

Lesson 04

H. Isabell Kuhn (1901-1957)

Isabell Kuhn was a Canadian Christian missionary to the Lisu people of Yunnan Province, China, and northern Thailand. She served with the China Inland Mission, along with her husband, John, as a Bible translator, church planter, Bible teacher, and evangelist. She authored nine books about her experiences. Although raised in a godly Presbyterian home she, like many of her peers, became an _____ when she attended college. She did not drink or smoke and was considered a good girl. She became engaged to a man who was unfaithful and told her that his unfaithfulness would continue after they were married. She seriously contemplated suicide, but the thought of her godly father made her change her mind. Deciding to pray, but not wanting to be duped by a "mental opiate," the unsure young woman whispered a prayer "with raised hands to God, to prove to her that He is and to give her peace; and, if He did she would give her whole life to Him—do anything He asked her to do, no matter what He asked—no matter where He asked her to go, for her whole life." In 1924, Isabell met James O. Fraser, missionary to the Lisu people. The following September, Kuhn began studying at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois, where she graduated as valedictorian. At Moody she also met her future husband, John Becker Kuhn, whom she once called "another dreamer." Isabel's mother had at one time told her that "the only way this young Christian [Isabell] would become a missionary was over her mother's dead body." This caused Kuhn much anxiety because, as a Christian, she wanted to honor her mother and father. As this missionary-to-be wrote, she was "too young in the Lord to understand that obeying God comes before obeying parents." Kuhn's mother died during an operation (while Kuhn was in her first semester at Moody), acknowledging to a woman friend that her daughter had "chosen the better way." Once graduated, Kuhn applied to the China Inland Mission, but was at first _____ because of a character reference which gave a negative report. On October 11, 1928, Isobel sailed out of Vancouver to China. As a new missionary, she was totally unprepared for the cost of things, from the poverty to the vermin to the Lisu diet to the crowds—and more. In these times, she would "fall on her knees and weep before the Lord," asking Him to help her. Kuhn eventually found ways to cope with certain irritations, like fleas; she even grew to enjoy certain things she initially couldn't stomach, like "large chunks" of boiled pork fat and bean curd. She married John Kuhn in Kunming, the capital of Yunnan Province, on November 4, 1929. Over the next twenty-four years they served together—like her mentor, J. O. Fraser, who came before them and who also worked alongside them until 1938. They ministered among the Lisu in China from 1934 until 1950. The communist revolution in China forced Belle and her son Danny to leave the country in March, 1950, and to put her missionary life on hold for two years. John Kuhn left China eighteen months after his wife. In 1952, The Kuhns continued their ministry among another Lisu people group, this time in northern Thailand, until 1954 when they retired. Isabel died of cancer in 1957. Fifty years after the death of Isobel Kuhn, Christianity still thrived in the Salween River valley where the Lisu live in China. Of the 18,000 Lisu who lived in Fugong, Yunnan in 1950, 3,400 professed faith in Christ. As of 2007, it is estimated that 80 to 90 per

cent of the 70,000 population make the same profession. In Yunnan, it is estimated that there are between 100,000-200,000 Lisu Christians. More than 75,000 Lisu Bibles have been legally printed in China following this explosive growth.

I. Margaret Stringer (1939-) (*Jesus Led Me All the Way*)

“I am humbled that you would count me among great lady missionaries. God and I know better. I have heard of Phil Stringer, but as far as I know we are not related. May God use that course to challenge young people to realize what a privilege it is to serve the King of Kings.” Margaret Stringer (Nov. 30, 2020 email note).

II. Brief Sketches Great Missionary Men

A. William Carey was born August 17, 1761 in Paulerspury, England and died in India June 9, 1834. He is known as the _____ of modern missions.

1. Early life:

Carey spent the first thirty-two years of his life in his home country and the rest of his life in India. He was raised during a time of revival in England. His father, Edmund, was a weaver and then a schoolmaster. Like Judson, Carey had a sharp mind for arithmetic. Carey also loved science and studied plants, birds, animals, and insects. He read and talked about Columbus so much that his friends nicknamed him Columbus. He was interested in people, places, and languages. He began to study Latin at age _____. He was a short man, only 5 foot 4 inches tall. Carey had a love for knowledge, but he left school to work at age twelve. He never attended _____. [Probably many boards would reject him for that reason.] He wanted to be a farmer like his uncle, but a scurvy-like irritation to his hands and feet prevented that. His father chose for him the occupation of shoemaker for which he served a seven-year apprenticeship. In the shoe shop, Carey found a New Testament commentary in a strange script that he learned was Greek. So, he began learning Greek. Carey became bald at age twenty-two because of an eighteen-month long fever.

