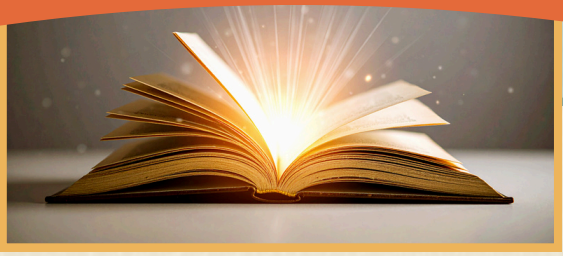
Twenty Missionary Biographies



Safety Disclaimer: *Every child and every family is different. These true missionary stories often include difficult realities as men and women faithfully shared the love of Christ in a broken world. We encourage parents to review each biography beforehand to ensure it is a good fit for their child's age, maturity, and your family's preferences.*

For families with pre-readers (ages 4-7):

- Amy Carmichael: "Can Brown Eyes Turn Blue?" by Catherine MacKenzie: A simple, story-like biography that introduces Amy Carmichael's calling and her courageous care for vulnerable children in India.

For families with young readers (ages 7-9), I recommend two short story anthologies:

- Ten Boys Who Made a Difference *by Irene Howat*: Fast, 10-minute snapshot stories of famous historical pioneers like David Livingstone.
- Ten Girls Who Used Their Talents *by Irene Howat:* Short biographical chapters featuring inspiring figures like Mary Slessor.

For families with older children (ages 9-12):

- George Müller: The Man of Faith *by Basil Miller:* Reads like a series of cliffhangers where empty breakfast tables are miraculously filled through prayer.
- The Life of Lillian Trasher: Nile Mother *by Beth Prim Howell:* A remarkable true story of one woman's faith as she built an "orphan city" in Egypt against all odds.
- God's Smuggler (Young Reader's Edition) *by Brother Andrew:* Plays out like a Cold War spy thriller with secret car modifications and border check-points.
- John Paton: South Sea Island Rescue *by Kay Walsh:* High-stakes danger involving shipwrecks, volcanic eruptions, and close island escapes.
- David Livingstone: Africa's Greatest Explorer *by Vance Christie:* Highlights African exploration, missionary service, and the hardships of travel through uncharted regions.
- The Hiding Place (Young Reader's Edition) *by Corrie ten Boom:* Perfectly balances secret rooms and Nazi resistance with a message of forgiveness.
- Eric Liddell: Pure Gold *by David McCasland:* Tracks an Olympic gold-medalist runner becoming a leader inside a WWII internment camp.
- Gladys Aylward: No Mountain Too High *by Myrna Grant:* Tells the true story of Gladys Aylward's missionary life in China, including her courageous journey leading about 100 orphaned children to safety during wartime.

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For families with middle and high school aged children (12+):

- Bruchko *by Bruce Olson*: A raw account of a 19-year-old captured by a stone-age tribe, surviving severe tropical diseases.
- Through Gates of Splendor *by Elisabeth Elliot*: The historic, deeply moving account of five missionary aviators martyred in Ecuador.
- Adoniram Judson: A Living Sacrifice *by Vance Christie*: Details America's first foreign missionary surviving a brutal Burmese prison.
- Kisses from Katie *by Katie Davis Majors:* The inspiring true story of a young woman who left her comfortable life in Tennessee to serve children in Uganda and discovered the joy and cost of saying yes to God.
- William Carey: Father of Modern Missions *by Sam Wellman*: Focuses on the extreme linguistic grit needed to translate the Bible into dozens of languages.
- David Brainerd: A Flame for God *by Vance Christie*: A deeply spiritual account of early missions among Native American tribes.
- Isobel Kuhn: By Searching *by Isobel Kuhn*: A deeply reflective look at a young woman finding her faith and serving the remote Lisu people.
- Richard Wurmbrand: Tortured for Christ *by Richard Wurmbrand:* The intense, high-stakes history of an Underground Church leader in communist Romania.

For families interested in reading missionary biographies on a regular basis, I highly recommend the Christian Heroes: Then & Now series by *Janet and Geoff Benge*. Published by Youth With A Mission (YWAM), this collection includes the inspiring true stories of 50 missionaries from around the world.

For younger readers ages 5-10 try the companion series Heroes for Young Readers. These hardcover books written in rhymed poetry simplify the life stories of 23 different missionaries.

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