

William Carey

The Power of Hanging on ! . . .



"The temper of our times is for instant gratification and short-term commitment – quick answers to prayer and quick results with a minimum of effort and discomfort. But there is no such thing as easy and instant discipleship. One can commence a walk of discipleship in a moment, but the first step must lengthen into a lifelong walk." So said J. Oswald Sanders, and so proved William Carey, the father of modern foreign missions, a diminutive bald headed English shoemaker.

He had little formal education, when a fellow apprentice, by faithful witness showed him his sinfulness and need of a Savior and led him to the Lord. He soon started preaching among the Baptists, but his speech was crude and his sermons poor. He said of himself that his great asset was that he was a "plodder." He just wouldn't give up.

Before his 41 years were finished in India as a missionary he had proved how great is the benefit of being a plodder. There he mastered 7 languages, became a master botanist and college professor with several degrees. As a young man, he was challenged by David Brainerd's story. He would look at the globe and weep, "And these are pagan, pagan."

And he longed for other Christians, especially ministers to share his great concern to fulfill the great commission. He said, "If Christ could stoop so low as to visit our sinful world, and be moved with compassion upon the most undeserving and guilty, the most sinful and depraved, in what better way could we demonstrate His grace than by laboring to promote the salvation of the most ignorant and helpless."

After preaching to a group of ministers, he was told, "Sit down young man. When God chooses to convert the heathen, he will do it without consulting you or me." Nonetheless, before the end of that day it was agreed that plans be laid to form a Baptist Society for propagating the gospel among the heathen.

Carey became their first missionary. But in the first 7 years he never saw a single convert, and death daily wore a thousand faces. It claimed one of his children and one by one his 3 wives. He wrote, "Now all my friends are but one. I rejoice, however, that He is all-sufficient, and can supply all my wants, spiritual and temporal."

Just a few years later there were 1400 baptized Christians.

A brilliant linguist, Carey with his helpers translated portions of the scripture into more than 40 languages. They had more than 100 schools with nearly 7000 students. He never returned to England. but in 1834 he went Home. He had these words put on his tombstone, "A wretched, poor, and helpless worm, On Thy kind arms I fall."

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