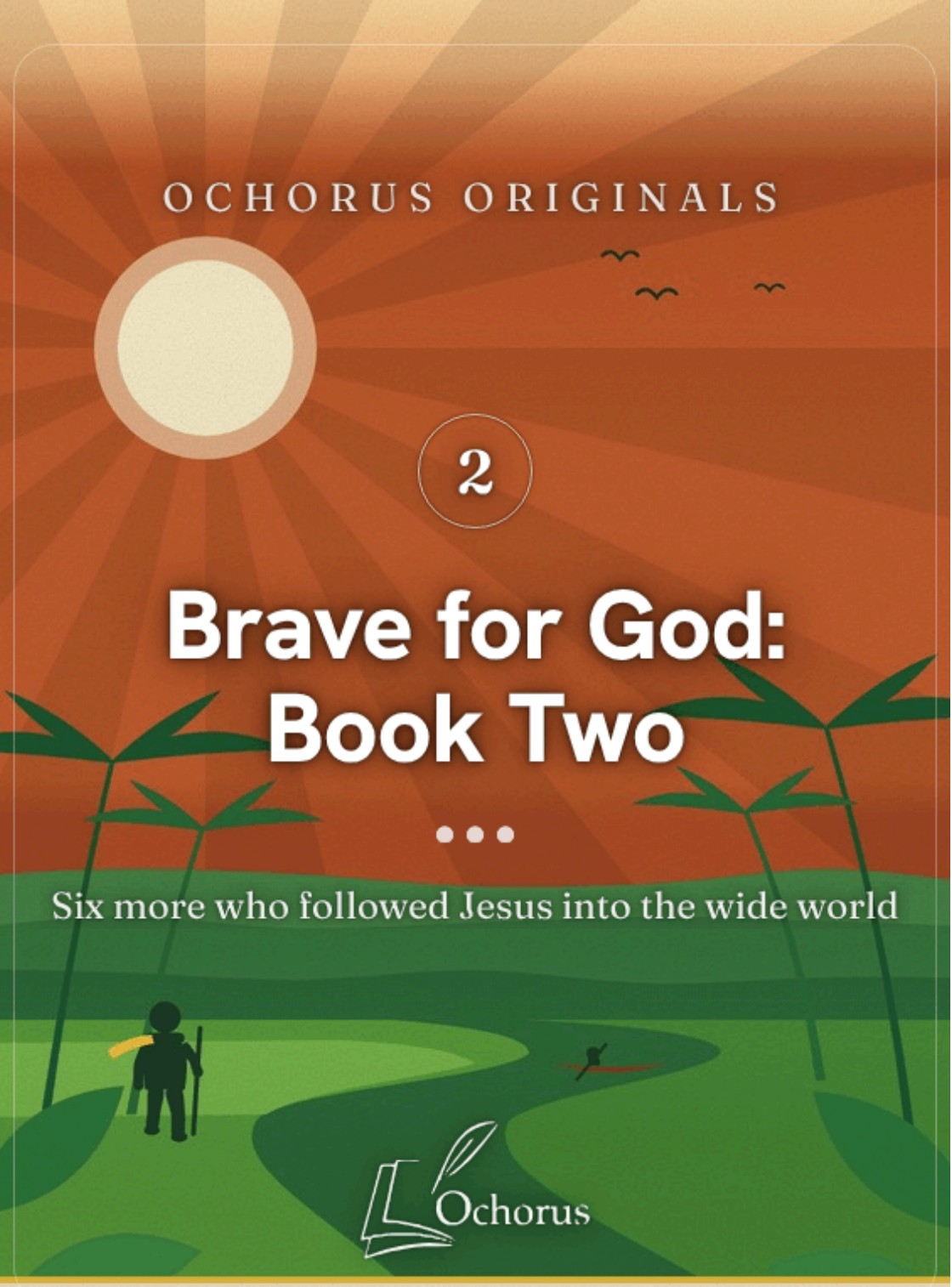
OCHORUS ORIGINALS

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Brave for God: Book Two

Six more who followed Jesus into the wide world



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Matthew 10:8

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William Carey: The Cobbler Who Would Not Give Up

William Carey was a poor man who mended shoes in a little English village. He was not clever in the way rich men were clever — he had left school early to work — but he had a hungry mind. While his hands stitched leather, he taught himself languages, one word at a time, from books propped up on his workbench.

