

WILLIAM CAREY
International Development Journal



Celebration of William Carey's 250th Birthday

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Who Was William Carey?

VISHAL AND RUTH MANGALWADI

Imagine a quiz master at the finals of the All Indian Universities' competition. He asks the best-informed Indian students, "Who was William Carey?" All hands go up simultaneously. He decides to give everyone a chance to answer.

A Quiz: Who Was William Carey?

Botanist

"William Carey was the botanist," answers a science student, "after whom *Careya herbacea* is named. It is one of the three varieties of eucalyptus found only in India."

"Carey brought the English daisy to India and introduced the Linnaean system to gardening. He also published the first books on science and natural history in India such as *Flora Indica*, because he believed the biblical view, 'All Thy Works praise Thee, O Lord.' Carey believed that nature is declared 'good' by its Creator. It is not *maya* (illusion) to be shunned, but a subject worthy of human study. He frequently lectured on science and tried to inject a basic scientific presupposition into the Indian mind that even lowly insects are not souls in bondage, but creatures worthy of our attention."

Industrialist

"William Carey was the first Englishman to introduce the steam engine to India and the

first to make indigenous paper for the publishing industry," pipes up the student of mechanical engineering. "Carey encouraged Indian blacksmiths to make copies of his engine using local materials and skills."

Economist

"William Carey," announces an economics major, "who introduced the idea of savings banks to India to fight the all-pervasive social evil of usury. Carey believed that God, being righteous, hated usury and thought that lending at the interest of 36 to 72 percent made investment, industry, commerce and the economic development of India impossible."

"The moral dimensions of Carey's economic efforts," the student continues, "have assumed special importance in India since the trustworthiness of the savings banks has become questionable, due to the greed and corruption of the bankers and the nationalization of the banks in the name of socialism. The all-pervasive culture of bribery has, in many cases, pushed the interest rates up to as much as 100 percent and made credit unavailable to honest entrepreneurs."

"In order to attract European capital to India and to modernize Indian agriculture, economy and industry, Carey also advocated the policy that Europeans should be allowed to own land and

property in India. Initially, the British Government was against such a policy because of its questionable results in the United States. But by the time of Carey's death, the same government had acknowledged the far-reaching economic wisdom of his stand. Likewise our Indian government, after one-half century of destructive xenophobia, has again opened the doors for Western capital and industry."

Medical Humanitarian

"William Carey was the first man," asserts a medical student, "who led the campaign for a humane treatment for leprosy patients. Until his time, they were sometimes buried or burned alive in India because of the belief that a violent end purified the body and ensured transmigration into a healthy new existence. Natural death by disease was believed to result in four successive births and a fifth as a leper. Carey believed that Jesus' love touches leprosy patients so they should be cared for."

Media Pioneer

The student of printing technology stands up next. "Dr. William Carey was the father of print technology in India. He brought to India the modern science of printing and publishing and then taught and developed it. He built what was then the largest press in India. Most printers had to buy their fonts from his press at Serampore."

"William Carey," responds a student of mass communications, "established the first newspaper ever printed in any oriental language because he believed that, 'Above all forms of truth and faith, Christianity seeks free discussion.' His English-language journal, *Friend of India*, was the force that gave birth to the Social Reform Movement in India in the first half of the 19th century."

Agriculturalist

"William Carey was the founder of the Agricultural Society in the 1820's, thirty years before the Royal Agricultural Society was established in England," says the postgraduate student of agriculture. "Carey did a systematic survey of

agriculture in India, wrote for agriculture reform in the journal *Asiatic Researches* and exposed the evils of the indigo cultivation system two generations before it collapsed."

"Carey did all this," adds the agriculturist, "not because he was hired to do it, but because he was horrified to see that three-fifths of one of the finest countries in the world, full of industrious inhabitants, had been allowed to become an uncultivated jungle abandoned to wild beasts and serpents."

Translator and Educator

"Carey was the first man to translate and publish great Indian religious classics such as the *Ramayana* and philosophical treatises such as *Samkhya* into English," says the student of literature. "Carey transformed Bengali, which was previously considered 'fit only for demons and women' into the foremost literary language of India. He wrote gospel ballads in Bengali to bring the Hindu love of musical recitations to the service of his Lord. He also wrote the first Sanskrit dictionary for scholars."

"Carey was a British cobbler," joins in the student of education, "who became a professor of Bengali, Sanskrit and Marathi at the Fort William College in Calcutta where civil servants were trained. Carey began dozens of schools for Indian children of all castes and launched the first college in Asia at Serampore, near Calcutta. He wanted to develop the Indian mind and liberate it from the darkness of superstition. For nearly 3,000 years, India's religious culture had denied most Indians free access to knowledge, and the Hindu, Mughal and British rulers had gone along with this high caste strategy to keep the masses in the bondage of ignorance. Carey displayed enormous spiritual strength in standing against the priests who had a vested interest in depriving the masses of the freedom and power that comes from the knowledge of truth."