2. Early adult life:

Carey married Dorothy Hackett on June 10, 1781. She was five years older than he and was _____ and unable to sign her name. He belonged to the _____ Baptist and no doubt professed to be a Calvinist, but he had no use for Hyper-Calvinism. He said it had paralyzed the churches. Like Spurgeon, he did not *practice* Calvinism. The elder of Carey’s church was a hyper-Calvinist so Carey would go to other towns to hear preaching that would feed his hungry soul. Carey planned to be a shoemaker and a lay preacher for life, but through books, especially those by Captain Cook, he became aware of the terrible plight of the heathen, especially in the South Seas. (Cook did not believe in missions.) Carey was ordained in August 1787. Not all wanted to hear him preach; some accused him a being an Arminian. Carey made a world map of leather which he prayed over it and wept when he taught a geography lesson. In 1789, Carey was unanimously called to Leicester to rebuild a

church ruined by antinomianism. (The ideas of antinomianism had been present in the early church and believed by some Gnostic heretics. It is the belief that freedom from law meant freedom to sin.) In a short time, everything went south, and Carey was fighting sin in the church. At this time, his only daughter, Lucy, died in infancy. Carey had _____ going for him. He was short, poor, uneducated, and bald. He wore an “odious and stiff wig” (which he later threw overboard on his way to India). Carey was very busy with church, school, and work, but he never ceased to promote the work of foreign missions. A few preachers such as John Sutcliff and Andrew Fuller called for men to go to the mission field, but when they met together and Carey proposed starting a mission board, they drew back (they got onboard later). Carey asked, “If the great commission was only for the apostles, then why do we still baptize and claim the promise of Christ’s presence until the end of the world?” He argued that others were going: Papists, Moravians, British traders, and slave traders, so why not us? At a second meeting, the pastors were still undecided about sending missionaries. Carey grabbed Fuller’s arm and said, “Is there nothing again going to be done, sir?” Fuller was won over, and they began forming plans for a mission board. Carey decided to give the all the proceeds from the sale of his pamphlet *Enquiry* to the cause. It is said that Andrew Fuller rescued the churches from _____ (hyper-Calvinism) which was smothering the churches’ obligation to reach the heathen. On October 2, 1792, the mission board, Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Among the Heathen, was formed at Kettering. [The missionary prayer cards were probably on legal size cards just to have room for the name!] Carey told his associates that going to India was like descending into a deep mine. He would go down, but he needed them to “_____.” They promised that as long as they lived, they would never let go of the ropes. And that promise was broken only by their death. Of his associates, Pearce lived six more years, Sutcliff lived twenty-one more years, Fuller lived twenty-two more years, and Ryland lived thirty-three more years. (See page 109 of *William Carey* by S. Pearce Carey for a description of these men’s functions in the mission society).

3. Life in India:

The voyage took five months. When John Thomas and Carey arrived in India, the East India Company (EIC) had been there for 200 years, but there were no English _____. There were Dutch and Danish missionaries. The EIC had chaplains for their English-speaking people, but they opposed reaching the heathen Indians. When they arrived, Dorothy and their son, Felix, became very sick with dysentery. Soon they were _____. Thomas had the purse and he had rented a large house and servants for his medical practice, spending their year’s income. There would be no money from England for _____. Carey visited David Brown, the Fort Williams chaplain and friend of John Newton. Because of Brown’s hostility toward Thomas, he was “superior and frigid as an iceberg,” not even offering Carey hospitality after his five-mile walk in the sun. This is when Dorothy’s thirteen-year mental distress began. She and her son were very sick, they had no money for bread, and they were destitute in a strange and friendless city. [Missionaries today have credit cards and medical care in most cases. If thing really get bad, they can arrange for emergency airplane evacuation.] Carey was able to get a position in charge of an indigo business which allowed

them to survive financially, but it also slowed Carey's learning of Bengali and Hindustani. The Careys were very lonely. Two years passed with no letters from home. Their families wrote, but the letters never arrived. [Some missionaries today have difficulty going two hours without checking with their family and friends on Facebook.] Many at home did not understand and judged Carey for his business. He received a letter admonishing him which hurt him deeply. [If they could send a letter, why didn't they send him money?] Had he not been providentially led to this business they would have starved.

