

## Amy Carmichael – Founder of Dohnavur Mission

(16 Dec 1867 to 18 Jan 1951)

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Amy Carmichael (16 Dec 1867 to 18 Jan 1951) was born in Northern Ireland to David and Catherine Carmichael. Her parents were devout Presbyterians; she was the oldest of seven children. She was adopted and tutored by Robert Wilson, cofounder of the Keswick Convention. Her father died when she was eighteen.

In many ways she was an unlikely candidate for missionary work. She suffered neuralgia, a disease of the nerves that made her whole body weak and achy and often put her in bed for weeks on end. It was at the Keswick Convention of 1887 that she heard Hudson Taylor (Missionary who worked in China) speak about missionary life. Soon afterward, she became convinced of her calling to missionary work.

### **Work in India**

Initially Amy travelled to Japan for fifteen months, but she later found her lifelong vocation in India. She came to India on 9 Nov 1895. She was commissioned by the Church of England Zenana Mission. Much of her work was with young ladies, some of whom were saved from forced prostitution. The organization she founded was known as the **Dohnavur Fellowship**. Dohnavur is situated in Tamil Nadu, 33 km from Tirunelveli town near the southern tip of India.

The fellowship soon became a sanctuary for over a thousand children who would otherwise have faced a bleak future. In an effort to respect Indian culture, members of the organisation wore Indian dress and the children were given Indian names. She herself dressed in Indian clothes, dyed her skin with coffee, and often travelled long distances on India's hot, dusty roads to save just one child from suffering.

In 1931, Amy was badly injured in a fall, which left her bedridden much of the time until her death. Amy Carmichael died in India in 1951 at the age of 83. She asked that no stone be put over her grave; instead, the children she had cared for put a bird bath over it with the single inscription "Amma", which means mother in Tamil/ Malayalam. During her 56 years of service she never went to her homeland for vacation.