Astronomer

"William Carey introduced the study of astronomy into the Subcontinent," declares a student

of mathematics. “He cared deeply about the destructive cultural ramifications of astrology—fatalism, superstitious fear and an inability to organize and manage time.”

“Carey wanted to introduce India to the scientific culture of astronomy. He did not believe that the heavenly bodies are ‘deities that governed our lives.’ He knew that human beings are created to govern nature, and that the sun, moon and the planets are created to assist us in our task of governing. Carey thought that the heavenly bodies ought to be carefully studied since the Creator had made them to be signs or markers. They help divide the monotony of the universe into directions—East, West, North and South—and of time into days, years and seasons. They make it possible for us to devise calendars, study geography and history and plan our lives, our work and our societies. The culture of astronomy sets us free to be rulers, whereas the culture of astrology makes us subjects, our lives determined by our stars.”

Library Pioneer

A post-graduate student of library science stands up next. “William Carey,” she reveals, “pioneered the idea of lending libraries in the Subcontinent.”

“While the East India Company was importing shiploads of ammunition and soldiers to subdue India, Carey asked his friends to load educational books and seeds into those same ships. He believed these would facilitate his task of regenerating Indian soil and empowering Indian people to embrace ideas that would generate freedom of the mind. Carey’s objective was to create indigenous literature in the vernacular. But until such indigenous literature was available, Indians needed to receive knowledge and wisdom from around the world to catch up quickly with other cultures. He wanted to make worldwide information available to Indians through lending libraries.”

Forest Conservationist

“William Carey was an evangelist,” maintains the student from the Indian Forest Institute. “He

thought that ‘if the gospel flourishes in India, the wilderness will, in every respect, become a fruitful field.’ He became the first man in India to write essays on forestry, almost 50 years before the government made its very first attempt at forest conservation in Malabar. Carey vigorously advocated and practiced the cultivation of timber, giving practical advice on how to plant trees for environmental, agricultural and commercial purposes. His motivation came from the belief that God has made man responsible for the earth. It was in response to Carey’s journal, *Friend of India*, that the government first appointed Dr. Brandis of Bonn to care for the forests of Burma and arranged for the supervision of the forests of South India by Dr. Clegham.”

Advocate for Women’s Rights

“William Carey,” argues a female social science scholar “was the first man to stand against both the ruthless murders and the widespread oppression of women, virtually synonymous with Hinduism in the 18th and 19th centuries. The male in India was crushing the female through polygamy, female infanticide, child marriage, widow-burning, euthanasia and forced female illiteracy, all sanctioned by religion. The British Government timidly accepted these social evils as being an irreversible and intrinsic part of India’s religious mores. Carey began to conduct systematic sociological and scriptural research. He published his reports in order to raise public opinion and protest both in Bengal and in England. He influenced a whole generation of civil servants, his students at Fort William College, to resist these evils. Carey opened schools for girls. When widows converted to Christianity, he arranged marriages for them rather than allowing them to be burned alive. It was Carey’s persistent 25 year battle against sati that finally led to Lord Bentinck’s famous Edict in 1829, banning one of the most abominable of all religious practices in the world: widow-burning.”

Public Servant

“William Carey,” pronounces a student of

public administration, “who initially was not allowed to enter British India because the East India Company was against proselytizing Hindus. Therefore, Carey worked in the Danish territory of Serampore. But because the Company could not find a suitable professor of Bengali for Fort William College, he was later invited to teach there. During his professorship, lasting 30 years, Carey transformed the ethos of the British administration from indifferent imperial exploitation to ‘civil service.’”

Moral Reformer

“William Carey,” reflects a student of Indian philosophy, “was a preacher who revived the ancient idea that ethics and morality were inseparable from religion. This had been an important assumption underlying the Vedic religion. But the *Upanishadic* teachers separated ethics from spirituality. They thought that the human self (*Atman*) was the divine Self (Brahma). Therefore, our spirit cannot sin. Our *Atman* only gets deluded and begins to imagine itself as distinct from God. What we require is not deliverance from sin but enlightenment, i.e., a direct experience of our divinity. This denial of human sinfulness and emphasis on the mystical experience of our divinity made it possible for us in India to be intensely ‘religious,’ yet at the same time unabashedly immoral.”