On the wall of his workshop William hung a map of the whole world, drawn by his own hand, with notes scribbled all over it. As he worked, he looked at the great lands far away — India, China, Africa, the islands of the sea — where millions of people had never once heard the name of Jesus. And it broke his heart.

In those days many Christians thought there was nothing to be done about it. If God wanted those far-off people to hear, they said, God would see to it without any help from us. But William did not believe God worked that way. He stood up among older, grander men and said something that changed the world: *Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.*

Then he did the hard part — he went. William sailed to India, and there he stayed for the rest of his life, forty years, and never came home. He set himself the enormous task of putting the Bible into the languages of India, so that the people could read God's words for themselves. With his friends

he translated the Bible, in whole or in part, into dozens of Indian languages — more than most people could even learn to speak.

He did more than translate. He started schools. He planted gardens and studied the plants of India. And he fought hard, and at last successfully, against a cruel custom of burning widows alive.

People remember William Carey as the father of modern missions — the one who woke the church up to the whole wide world. But he never thought himself anything special. If anyone remembered him at all, he once said, let it be only as a man who could plod — who kept on and on and would not give up. And plod on he did, until the far countries on his hand-drawn map could read the good news in their own tongues.

David Livingstone: The Man Who Walked Across Africa

Like Mary Slessor after him, David Livingstone grew up poor in Scotland and went to work in a cotton mill when he was only ten years old. He fixed a book open on the spinning machine and read as he worked, snatching learning between the roar of the wheels. Bit by bit, he taught himself enough to become a doctor.

David went to Africa to tell people about Jesus, but he soon found he could not sit still in one place. There was a whole vast continent that maps of his day left blank, full of peoples no outsider had ever met. So David walked. He walked thousands upon thousands of miles, across deserts and through forests, over mountains and along great rivers, further than almost any traveller had gone before.

But the more he walked, the more he saw a terrible thing. Everywhere he went, slave traders were stealing people from their homes — mothers, fathers, children — and marching them away in chains to be sold. David called the slave trade "the open sore of the world," and he made it his life's work to help end it. He wrote and spoke and travelled to shame the powerful into stopping it.

David made deep friendships among the African people he lived and travelled with, and they loved him. He was often ill, and often alone, and far from home for years at a time. He died in Africa, on his knees beside his bed, as if he had fallen asleep praying.

Then his African friends did something wonderful. They did not want his body lost in the wilderness. So they carried him — by hand, taking turns — more than a thousand miles to the coast, a journey of many months, so that he could be sent home to be buried with honour. But first, because they knew how much he had loved their land, they buried his heart in the soil of Africa. And there it stayed.

Festo Kivengere: The Man Who Loved His Enemy

Festo Kivengere grew up herding cattle on the green hills of Uganda, in the heart of Africa. As a young man he met Jesus during a great wave of new faith that swept East Africa, and joy so filled him that he could not keep it to himself. He became one of the most loved preachers his country ever knew — some called him "the Billy Graham of Africa."

But a dark time came to Uganda. A cruel ruler named Idi Amin seized power, and he was terribly afraid of anyone who would not bow to him. His soldiers arrested and killed many people, including Christians who spoke the truth. One of them was Festo's own dear friend, Archbishop Janani Luwum, who was murdered for standing up to the dictator.

Festo knew he might be next. Soldiers were looking for him. So one night he and his wife fled, climbing on foot over the steep mountains at the border, through the darkness, until they crossed safely into the next country. He had lost his home and his friend and very nearly his life.

Now, anyone would understand if Festo had hated Idi Amin. But Festo had learned something at the foot of the cross of Jesus, where a dying Man had prayed, *Father, forgive them.* Instead of hate, Festo chose love. He even wrote a whole book with a title that astonished people: *I Love Idi Amin.* He did not mean that the cruel things were good — they were wicked, and he said so. He meant that he would not let hate grow in his own heart, because Jesus had forgiven him, and so he could forgive too.

Festo Kivengere spent the rest of his life carrying that message across the world: that the love of God is stronger than the worst that evil can do, and that even an enemy can be loved.

Pandita Ramabai: The Scholar Who Rescued the Forgotten

In India long ago, most girls were not taught to read at all. But Ramabai's father believed a girl could learn, and he taught his daughter the oldest and hardest books in the land. She learned so much that when she grew up, the wise men of India gave her a special name: *Pandita*, which means "the learned one." A woman had almost never been given such an honour.

