old son, Mihai, alone and homeless. He was then taken in by Christian friends, who risked imprisonment to care for the child of a political prisoner. Sabina was released after three years, and Richard was also later released, only to be re-arrested and then released in an amnesty in 1964.

In December 1965, two organizations paid a \$10,000 ransom to allow the Wurmbrand family to leave Romania. Reluctant to leave his homeland, Richard was convinced by other underground church leaders to leave and become a “voice” to the world for the underground church. Richard, Sabina and their son, Mihai, left Romania for Norway and then traveled on to England.

Richard began his ministry of being a voice for persecuted Christians in the West, where he also wrote his testimony of persecution, *Tortured for Christ*. Later, Richard moved to the United States, and in 1967 the Wurmbrands officially began a ministry committed to serving our persecuted Christian family called Jesus to the Communist World (later renamed The Voice of the Martyrs). This work continues today in more than 60 countries where Christians are persecuted.

## Sundar Singh

Singh was raised a member of the Sikh religion. Prior to his conversion, Sundar attended a primary school run by the American Presbyterian Mission where the New Testament was read daily as a "textbook." Sundar "refused to read the Bible at the daily lessons. To some extent the teaching of the Gospel on the love of God attracted him, but he still thought it was false.

In the midst of such confusion and while only fourteen years old, his mother died, and Sundar underwent a crisis of faith. His mother was a loving woman and they were very close. In his anger, Sundar burned a copy of one of the Gospels in public. Within three days Sundar Singh could bear his misery no longer. Late one night in December 1903, he rose from bed and prayed that God reveal himself to him if he really existed. Otherwise -- "I planned to throw myself in front of the train which passed by our house." For seven hours Sundar Singh prayed. "O God, if there is a God, reveal thyself to me tonight." The next train was due at five o'clock in the morning. The hours passed. Suddenly the room filled with a glow. A man appeared before him. Sundar Singh heard a voice say, "How long will you deny me? I died for you; I have given my life for you." He saw the man's hands, pierced by nails.

Amazed that his vision had taken the unexpected form of Jesus, Sundar was convinced in his heart that Jesus was the true Saviour, and that He was alive. Sundar fell on his knees before Him and experienced an astonishing peacefulness which he had never felt before. The vision disappeared, but peace and joy lingered within him.

Despite his family's pleas, bribes, and threats, Sundar wanted to be baptized in the Christian faith. After his father spoke words of official rejection over him, Sundar became an outcast from his people. Sundar cut off the hair he had worn long like every Sikh man. Against great opposition, he was baptized on his birthday in 1905, in an English church in Simla.

Sundar journeyed much. He traveled all over India and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). Between 1918-1919, he visited Malaysia, Japan and China. Between 1920-1922 he went to Western Europe, Australia and Israel. He preached in many cities; Jerusalem, Lima, Berlin and Amsterdam among others. Despite his growing fame, Sundar retained a modest nature, desiring only to follow Jesus' example: to repay evil with kindness and to win over his enemies by love.

He traveled in India and Tibet, as well as the rest of the world, with the message that the modern interpretation of Jesus was sadly watered down. Sundar visited Tibet every summer and in 1929, he visited there and was never seen again.

# 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?
- How old were they when they died?
- Where were they born?
- Where did they work?
- What was the main type of work they did?



white

## 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

## 2. 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

## 3. 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

## 4. 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

## 5. 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