“Carey began to affirm that human beings were sinners and needed both forgiveness for sin and deliverance from its power over them. He taught that it was not ignorance, but sin, that had separated us from God; therefore, it was impossible to please God without holiness. According to him, true spirituality began only when we repented of our sin. This teaching revolutionized the 19th century religious scene in India. For example, after Raja Ram Mohun Roy, one of the greatest Hindu scholars of that century, came in contact with Carey and the others at Serampore, he began to question seriously the spirituality then prevalent in India. Raja Ram Mohun Roy concluded, ‘The consequence of my long and uninterrupted research into religious truth has been that I have

found the doctrine of Christ more conducive to moral principles, and better adapted for the use of rational beings, than any other which has come to my knowledge.”

Transformer of Culture

A student of history stands up last. “Dr. William Carey was the father of the Indian Renaissance of the 19th and 20th centuries. Hindu India had reached its intellectual, artistic, architectural and literary zenith by the 11th century AD. After the absolute monism of *Adi Shankaracharya* began to sweep the Indian subcontinent in the 12th century, the creative springs of humanity dried up and India’s great decline began. The material environment, human rationality and all that enriches human culture became suspect. Asceticism, untouchability, mysticism, the occult, superstition, idolatry, witchcraft and oppressive beliefs and practices became the hallmark of Indian culture. The invasion, exploitation and the resulting political dominance of foreign rulers made matters worse.”

“Into this chaos Carey came and initiated the process of India’s reform. He saw India not as a foreign country to be exploited, but as his heavenly Father’s land to be loved and served, a society where truth, not ignorance, needed to rule. Carey’s movement culminated in the birth of Indian nationalism and of India’s subsequent independence. Carey believed that God’s image was in man, not in idols; therefore, it was oppressed humanity that ought to be served. He believed in understanding and controlling nature instead of fearing, appeasing or worshiping it; in developing one’s intellect instead of killing it, as mysticism taught. He emphasized enjoying literature and culture instead of shunning it as *maya*. His this-worldly spirituality, with as strong an emphasis on justice and love for others as on love for God, marked the turning point of Indian culture from a downward to an upward trend. The early Indian leaders of the Hindu Renaissance, such as Raja Ram Mohun Roy, Keshub Chandra Sen and others, drew their inspiration from William Carey and those associated with him.”

So Who Was William Carey?

William Carey was all of these things and thus a central character in the story of the modernization of India. Carey also pioneered the Protestant Church in India and translated or published the Bible in 40 different Indian languages. He was an evangelist who used every available medium to illuminate the dark facets of India with the light of truth.

Excerpt from *The Legacy of William Carey*,
by Vishal and Ruth Mangalwadi, 1999 Crossway
Books. Used by permission of the author.

William Carey, the Agriculturalist

KEN GNANAKAN

William Carey, the worker with a big vision is equally known for his practical pursuits putting faith into practice as much as the proclamation of the Gospel. The Gospel for him was not only for salvation of the "soul"; and therefore gave him access into several areas of life in India. His was a holistic purpose in every sense of the word.

We read brief references to Carey as an agriculturist or a botanist scattered here and there, and I have been eager to explore this further. To my delight I stumbled across *The Life of William Carey*, a book by George Smith published in 1922.¹ Being interested in some aspects of the field myself, this was pure serendipity!² Carey, Smith writes, was

"...an erudite botanist. Had he arrived in Calcutta a few days earlier than he did, he would have been appointed to the place for which sheer poverty led him to apply, in the Company's Botanical Garden, established ...for the collection of indigenous

and acclimatisation of foreign plants...

One of Carey's first requests was for seeds and instruments, not merely from scientific reasons, but that he might carry out his early plan of working with his hands as a farmer while he evangelised the people."³

Smith refers to Carey as "the gentle botanist" who engaged in this recreation "in the interest of his body as well as of his otherwise overtaken spirit." Such engagement in kingdom activity must flow from a theology that legitimizes all activity in God's world as God's purposes. This was undoubtedly true – Carey, being a devout Calvinist, regarded creation as God's handiwork.⁴

Carey procured five acres of land in Serampore (near Calcutta) and planted trees which had not been known to that region. There was "mahogany and deodar, the teak and tamarind, the carob and eucalyptus." He was very careful to record the date of planting and meticulously checked on the rate of growth. The trees grew to becoming a welcoming abode to all who visited. "The garden" was

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more than a place of recreation. “It was his oratory, the scene of prayer and meditation, the place where he began and ended the day of light.”⁵

It was not merely the planting of trees; Carey was interested in the prevalence of a scientific foundation. He introduced the “Linnaean classification” to India, and began the enormous task of recording and classifying Indian plants. (Modern biological classification has its root in the work of Carolus Linnaeus, who grouped species according to physical characteristics.)

