

Carmichael: A Rescuer of Women

Although Amy Carmichael's name is barely known in Europe and the Americas, she was like Mother Teresa and ministered in India, where she touched the lives of thousands of women.



Carmichael was born and raised at the end of the 19th century in a Presbyterian home in faraway Ireland. When she turned 16, she made a bold move by packing her things and moving to Belfast. Her goal was to establish a Presbyterian mission for women who worked in mills. It didn't take her long to meet with success, as the membership of the mission grew to more than 500 women.

But Carmichael knew that wasn't really what she wanted to do with her life. Her ultimate goal was to be an overseas missionary. And she got her opportunity. After a brief stint in Japan, she was posted to India.

Carmichael had a strong spirit. The hot and unfriendly climate of India did not deter her from fulfilling her dream. Neither did the dangers missionaries often encounter. She suffered dreadfully from neuralgia, which oftentimes left her no choice but to run her mission from her bed. When her condition grew worse, she was moved back to her home in Ireland.

After a period of rest, she again returned to India stronger and better, and this time she channeled her efforts to rescuing young Indian women who were working as prostitutes in Hindu temples, a work at which she was highly effective.

Instead of returning home after completing her assignment, Carmichael chose to spend the rest of her life in India. She went as far as dyeing her skin with coffee to make it match that of the Indian people, and this allowed her to travel safely around the country.

Carmichael spent the last 75 years of her life in India without for one day setting her feet back in Ireland. Sadly, she suffered paralysis for the last 20 years of her life because of a bad fall she experienced. The neuralgia she endured did not make things easy in any way. Yet, Carmichael's efforts eventually led the government to ban temple prostitution across India in 1948.

After her death, Amy Carmichael was buried in India. The children she saved erected a birdbath over her grave with the word *Amma* inscribed on it, meaning "mother" in the Tamil language.

(more)

Love is at the center of our faith. Carmichael personified that love. And so do the associates of Life Care and Century Park, men and women who are on a mission to love and serve those entrusted to them.

Who can help but think of the Apostle Paul's great words: *If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal* (1 Corinthians 13:1).

Love is essential to our faith and to the work we are called to do.

– Beecher Hunter