

# The Life of William Carey

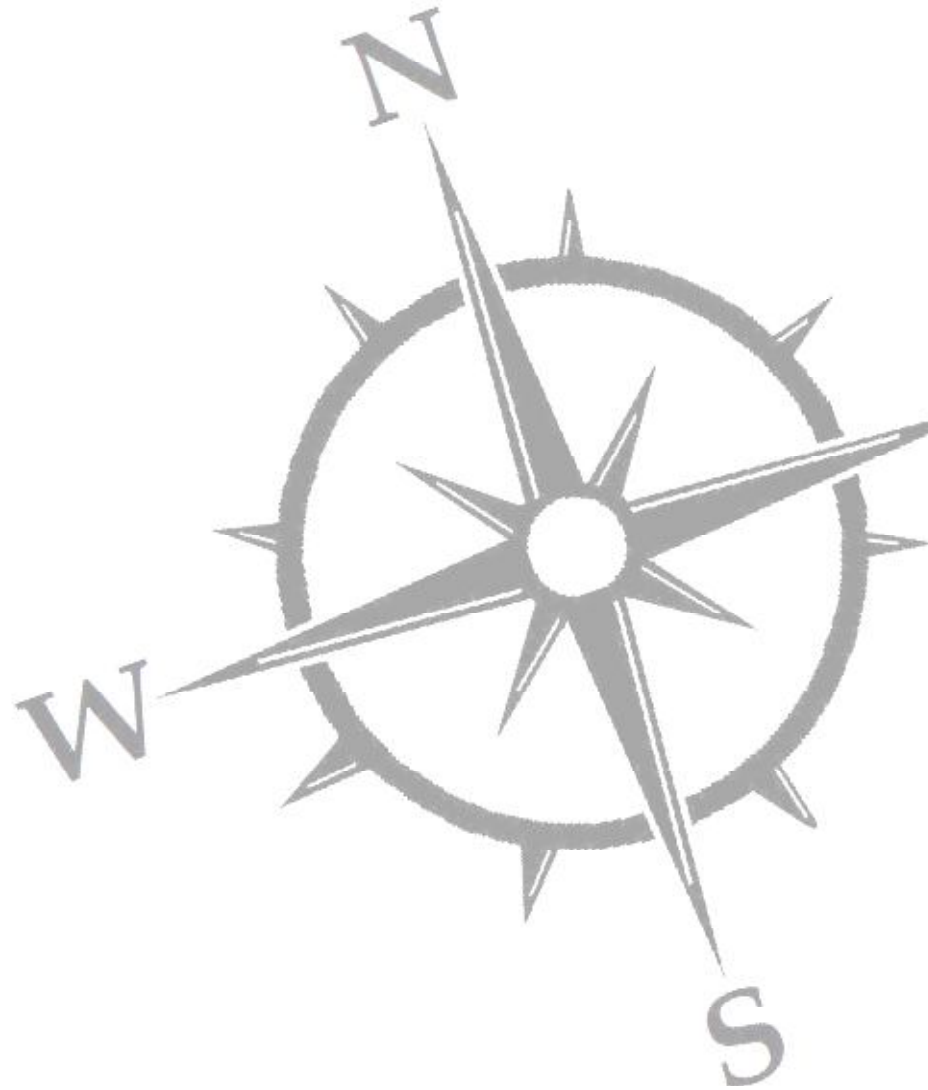
(1761-1834)

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## Lesson: 4.10 – Finishing Missionary Spotlight Series

This story reminds us that even if we start our Christian life well, it is very important that we finish well. We must be faithful in serving the Lord throughout our whole life. The Bible says that Christians are running a race and the goal is to finish and to finish well. William Carey had served the Lord all of his life, but finishing the race is just as important as running hard the rest of the race.

*"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." - 2 Timothy 4:7*







### **Who remembers where we left off last week?**

(Read the last paragraph from last week's lesson to begin this lesson as a review).

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Joshua had come down the river to Fort William College with some terrible news to tell me. "A fire swept through the print shop last night...there's...there's nothing left," he said. My mouth fell open in disbelief. "What do mean nothing left?" I said. He went on to say that the fire had started in the room where we store all of the paper. Paper burns so easily and quickly that it wasn't long before the whole room was ablaze. It happened soon after the workers left. William Ward had still been in the print shop. He saw the smoke and ran down the hall towards the paper room, but couldn't open the door because of the smoke.