William Carey was soon to become an agricultural reformer. He was concerned about the state of agriculture in the district, and urged various improvements. “The soils, the “extremely poor” people, their “proportionally simple and wretched farming utensils,” the cattle, the primitive irrigation alluded to in Deuteronomy (11:10) as “watering with the foot,” and the modes of ploughing and reaping, were all a matter of his concern.”⁶

Carey considered various aspects of hemp and jute plants, oil-seeds, the cultivation of wheat, pulses, “egg-plant, the capsicums, the cucumbers, the arum roots, turmeric, ginger, and sugar-cane” and all to help improve methods of growing and helping the poor. He was soon ready to cause his experiments to receive wider application; and on 15th April 1820, issued a “Prospectus” launching the “Agricultural and Horticultural Society in India.”

The Society gradually grew into having an influence on individuals and institutions with various studies being propagated to improve agricultural methods. In 1842, the Agri-Horticultural Society resolved to honour its founder; the then president stated – “... the late Reverend Dr. William Carey, who unceasingly applied his great talents, abilities, and influence in advancing the happiness of India—more especially by the spread of an improved system of husbandry and gardening inspires our desire to mark, by some permanent record, their sense of his transcendent worth, by placing a marble bust to his memory.”⁷

I write about Carey as an agriculturist with a deep desire for a practical engagement of Christians in resolving the problem of food security among the poor. The crisis we face is looming large, and this is of grave concern. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently said that the world’s poorest countries are facing “a real prospect of a new crisis in food and nutrition security.”

If we truly believe in God as creator, and that we are caretakers of God’s creation, then Carey’s example should be one that will make us more concerned Christians.

Footnotes

1. George Smith, *The Life of William Carey* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1922), 216.

2. My interest in ecology and the environment has led me to membership of the International Ecological Engineering Society, Switzerland with a heavy focus on agriculture and food security.

3. Smith, 219.

4. <http://www.reformedreader.org/rbb/carey/caindex.htm>

5. Smith, 222.

6. Ibid., 227.

7. Ibid., 239.

William Carey's Current Contribution to Bible Translation: Wyclipedia

RYE

*"In some languages they (ie Carey and Marshman) stand unrivalled; others they are putting into the press without knowing a word of them or being able to read the characters in which they are written."*¹

William Carey was a fruitful servant of the Lord. His perseverance and productivity have been matched by few others. What was his secret to making so much progress in Bible translation? He (and Marshman) "believed that a faulty translation was better than none."² Thus, he felt free to facilitate a large quantity of work without the pressures of perfectionism. He recognized that translation work is a process, and accepted the tension inherent in striving for both quantity and quality.

Carey described himself as a "plodder" when writing to his nephew. "Eustace, if after my removal any one should think it worth his while to write my Life, I will give you a criterion by which you may judge of its correctness. If he give me credit for being a plodder he will describe me justly. Anything beyond this will be too much. I can plod. I can persevere in any definite pursuit. To this I owe everything."³ He spent decades plodding through translation in his favorite language. In all, he published five editions of the Old Testa-

ment and eight editions of the New Testament in Bengali. Another example of his "plodding" can be found in his response to the devastating 1812 fire at Serampore. He wrote a letter about it to a Dr. Ryland on March 25th, 1812.—"I wish to submit to His sovereign will, nay, cordially to acquiesce therein, and to examine myself rigidly to see what in me has contributed to this evil. I now, however, turn to the bright side...and the merciful circumstances which attend even this stroke of God's rod; but I will principally notice what will tend to cheer the heart of everyone who feels for the cause of God. Our loss, so far as I can see, is repairable in a much shorter time than I should at first have supposed."⁴ Embracing the destruction as needed humbling, reproof from God, Carey lead others in resuming the work as quickly as possible, even viewing the loss of first drafts positively inasmuch as the second drafts were superior. Furthermore, many Europeans awoke to the cause as a result, expressing overwhelming support.

Carey was a productive plodder. Early on, he had trained himself to consistently study Scriptures in other languages. George Smith shares that, "From the time of his youth, when he realised the self-evidencing power of the Bible,

Carey's unbroken habit was to begin every morning by reading one chapter of the Bible, first in English, and then in each of the languages, soon, numbering six, which he had himself learned."⁵

This was a good foundation for his latter work. Figures vary, but it seems that, in all, Serampore produced approximately 44 Bibles. Of these projects Carey himself was directly involved in 28, of which seven included the entire Bible. "Most of these Serampore versions were, it is true, first attempts and have been superseded by more accurate versions, but the first step is always the most important one, and this was taken by Carey and his brethren."⁶

His Motive

Carey believed the Word of God to be of eternal import. The Mangalwadis phrase it in this way: "[C]arey spent enormous energy in translating and promoting the Bible, because as a modern man he believed that God's revelation alone could remove superstition..."⁷ Carey himself said "Schemes of temporal relief, however praiseworthy, can only extend their beneficial influence through the term of human life; but to impart the Word of Life to those who have it not, is an exercise of benevolence as far transcending in importance all inferior plans of charity, as the interests of eternity outweigh those of time."⁸

