

Pastor Rick Phillips
Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC
Fall 2023

Profiles in Christian Courage

3. Amy Carmichael





Amy Carmichael

- ▶ Born in 1867 in Millisle, Ireland in a Christian home
- ▶ Her parents founded a mission to mill girls working in Belfast
 - ▶ Amy would visit the slums with a pastor to invite girls to a Bible study.
 - ▶ Prayed for 500 pounds to build a hall. When built it overflowed.
- ▶ In 1889, she heard pioneer missionary Hudson Taylor and was persuaded to be a missionary
- ▶ Serious health problems caused her to be turned down for China Inland Mission
- ▶ The Keswick Missionary Committee sent her to Japan, but ill health forced her to return home after 15 months.
- ▶ She ended up in Bangalore, India at age 28 on the advice that the climate would help her ailment.

Early Ministry

- ▶ Did not get along with other British missionaries, who celebrated English ways and refused to learn Tamil.
 - ▶ Amy worked at Tamil 6 hours per day.
- ▶ Visited villages with Indian Christians to evangelize
 - ▶ Organized the Starry Cluster, her community of converted girls.
- ▶ Encountered temple prostitution, into which young girls were sold by their families
- ▶ In 1901, a seven-year-old escaped prostitute (Preena) approached Amy to protect her.
 - ▶ This event began the Dohnavur Fellowship, a home for rescued children.





Mission to the Temple Girls

- ▶ Until the discovery of Preena, even most missionaries doubted temple prostitution
- ▶ Amy followed up and soon discovered five more escaped and tortured girls.
- ▶ Age 33, she accepted the role as *Amma* to the temple girls as her life calling. By 1904, she housed 17 children (including babies).
 - ▶ Her mother appeared in India to help her
 - ▶ 3 babies died, prompting accusations
- ▶ Other missionaries were mobilized to rescue girls; by 1906, Amy housed 50 rescued girls
 - ▶ “Never had she envisioned that instead of evangelizing, her mission would be trim tiny toenails and fingernails.”
- ▶ Amy’s chief resource was prayer: she had days of prayer for the children’s health, for larger facilities, and for money. By 1907, she had a new house, nursery, schoolhouse, and homes for workers.
- ▶ Amy began writing books to raise funds.