William Ward ran out of the print shop, trying to shut all the windows as he went. He saw Joshua as he came out of the building. Together with the help of the

boarding school children, they quickly got buckets of water, and Joshua climbed up a ladder and poured them into a hole in the ceiling. Finally, after a couple of hours, the fire was out.

I was excited. At least it had only burned the extra paper, and it had not burned the printing press or all the letters and original copies of the Bibles and the books that we had made. But Joshua shook his head. Big tears ran down his cheeks. Somehow, one of the doors was opened, and very soon the air helped the fire to get going again. They all came back out to find that the whole print shop was now on fire. This time, their efforts to pour water on it didn't help. About two hours later, the fire burned itself out. I turned to Joshua and marveled at the fact that years of hard work were gone in just minutes.

An hour or so later, we were rowing our way back up to Serampore to take a look at the damage. When I arrived, I saw the charred building and could see the thin columns of smoke still coming out of it.

William Ward was there to greet me. He said that he had begun to sort through the ashes and found that the printing press had not been badly damaged and could be repaired and made to work again. Some of the paper in the middle stacks had not been burned. "...and what about the manuscripts?" I asked William Ward, though I knew what the answer would be.

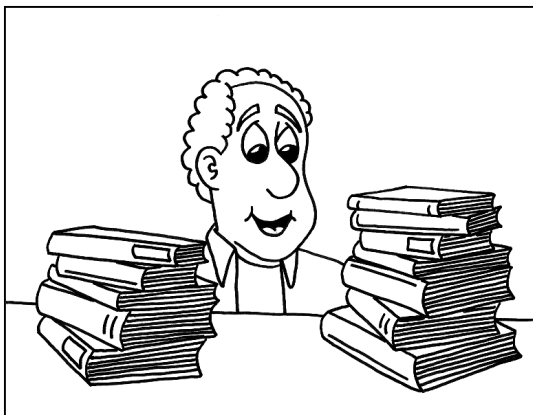
That night, I went in and sat by Charlotte. For the first time, I sat and cried. All of my work was gone. The next day, we began looking through things. We had lost

the new multi-language dictionary, many copies of the Bible in various printing stages, and many other books, translations, and letters that we had made by hand for the printing press. All in all, we had lost nearly everything we had worked at for the last six years. I guessed it was about ten thousand pounds worth of damage, but how could you calculate all of the work that had gone into translating and writing the books before they were published. I told everyone that we must not let this bring us down, but we must continue with what God had for us and rebuild.

It took almost six months for news of the fire to reach England, but when it did, the Christians there jumped into action. Only two months later, Andrew Fuller had collected over ten thousand pounds and sent it to me, and we had replaced nearly all that was lost in the fire. The people of England began to be excited about missions and began to pray for the work that we were doing in India. They even began to question why the East India Company wouldn't let missionaries in. William Wilberforce took up the fight and brought it before parliament. Parliament voted that it would now give licenses to missionaries to go to India. I found out the news in the best way. My brother's son Tom was the first person issued a license to come to India as a missionary.

Though I was getting older, the door was now opened for us to freely travel through India to share the gospel. My son, Jabez, went to the island of Amboyna. My oldest son, Felix, traveled to the nearby country of Burma to work with the people





there. A missionary from America named Adoniram Judson came through on his way to Burma. I spoke for a while with him and thought that God had some great things in store for him there in Burma.

Not long after Adoniram arrived, Felix had a terrible accident. His boat overturned in Burma and everyone in his family drowned. He began to kind of wander around Burma, and every once in a while I would get a letter from him about what was going on in his life. One day, William Ward ran into him and convinced him to come back to Serampore. We were all so excited to see him come back home. Felix began working with William Ward, and soon they had also translated many Christian books into Bengali like *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

Over the next few years, things did get a little tougher. New missionaries arrived. Though the help should have been nice, many of them thought that they knew everything about missions, and they did not want to take advice from Joshua, William Ward, or myself. On top of that, many of the churches in England wanted to be in charge

of what we did in India. I wrote to them and explained that it would be very difficult for them to try to govern our mission station from halfway around the world. The thing that hurt the most was when the mission board that I had helped to form accused me of trying to get rich in India. From the day I had left England, I had only received 600 pounds from England and the mission board, but I had given over 40,000 pounds to the mission out of my own money. That was more than anyone had ever given to the mission. Not to mention all of the time that I had given to see things succeed in India