Carey was focused. "Carey became utterly consumed with the need to record, write and understand the local languages – in order that he might deliver the Bible to the people."⁹ Thus, he had little time for distractions: "You, madam," he wrote in 1797 to a lady as to many a correspondent, "will excuse my brevity when I inform you that all my time for writing letters is stolen from the work of transcribing the Scriptures into the Bengali language."¹⁰

His Approach

Sanskrit was a philological key that unlocked the meaning to many other languages. Carey claimed it sometimes gave him the meaning of 4

out of 5 words in other (Indo-Aryan) tongues.¹¹ Thus, he adopted an approach of a "mother translation" and "daughter translations."¹²

Carey's organizational methodology was ahead of his time. He ably organized resources like natives, typesetters, European support, colleagues, and a successor. Carey gathered pundits and munshies from all over India to write rough drafts. Then, they read over one another's work, discussing difficulties they encountered and offering other helpful feedback.¹³ Marshman, who had been trained in the original languages, served as a kind of quality control consultant, editing even the work of Carey. On one occasion, he commented that a Persian New Testament would do much good "though it be not wholly free from imperfections."¹⁴

Cluster Projects

Translation work seems to have changed through time. As recently as the last century, a typical model involved one translator couple and one language group. However, exciting advancements are under way. SIL¹⁵ comments that the cluster approach, "[I]nvolves a consultant team working alongside teams from several related languages," which "takes advantage of these languages' linguistic and cultural similarities, enabling ... more efficient progress..."¹⁶

JAARS explains that these clusters can be grouped according to linguistic similarities, geographical proximity, social networks, or denominational affiliations. Clusters provide obvious advantages. A few that consultant John Nystrom¹⁷ shares include: each translator contributes unique strengths to the team, resources (human, technological, etc.) are shared, and consultants can work on "all the 'daughter' translations simultaneously, since they will all be very similar." This is reminiscent of Carey's approach, "a body of able Native Biblical Critics may be gradually formed, to carry forward the translations till they have received their final improvement." That is, using the natives, "secures in the translations a degree of perfection

unattainable by the [Europeans].”¹⁸ An indirect blessing from this model is that these translators grow spiritually. “In the translation strategy, language helpers are ‘tutored’ in the Scriptures during the translation process, thus getting an ideal training for starting and leading an indigenous church.”¹⁹

These kinds of improvements are much needed. Current estimates suggest that about 340 million people speaking 2,078 languages may have a need for Bible translation to begin.²⁰ Wycliffe Bible Translators’ Vision 2025²¹ hopes to see a Bible translation program in place in every language still needing one by 2025. At the same time that progress ought to be accelerated, some statistics point to a decline in the kingdom workers available to join in this movement. G. Gravelle notes that, “Now the number of people training in the West to do Bible translation is on the decline. For example, new annual membership in Wycliffe Bible Translators USA has declined by about 45 percent since it peaked in 1988. Total membership of that organization has declined by about 27 percent since 1995 when membership was at its highest.”²²

Can Carey currently contribute to the cause?

Yes.

Wyclipedia

Employing Serampore’s philosophy of collaboration, with an emphasis on efficient production, we see the value in Wyclipedia, so named because of its wikipedia format and Wycliffian purpose. Here is an example of a wiki, and background information about John Wycliffe:

“Wikipedia [a popular wiki] is a free, web-based, collaborative, multilingual encyclopedia project ... whose... 18 million articles have been written collaboratively by volunteers around the world, and almost all of its articles can be edited by anyone with access to the site.”²³

John Wycliffe is arguably the first person to translate the complete English Bible.²⁴ Thus, Dan-

iel Webster penned,

“The Avon to the Severn runs,
The Severn, to the sea,
And Wycliffe’s dust shall spread abroad
Wide as the waters be.”

Contributing to the acceleration of the pace of Bible translation ought to be easy. Many have training and interests that can be channeled into Bible translation. For instance, in North America, countless believers have some formal training, such as seminary, that could be useful in exegetical consulting. Numerous immigrant churches speak the languages of wider communication, such as Hausa and Hindi, of the places where translation projects need to begin. Yet, somehow, these have not connected to the work of Bible translation.

The solution: Wyclipedia.

As a wiki, Wyclipedia could allow volunteers to easily contribute their biblical and linguistic gifts towards the cause of Bible translation. Those from similar language groups, those who are currently students, those who have health issues, etc. can actively help others read God’s Word in the language of their hearts.

The positive impact is obvious. Progress will be exponentially expedited. Workers will feel encouraged and less isolated. Churches will feel more connected to God’s great work of Bible translation.

