

First Biographies

Amy Carmichael

(1867 - 1951)



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Retold by Christina Eastwood

Amy Carmichael

Amy Carmichael (1867-1951) was a missionary in India. On the 6th day of every month she and her helpers had a special day. They would give thanks and pray specially on that day. This was all because of something that happened on 6th March 1901.

Amy learnt the Tamil language. This is spoken in the south of India. She also studied the Hindu caste system. The caste system sorts people out according to their birth. Some are born into a high caste. Some are born into a low caste. No one can change caste. High caste people are more important. They have better jobs. They earn more money. The different castes cannot mix with each other. It is not allowed for a low caste person to do the kind of job that high caste people do. The

caste system is part of the Hindu belief in re-incarnation.

Re-incarnation means that your soul survives death. It comes back to the world in another body. It may be a human body or an animal. If the person has done good things in their life they will be rewarded. They will go up into a better caste when they return reincarnated. If they have done evil they will be punished. They will be in a lower caste when they come back.

Perhaps they will be an animal. If someone is poor they must deserve it. In a previous life they must have done something bad.

Amy Carmichael knew how wrong this was. She knew it was not true. She knew that people are equal in God's eyes. She travelled many miles over India telling people about God's forgiveness and salvation.

Amy Carmichael wore Indian clothes.

Sometimes she would even dye her skin using tea or coffee. In this way she did not look strange to Indian people. Amy had brown eyes just like Indian people. That helped her too. As a little girl she had wanted blue eyes. She even prayed to God, "please change my brown eyes to blue!"

How glad she was when she became a missionary in India that her eyes were brown. God had answered her prayer. But in a way she did not think of as a child. He did not give her blue eyes. He gave her a job that made her pleased with brown eyes!

Amy discovered that little girls were being sold to the temples as slaves. She wanted to rescue them. On 6th March Preena, joined Amy Carmichael and her team of helpers. She was the first India girl to be rescued.

You can see her photo below.



Preena managed to escape from the temple. She went home to her mother. However, her mother was afraid. "The gods will punish me if you run away," she said. She took Preena back to the temple. Preena went each day to collect water for the temple. She had heard Amy telling Indian ladies about God's love for all. "God loves people of every caste," Amy said. Preena escaped again. This time she ran to the church in the village. A Christian lady found her. She took her to Amy. Preena

climbed at once into Amy's lap. "Please let me stay, Amma" she begged. Amma means "mummy."

Amy prayed for God to guide her. It would be hard to keep Preena. More and more poor children came to Amy for help. God had answered her prayer!

Amy worked in India for fifty-five years. She never went back to Britain. In 1931 she fell and hurt herself. Now she could often not get out of bed. She continued to serve in India even so until she died.