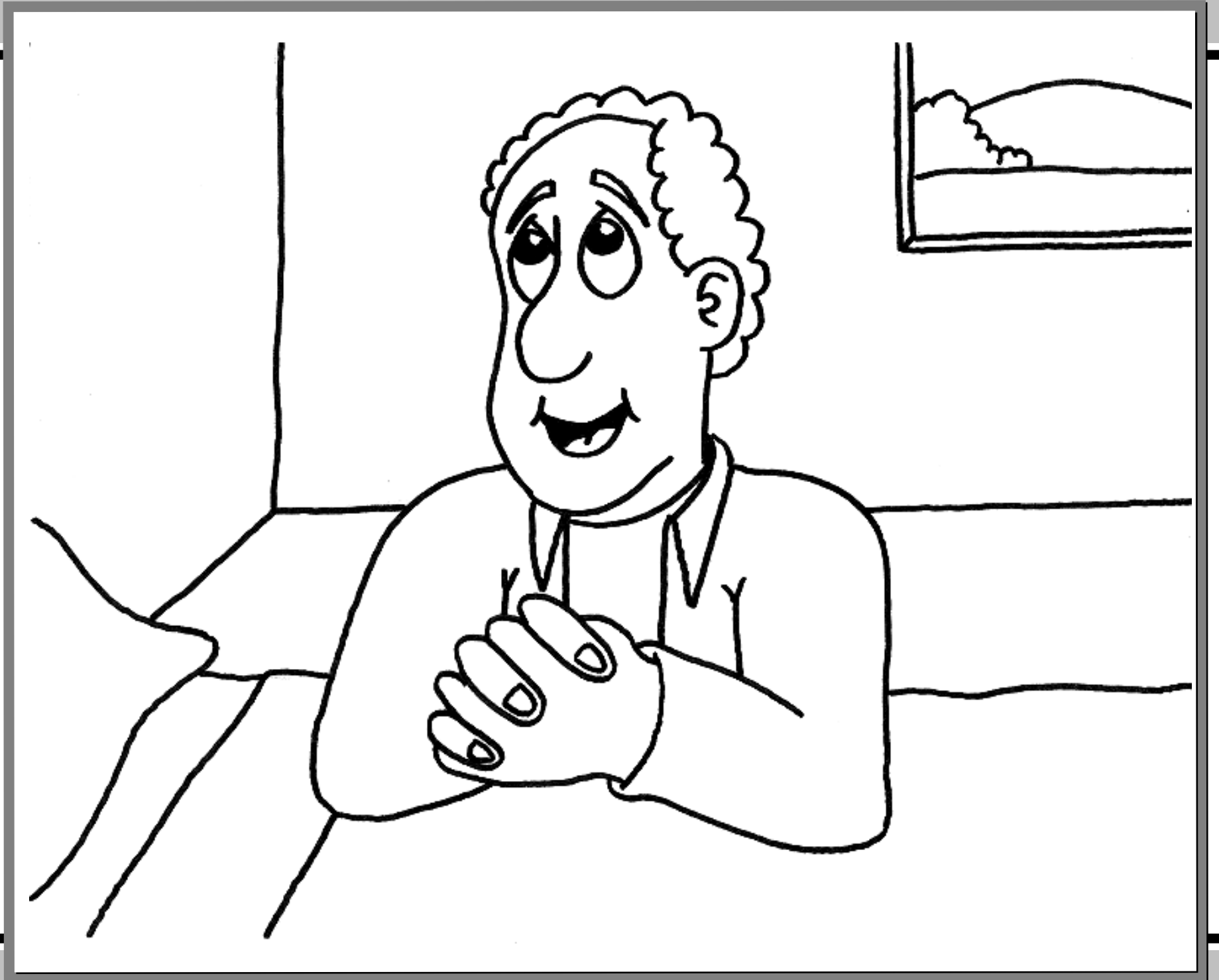
William Ward left for England to speak with the missionary board and Joshua and began work on an old idea from when we first arrived in India. We were going to build a college similar to Fort Willam College, but this one would be for new Indian Christians. Here they could learn and be trained to share the gospel. William Ward talked and addressed some concerns with the missionary society, and when he returned to India he had raised 5,000 pounds to help with the new college. The king of Denmark also offered us five acres of land, and soon Serampore College was up and running. At fifty-nine years old, many people asked me why I wasn't going to slow down and enjoy life a little, but there was still so much that needed to be done in India.