What about quality control? Before The Word is ready for publishing, well trained experts will provide the final editing touches. Their workload will be dramatically reduced because of the work of many others. Additionally, more people may become interested in this type of valuable service as Wyclipedia opens their eyes to its importance.

Wyclipedia serves the task of getting God’s Word to those who have yet to hear. Wyclipedia engages people with trained minds and/or zealous hearts. Wyclipedia is the answer for the next generation of Bible translation.

"Few people know what may be done till they try, and persevere in what they undertake." –William Carey

<http://wyclipedia.missiodigio.com/>

Footnotes

- [1] David Brown, as quoted in Walker, F. Deaville, *William Carey: Missionary Pioneer and Statesman* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1925), 227.
- [2] Ibid
- [3] George Smith, *Life of William Carey*, Shoemaker & Missionary. http://www.ccel.org/s/smith_geo/carey/carey.htm (accessed June 28, 2011).
- [4] Ibid
- [5] Ibid
- [6] Ibid
- [7] Vishal and Ruth Mangalwadi, *The Legacy of William Carey: A Model for the Transformation of a Culture* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1993), 81.
- [8] William Carey, "To all those who encourage the Translation of the Sacred Scriptures into the Languages of Eastern Asia," in *College for the Instruction of Asiatic Christian and Other Youth in Eastern Literature and European Science at Serampore, Bengal*. <http://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/serampore/serampore-constitution-bible-translation.pdf#page=32> (accessed June 28, 2011).
- [9] Lex Loizides, "How Bible Translation Can Protect Indigenous Languages - William Carey in India," 2010. <http://conversation.lausanne.org/en/conversations/detail/11098> (accessed June 28, 2011).
- [10] Smith, *Life of William Carey*. http://www.ccel.org/s/smith_geo/carey/carey.htm (accessed June 28, 2011).
- [11] Ibid
- [12] F. Deaville Walker, *William Carey: Missionary Pioneer and Statesman* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1925), 221.
- [13] Walker, 222.
- [14] Smith, *Life of William Carey*. http://www.ccel.org/s/smith_geo/carey/carey.htm (accessed June 28, 2011).
- [15] Summer Institute of Linguistics
- [16] www.sil.org/sil/sil-intl-flagship-english.pdf
- [17] <http://www.jaars.org/stories/why-cluster-projects>
- [18] Carey, "To all those." <http://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/serampore/serampore-constitution-bible-translation.pdf#page=32> (accessed June 28, 2011).
- [19] T. Wayne Dye, *Bible Translation Strategy: An Analysis of Its Spiritual Impact* (Dallas, Texas: Wycliffe Bible Translators, 1988), 99.
- [20] <http://www.wycliffe.net/ScriptureAccessStatistics/tabid/73/language/en-US/Default.aspx> as of Sept. 2010.
- [21] <http://www.wycliffe.org/explore/whenwillwefinishthetask.aspx> (accessed June 27, 2011).
- [22] Gilles Gravelle, "On Indigenous Agency: Bible Translation in Historical Context: The Changing Role of Cross-Cultural Workers," in *IJFM* 27:1 (Spring 2010), 11-20.
- [23] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia#cite_note-2 (accessed June 29, 2011)
- [24] Some say it was his followers, the "Lollards."

Dorothy Carey: Insights for Cross-Cultural Workers

JAMES D. SMITH III

Not long ago I had the privilege of teaching the Perspectives lesson on “Pioneers of the World Christian Movement” to a fine group at the YWAM base in Tijuana, Mexico. Among those chosen to be explored were William Carey – and his first wife Dorothy. The story of his Enquiry (1792), and iconic service in India until death in 1834, was a familiar inspiration to several. But, as one young couple shared over lunch, with their delightful children present, “We’d never heard of Dorothy – and combining work overseas and family is what we’re really praying about right now.”

On June 10, 1781, the 19 year-old shoemaker William Carey married 25 year-old Dorothy Plackett, a farmer’s daughter, in Piddington, Northhamptonshire. How they met is unclear, but the newlyweds were dedicated Christians soon active in the recently organized Hackleton Meeting house. William’s fellowship with the “dissenters” from Anglicanism, and their emerging Baptist leadership, brought lay preaching opportunities. On a different note, their two year-old firstborn, Ann, died from fever.

In 1785, three events opened new horizons. First, those in the Baptist Church in nearby-

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Moulton, noting William's gifts, called him as pastor. Also, the publication of Andrew Fuller's *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* inspired a less hyper-Calvinist, more evangelistic movement in the churches. Finally, during the five years of his pastorate, three children were born: Felix in 1785, then William and Peter.

