

William Carey
(17 August 1761 – 9 June 1834)

...was a British Christian missionary, Baptist minister, translator, social reformer and cultural anthropologist who founded the Serampore College and the Serampore University, the first degree-awarding university in India.

Carey is known as the "Father of Modern Missions."

His essay, **"An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens"**, led to the founding of the Baptist Missionary Society.

He translated the Hindu classic, the Ramayana, into English, and the Bible into Bengali, Oriya, Assamese, Marathi, Hindi and Sanskrit.

William Carey has been called a reformer and illustrious Christian missionary.

- On 5 October 1783, William Carey was baptized and committed himself to the Baptist denomination.

In 1785, Carey was invited to serve as pastor to the local Baptist church. During this time he read Jonathan Edwards' *Account of the Life of the Late Rev. David Brainerd* and the journals of the explorer James Cook, and became deeply concerned with propagating the Christian Gospel throughout the world. John Eliot (c. 1604 – 21 May 1690), Puritan missionary in New England, and David Brainerd (1718–47) became the "canonized heroes" and "enkindlers" of Carey.

In 1792, he published his groundbreaking missionary manifesto, **"An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens"**.

- The **first** part is a theological justification for missionary activity, arguing that the command of Jesus to make disciples of all the world (**Matthew 28:18–20** and **Mark 16:15–20**) remains binding on today's modern Christians.
- The **second** part outlines a history of missionary activity, beginning with the early Church and ending with David Brainerd and John Wesley.
- **Part 3** comprises 26 pages of tables, listing area, population, and religion statistics for every country in the world at that time.
- The **fourth part** answers specific objections to sending missionaries, such as difficulty learning the language or danger to life.
- Finally, **the fifth part** calls for the formation by the Baptist denomination of a missionary society and describes the practical means by which it could be supported.

Carey's seminal pamphlet outlines his basis for missions:

- 1) Christian obligation
- 2) wise use of available resources
- 3) accurate information.

Carey later preached a pro-missionary sermon - the so-called *Deathless Sermon*), using **Isaiah 54:2-3** as his text, in which he repeatedly used the epigram which has become his most famous quotation: *Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.*

Carey finally overcame the resistance to missionary effort, and the “**Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Amongst the Heathen**” (subsequently known as the *Baptist Missionary Society* and since 2000 as BMS World Mission) was founded in October 1792

In Carey's lifetime, the mission printed and distributed the Bible in whole or part in 44 languages and dialects.

Also, in 1812, **Adoniram Judson**, an American Congregational missionary en route to India, studied the scriptures on baptism in preparation for a meeting with Carey. His studies led him to become a Baptist.

Carey's work is considered to have provided the starting point of what blossomed into the Christian Vernacular Education Society providing English medium education across India.

William Carey has been referred to as the “**father of modern missions**”, and as “**India's first cultural anthropologist.**”

His teaching, translations, writings and publications, his educational establishments and influence in social reform are said to have “marked the turning point of Indian culture from a downward to an upward trend.”

- Thus Carey significantly contributed to the **birth of Indian nationalism.**
- Carey's was instrumental in **launching Serampore College in Serampore.**
- Carey's passionate **insistence on change resulted in the founding of the Baptist Missionary Society.**

By the time Carey died, he had spent 41 years in India without a furlough. While his mission could count only some **700** converts in a nation of millions, he had **laid an impressive foundation of Bible translations, education, and social reform.**