The Amma of Dohnavur





Courage under Fire

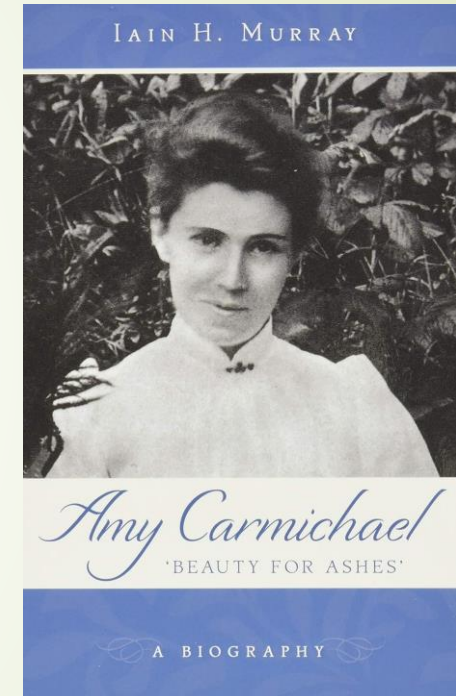
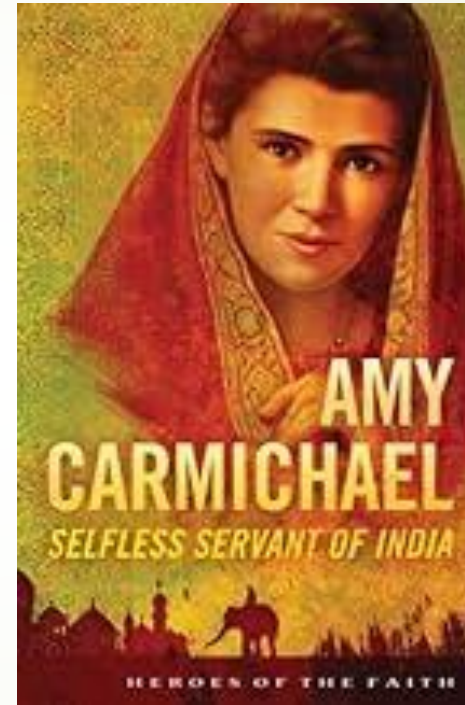
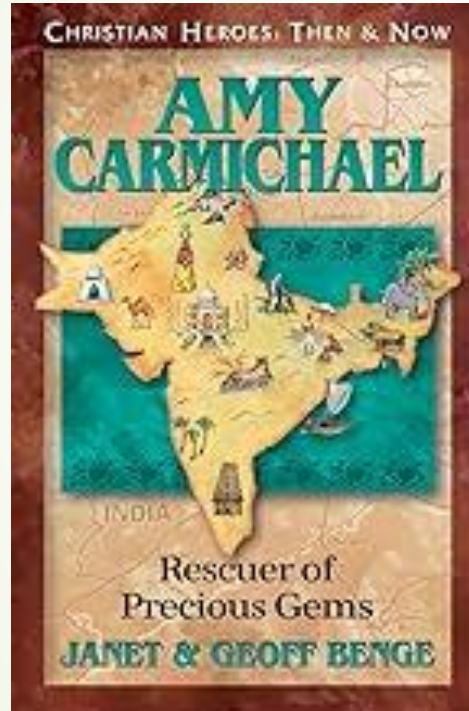
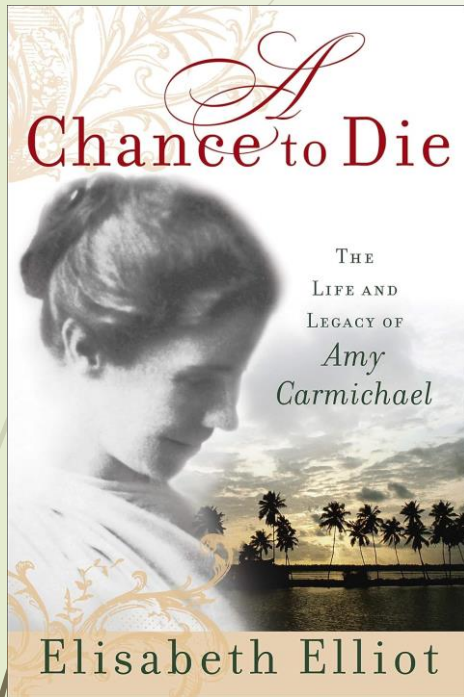
▶ Muttammal

- ▶ In 1909, a wealthy Indian woman brought her 12 year old daughter for refuge. The girl was heir to a large fortune, but her uncle had legal control and planned to kill her
- ▶ The legal statutes all supported the uncle, so Amy committed herself to prayer. Gangs of thugs followed and threatened her.
- ▶ A Christian lawyer refused to help her, until Amy demanded that they pray together.
- ▶ A judge ordered Amy to hand over Muttammal and pay all court costs. Amy responded by smuggling her to England with a missionary returning home.
- ▶ Indian authorities pursued the missionary to London, but Amy had actually sent Muttammal to Ceylon with a different missionary.
- ▶ Yet Amy would have to go to jail since she could not pay the court costs; on the final day, a royalty check arrived to cover the amount.

Courage for the Long Haul

- ▶ In 1917, Amy purchased a large property – The Gray Jungle – to house her growing compound, with 20 nurseries.
- ▶ In 1918, a baby boy was delivered, starting her long desired mission to the temple boys.
- ▶ By 1923, she had thirty nurseries, a large staff (including doctors), and official acceptance.
- ▶ Conversion of Jambulingam.
- ▶ Severing ties with her missionary society
- ▶ Founded the Dohnavur Fellowship in 1925:
 - ▶ “To save children in moral danger; to train them to serve others; to succour the desolate and the suffering; to do anything that may be shown to be the will of our Heavenly Father, in order to make His love known, especially to the people of India.”
- ▶ In 1926, Dr. Godfrey Webb-Peploe joined as her successor (Amy was 50).
- ▶ In 1931, she suffered an injury that left her bedridden in pain for the next twenty years.
- ▶ She died in 1951 (age 80) and was buried in an unmarked grave in Dohnavur.
 - ▶ “His brow was crowned with thorns; do we seek rosebuds for our crowning?”

Books on Amy Carmichael



Notable Books by Amy Carmichael