While at Moulton, Dorothy reaffirmed her faith through believer's baptism in 1787. Two years later, William became pastor at Harvey Lane Baptist Church in Leicester. Already his language skills, voracious reading (including Captain Cook's narratives) and Scripture study were broadening his worldview. So was a growing network of friends – part of his heavy church workload and community activities. In fact, William's father complained that he seldom wrote. In response (Nov. 12, 1790), Pastor Carey inked, "You must not expect frequent letters," exhaustively detailing his daily activities – and nowhere mentioning time with Dorothy and the children. In this season, another child (their youngest, Lucy) died in her second year.

William's *Enquiry* (as the full title suggests) obligated all Christians to the Great Commission, utilizing various means to reach the nations. In section four, he cited the impediments: distance, harsh living conditions, danger, and scarcity of life-sustaining necessities. These would affect any persons envisioning overseas fields. What did Dorothy think of this, and her husband's vocational turns? We can't be certain. James Beck, in his insightful biography, *Dorothy Carey: The Tragic and Untold Story of Mrs. William Carey* (1992), notes the developments. In May, 1792 at the Baptist Association meetings it was "Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God." On Nov. 27 he wrote to his father, "I am at the Lord's disposal, but have little expectation of going myself." A few weeks later, on Jan. 9, 1793, Carey and Dr. John Thomas officially became the first BMS international workers. For William, vision had triumphed, what remained were the details – including his family.

Dorothy decided to stay home in England,

and clearly reaffirmed this for many months. No doubt she too recognized the "impediments" to healthy family living overseas, and was fearful, given the whirlwind of plans and arrangements in the air. Quite possibly, she sensed her faithful "sending" role as God's will – in part because she was pregnant, and faced the grim prospect of childbirth at sea. Leadership supported her, and on March 26, 1793, William and eight year old Felix said farewell to Dorothy, William Jr. and Peter (now moved to a Hackleton cottage with her youngest sister, Kitty) – none knowing if they would meet again.

But Carey and company were held up in transit for weeks, entangled with permits, East India Company protocols, contrary winds, convoy needs and fundraising. Meanwhile, baby Jabez was born. Correspondence continued between William and Dorothy – with additional pressure from John Thomas. In a March 10, 1794 letter, he recalled an eleventh-hour conversation: "I went back and told Mrs. Carey her going out with us was a matter of such importance, I could not leave her so – her family would be dispersed and divided forever – she would repent of it as long as she lived. As she tells me since, this last saying, frequently repeated, had such an effect on her that she was afraid to stay at home; and afterwards, in a few minutes, determined to go, trusting in the Lord: but this should be on the condition of her sister going with her. This was agreed." In a few stressful minutes, some combination of fear and faith had changed the course of her remaining years.

The story of the Careys in India has been often told, informed by surviving journal entries and letters from William and colleagues (largely in BMS archives or the Angus Library at Regents' Park College, Oxford). Though Dorothy became literate in adulthood, we have none of her writings. Beck's opening chapter on the family in India is aptly entitled "The Moving Sick." Suffering from chronic dysentery, Dorothy moved with William and four small children from Calcutta to Bandel to Manicktullo to Debhatta – where in Spring 1794, Kitty married Christian salt agent Charles Short. Dorothy moved on with her husband to Mudn-

abatti (Malda) in August without her sister's vital support. Then, that Fall, son Peter fell desperately ill – and died.

When daughters Ann and Lucy had passed years earlier, the Careys grieved but were supported by family and friends. This loss was radically, tragically different. Evidence suggests that the Careys had received no mail from England during their first two years in India. Moreover, at Peter's death in October, 1794, their Hindu and Muslim neighbors had religious taboos about death, corpses, burial and bonding. For 72 hours the family could get no one, even low caste workers at their indigo plant, to help bury their decaying son's remains. The memories were indelible. Even when William's employer, George Udney, arranged for all to take a break—and Carey's journal suggests December 1794 was a time of refreshment—only weeks after they returned to Mudnabatti on New Year's Eve, Dorothy Carey broke under the strain.

Perhaps it was the trauma of Peter's death scenes. Perhaps it was William, the indigo market uncertain, now preoccupied with new school and business plans, while factory duties required supervision of 400 men. Perhaps the cumulative effects of amoebic dysentery had weakened her body and disordered her mind. Perhaps it was the utter isolation she felt, and fears for the remaining children. Whatever the causes, in early 1795 (age 38) Dorothy was jealous and delusional, seeing William's absences as occasions for sexual infidelity, following him, at times assaulting him, leveling charges to those within earshot. She detailed these in a letter to team member John Thomas, known through his personal correspondence.