But Ramabai had seen how hard life could be for women and girls in her country. When a girl's husband died, she was often treated as if the sadness were her fault — these "widows," some of them only children, were made to suffer, and many had no one at all to care for them. And when famine came and the crops failed, it was the orphans and the poor who starved.

Ramabai became a follower of Jesus, and she believed He had given her all her learning for one purpose: to rescue the people India had forgotten. So that is what she did. She travelled into the worst of the famine and gathered up starving girls and orphans by the hundreds and brought them home.

She built a place for them near the city of Pune and called it *Mukti*, which means "Salvation." It grew into a great home where thousands of rescued women and children were fed and taught and loved, and learned trades so they could stand on their own. And like William Carey, Ramabai gave her people the Scriptures in their own words, translating the whole

Bible into her Marathi language — a labour of many years that she finished only just before she died.

Ramabai grew famous, and was honoured even by those who did not share her faith, for her learning and her tireless love for the poor. But fame never turned her head. She wore plain clothes, ate simple food, and worked beside the very women she had rescued, until they were not her servants but her family.

Pandita Ramabai took the learning that was meant to make her famous and spent it, every bit, on the widows and orphans nobody else would help.

Corrie ten Boom: The Watchmaker Who Hid the Hunted

Corrie ten Boom lived above her family's watch shop in Holland, where her father mended clocks and taught her the trade. The ten Booms were quiet, kind people who loved God and loved their neighbours — and one day that love was put to a terrible test.

Armies had marched into Holland, ruled by men who hunted down the Jewish people to imprison and kill them, only because they were Jews. When frightened Jewish families came knocking at the watch shop, the ten Booms did not turn them away. They took them in and hid them.

Corrie's brave helpers built a secret room behind the wall of her own bedroom — so cleverly that no one could tell it was there. When soldiers came searching, the hidden families would slip through a little door and stand silent in that narrow space until the danger passed. In this way the ten Booms saved many lives.

But one day they were betrayed. Soldiers arrested the whole family and sent Corrie and her sister Betsie to a dreadful prison camp, a place of cold and hunger and cruelty. Even there the two sisters told the other prisoners about God's love, and Betsie kept saying that no pit is so deep that God's love is not deeper still. Betsie died in that camp. Corrie lived, and was set free.

After the war, Corrie travelled the world telling her story. The hardest part came when she met, face to face, one of the cruel guards from the camp

— now sorry for what he had done, holding out his hand. Everything in her wanted to turn away. But she remembered that God had forgiven her, and she prayed for the strength to forgive him — and she took his hand. Corrie ten Boom spent the rest of her long life teaching the world that there is no one God cannot forgive, and no hurt His love cannot heal.

Eric Liddell: The Runner Who Would Not Run on Sunday

Eric Liddell was born in China, where his parents had gone to tell people about Jesus, and he grew up to be the fastest runner in all of Scotland. When he raced, people said, he ran with his head thrown back and his face lifted to the sky, as if he were running for the sheer joy of it. Eric believed his speed was a gift from God, and he loved to use it.

In 1924 Eric was chosen to run for his country in the Olympic Games, and everyone was sure he would win the hundred-metre race. Then the timetable was announced, and Eric's heart sank: his race was to be run on a Sunday. Eric believed Sunday was God's day, a day to rest and worship, and he made up his mind that he would not run on it — not even for an Olympic gold medal.

People were angry. Newspapers called him foolish. The whole country urged him to change his mind. But Eric would not. So he trained instead for a different, longer race, the four hundred metres, which was not his best and which nobody expected him to win.

On the day of that race, someone slipped a note into Eric's hand. It said that God honours those who honour Him. Eric ran as though his feet had wings — and he not only won the gold medal, he set a new Olympic record. The boy who gave up his best race had been given a better one.

But the most surprising thing came next. At the very height of his fame, when he could have had anything, Eric gave it all up and went back to

China to serve as a missionary and teacher. Years later, during a great war, he was locked in a crowded prison camp. There he became everyone's friend and helper, teaching the children games and lessons, carrying the sick, and giving away his own small share of food. He died in that camp, worn out from caring for others, and the whole camp mourned him. Eric Liddell had run his last and best race — not for a medal, but for the love of God and of everyone around him.

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