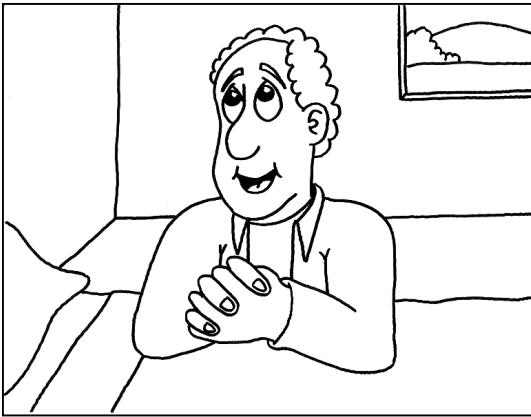
1821 was a very sad year for me. My wife Charlotte became ill. For weeks I sat by her bed and wheeled her out into the garden. Not long after, she passed away. It was a very sad day for me. We had been married for thirteen years, and I loved her and missed

her very much. Three other people passed away very soon after that. Krishna Pal, our first Indian convert got a disease called cholera and passed. Very soon after him, my son Felix also became sick with other health problems, and he passed. Finally, William Ward became sick, and he also passed. I had lost four very special people. I was sad to lose such wonderful helpers, friends, and family. Although I was very sad, I knew God wanted me to continue as before.

In 1823, I married again. My new wife was named Grace Hughes. It wasn't long after we were married that I hurt my foot getting down from a horse buggy. It took several months, but by the end of 1823, my leg was better and just in time. That year was an extra rainy year, and the rivers in the area flooded. One day, I looked out of the window of my house and saw large trees and water flooding into the mission compound. I jumped up and ran out to a higher spot just in time before many of the things in the mission were washed downstream. Once again, a few days later, I stood in the middle of the compound looking at all the damage around me, and made my plans to rebuild. The flood had wiped out the garden that Charlotte and I had planted. It had flooded the print shop and the building that we used for our Serampore College. Just like in the case of the fire, I was not going to let something like this set me back. I wrote to England, took on some extra translation work of government documents, and soon we had enough money to rebuild and get the college running again.

Despite the many bad things that were going on, some good things were





grateful that long ago, just like I had preached to those pastors back in England, I have expected great things from God, and I have attempted to do great things for God.

**(Summary of the life of William Carey)**

William lived for about a year after he had that stroke. On June 9, 1834, William passed away in bed at his home. He was 72 years old and had been in India for forty years.

He had started life as a poor shoemaker. He taught himself Greek and Latin and became a pastor. After he became convinced that God wanted Christians to take the gospel around the world, he started England's first missionary society. He then volunteered to go as one of the society's first missionaries. He started a respected college in India, translated the Bible and many other Christian materials into many Indian and Asian languages, and helped to start many schools and churches in India. At the time of his death, there were about thirty mission stations in different parts of India. He had trained about fifty pastors to work in these churches, and over half of the pastors were from India. He also helped to do away with several terrible practices that the Indian people practiced.

The fire at the mission station got the people of England excited about missions for the first time. Andrew Fuller had arranged for a picture of William to be painted. Though William never knew it, his portrait was sent back to England, and it wasn't long before his picture hung in many churches and

homes around England. People were excited to hear what God was doing in India with William Carey and were praying for God to work through him. William had set a pattern for how missions was supposed to work. Many people have copied the way he did things, but very few have done nearly as good of a job as William Carey did.

As his body was brought through the streets in India, hundreds of Indian people lined the sides of the streets. They had lost a wonderful leader and a wonderful friend who had given his life to see that they heard the good news of the gospel.

Just before his death, William was visited by a man named Alexander Duff. Alexander wanted to start a seminary in India and wanted William's advice on doing it. As Alexander stood up to leave, William stopped him and said, "Mr. Duff, you have been speaking a lot about William Carey. When I am gone, say nothing about William Carey...speak only of William Carey's Savior." William's life can be summed up in his own words, "Expect great things from God; Attempt great things for God."