Reason, prayer, and the first mail from England on May 9 did not relieve Dorothy's plight. The birth of son Jonathan in Jan. 1796 may reflect a planned pregnancy in hopes of reassurance and restored well-being. What remained was William's strategy of confining her – and confiding to his journal. For the next 12 years, "Poor Mrs. Carey" (as William said) never mended, raved and was confined, phobic about possible agents of harm to

her remaining children. We can't know whether she was aware of the progress, particularly in Serampore after 1800. Dorothy Carey's passing at age 51, on Dec. 8, 1807, was noted in the diary of friend William Ward: "Her death was a very easy one; but there was no appearance of the return of reason, nor anything that could cast a dawn of hope or life on her state."

William immediately sent word to Felix, who was bound for Burma (the four surviving sons became cross-cultural workers or civil servants). In Carey's Jan. 20, 1808 letter to his sisters relating Dorothy's death, he advised them of his intention to wed Charlotte Rumohr – which he did on May 8. Theirs was a happy marriage – she wanted to be in India and, as William said at her death in 1821, "She had lived only for me." It appears he had learned some valuable lessons as well.

The family in Mexico, referenced at the outset, had never heard of Dorothy Carey. Others (e.g. Timothy George, *Faithful Witness: The Life and Mission of William Carey*, 1991) tell her story with compassion. But many Carey biographers have left pages of slander. Given William's glorious accomplishments, she was the problem: "a dull, commonplace woman," an "illiterate, weak-minded" companion, and "never anything but a clog to him," styled "a peasant woman with a reproachful tongue."

More helpful insights come from Beck's biography, and (in my case) local Marriage and Family Therapy practitioners. In teaching, I introduce seminary MFT students to church history through biography, inviting them to engage the lives of historical figures as mentors, and also to identify key stages and issues in these lives which invite counsel and healing. Several have focused on the Careys: "Each decision William made took him closer to his personal, spiritual and career goals – and also took Dorothy further away from the security of her family and into isolation." "The departure of Kitty proved devastating for Dorothy and the workaholic patterns of William further drained her." "Women looked admiringly at him, so it didn't sit well with

her when he was too busy.” “Dorothy has much to teach us – about supportive relationships and secure attachments, about balance, about fear, about boundaries.” Today, skilled and Spirit-led counselors can play a key role in developing healthy ministry families. The following dynamics may deserve consideration as well.

The Scripture Principle:

The Careys’ story is a vivid reminder of the tension within Scripture regarding faith and family. Jesus said those who love family more than him are not worthy (Matt. 10:37), and those leaving houses and family for his name’s sake are rewarded, inheriting eternal life (Matt. 19:29). Yet in extremity he cared for his mother (John 19:26-27; cf. Mark 7:9-13), and Paul was inspired to remind disciples that “Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” (I Tim. 5:8). Stewards of life together, we remain mindful that needs (in whatever cultural setting) may be mental, physical, relational or spiritual.

The Hero Principle:

Protestant critiques of Roman Catholic literature and culture sometimes involve the saints and hagiography. Yet in the tales of heroes such as William Carey, a “Dorothy” often stands as frustration or foil. The reader suspects both providence and personality were at work when Pastor Carey advised his wife (Spring, 1793) that, “The sense of duty is so strong as to overpower all other considerations.” Studies such as William Petersen’s *25 Surprising Marriages: Faith-Building Stories from the Lives of Famous Christians* (1997) remind us of human frailties in divine ventures. Engaging these lives, we should “examine all matters, and hold on to what is good” (I Thess. 5:21).

The Culturally-Sensitive Principle:

Did William work as hard to understand and win Dorothy as he did the peoples of India? Did family and friends in England believe the Careys’

courage meant there was no need of supportive contact? We are uniquely blessed today to have benefit of anthropological, linguistic and other resources enabling culturally sensitive witness. Yet often we are not keen students of the worldview, values, beliefs and behavior of our own family members, colleagues, those we send or our sending churches. As a pastor welcoming faith-based NGO workers on home assignment, I’ve thought, “I hope we’re as diligent showing grace and understanding to each other as to the targeted group on the map...” Hospitality begins at home.

The Oswald Chambers Principle:

In 1927, Bidy Chambers aptly chose *My Utmost for His Highest* as title for a volume of her husband Oswald’s transcribed teachings. His aspiration was not about strategic obsession or maxed-out strengths and ignored weaknesses, but life-giving biblical wisdom. Chambers said, “If we obey God, it is going to cost other people more than it costs us.” While tempted to see that as our credit line, when healthy it quickens our conscience. As a young husband and father in seminary, I first heard the story of Dorothy and William Carey – and it changed my view of life and ministry. To whatever God might call me, I knew my vocation was to love my wife as Christ loved the Church (Eph. 5:25). To love Him was intimately tied to loving especially my nearest neighbors as myself (Mark 12:28-31). In marriage covenant and shared vocation with my wife, Linda, the Careys remain my teachers.