Even during these difficult days, Carey preached in a twenty square mile area, walking up to twenty miles to a meeting. Up to 500 people attended the services at Mudnabati. He prayed and begged for more missionaries. Soon the Society sent William Ward who was a _____.

Carey begged for more missionary help. Finally, in 1796 John Fountain came. Another man joined them who was not a missionary. He was Ignacio Fernandez, born in Macao, China. He was trained for the Catholic priesthood. But in India, but he was very turned off seeing the Catholic idolatry. Ten years later, he obtained a Portuguese New Testament and then met John Thomas. He became a great friend and supporter.

In 1797, Carey and Thomas made a second trip to Bhutan. Carey learned Sanskrit and Hindustani, and in 1797, he finished the Bengali New Testament that Thomas had begun. Then he got a printing press. The natives thought it was an _____. Thomas taught Carey some about medicine and he helped Thomas with that part of the ministry. Years passed at Mudnabati with no Indian converts. Some English converts were made.

Then Carey and the team moved to Serampore, which was under the control of the Danes and where there was less British _____. A mission was attempted there by the Moravians in 1777 and abandoned in 1792. The Moravians saw only one dubious convert. Missionaries Fountain and Brunson died within a few months, but William Ward and Joshua Marshman stayed there working with Carey for many years. Ward lived another twenty-three years, Marshman thirty-seven years, and Carey thirty-four years. This threefold cord was never broken in spite of many who wanted it torn apart. Carey was a gentle, humble man. He was a co-equal team player, not a _____, it seems.

Mr. and Mrs. Marshman began a school for European children which brought in money for the mission. They also began a free school for poor Bengali children directed by a Bengali master.

After almost _____ years Carey saw his first convert, a man named Fakira. He requested baptism and then left to bring his children. He was never heard from again, and they suspected that he was martyred. (John Thomas labored fifteen years before he saw his first convert). The proof of a convert's sincerity was the Indians _____ together which the missionaries insisted on. To eat with someone of a lower caste would break your caste.

On December 28, 1800, Carey baptized his son Felix and a man named Krista. Krista's wife Jaymanti was baptized two weeks later, and her sister, Rasamiyi, was saved and baptized at the end of February.

In 1801, Carey was made the chairman of the Bengali department of a new British college called Fort William College. This provided some financial help for the team and also _____ from the East India Company. It also allowed him to train future judges and governors. In 1804, Carey addressed a group of Indian leaders and intellectuals in Sanskrit, something never done by a European. He was one of only two Europeans that could speak that language. By 1805, he was teaching the Marathi language. Carey worked with the college for thirty years and wrote grammar books in Bengali, Sanskrit, Marathi, Punjabi, Telugu, and Kanarese, as well as helping with one in Bhutia.

Besides teaching at the college three days a week, his teaching ministry, and the Bible translation, he also managed to treat the sick, including lepers. Carey petitioned the governor to build a hospital at Calcutta. The missionaries took the converts on preaching trips to train them.

Between 1801 and 1803, four missionaries died including David Brunson (age twenty-three) and Dr. John Thomas, the first Englishman to preach in the Bengali language and begin to translate the Bengali Bible. Carey finished that translation. He found that the translation was much too “English” and over the years, revised the Old Testament three times and the New Testament eight times. [That is the translation process. It is not perfect the first time. You must start by writing something. You cannot revise and improve nothing.]

Carey lived his _____: *Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.* Ward was skeptical of Carey attempting to translate in so many languages. He feared that they would not firmly establish the work with Bengali speaking people. He said, “*I warn you that the Jesuit missionaries have made grammars, dictionaries and translations in abundance, which are now rotting in the libraries of Rome.*” But Ward changed his mind about it when he realized that there were many multilingual pundits at the college in Calcutta that could help Carey translate. Ward said, “...it was a providence which it would be sinful to neglect.” Carey did not simply turn the work over to the pundits, he learned the languages himself and superintended the translations. [Carey is criticized today for using “unsaved scholars” to help him translate. For many, many years Baptists have avoided making mistakes in Bible translation by _____ the work completely. Shame on us! RLC]. Carey saw the need to translate the Bible into Sanskrit. Sanskrit is the basis of many of the Indian languages as Latin is the basis of many European languages. Then it could be used as a basis for other translations. (It took 4 years for the New Testament and another 10 for the Old Testament). Other translations from it went faster. The process also showed problems in its translation that we fixed. [I do not read much about Hebrew and Greek].