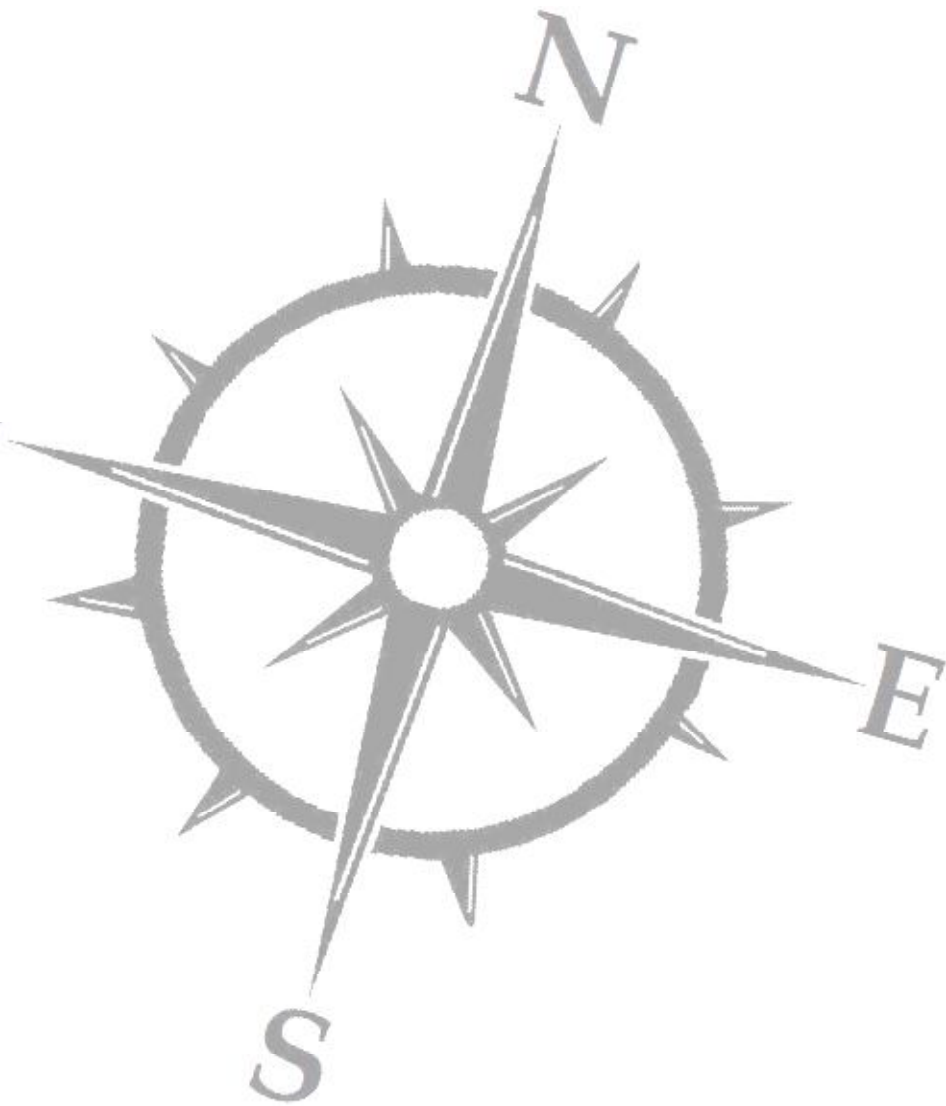
**Would you be willing for God to use you like He used William Carey to do great and wonderful things?**

*(For additional information, discussion questions, and materials on this lesson please refer to **lesson 4.10 on page 58** in your *India Expedition - Leader's Guide*.)*

happening. Even though the younger missionaries didn't want me around, I was in high demand by the government officials. It wasn't long before they began to look at those terrible practices again of sati and other terrible things that the people of India did to "worship" their gods. Many of these practices were outlawed, and I was asked each time to translate the documents for the Indian people.

The following years were filled with other frustrations and sorrows. The banks of India failed, and because of that Fort William College had no money and had to close. We experienced another flood, but once again, we made plans to rebuild. I also had a stroke. This made me very weak, and I had to be carried around. It became very difficult for me even to go outside and I would often have my gardener come in and talk with me about how the garden looked outside.

Things continued outside even though I was forced to remain inside. India now had many missionaries bringing the message of Jesus to the people. I am happy with all that God has done through me here, and I am



# References

For further reading or to obtain more information on this portion of the life of this missionary, please consult the following sources from which we obtained our information:

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