

Howard Carter (1891-1971)

by Keith Malcomson

Howard Carter's life was marked by a deep spiritual search, a call to ministry, and a lifetime of service to God, marked by significant milestones and achievements in the AoG.

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5, John 15:16, Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 12:4, 2 Timothy 4:7

Topics: "Faith And Obedience", "Pentecostal Ministry"

Description

Keith Malcomson shares the inspiring journey of Howard Carter, who overcame obstacles, embraced the Pentecostal experience, and dedicated his life to serving God. From a speech impediment to imprisonment as a conscientious objector during the war, Carter's faith and commitment to God's calling never wavered. He founded a Bible school, traveled the world ministering and establishing churches, and impacted countless lives through his teachings and ministry, leaving a legacy of faith and dedication to God's will.

Transcript

Howard Carter was born in Birmingham into an unsaved but religious Anglican home. He had one younger brother called John. From an early stage he was marked by a speech impediment which brought ridicule at school. Their godly mother took them to church but it was not until he was nearly 20 that he began a real heart search for God and truth. He attended a service in a simple and humble Church of Christ building along with his brother. They were much touched by these people, soon they both received Christ as Saviour and were baptised in water.

A member of this congregation soon had these two brothers helping out with the YMCA who went out preaching to the poor, reading the scriptures, singing and witnessing. This was their training ground. This same man took them to Friday night meetings where they were taught about being filled with the Spirit and of Gods power to heal. Soon they saw their mother healed from kidney trouble and crippling arthritis.

One man from this fellowship was the first Pentecostal they had met. He deeply affected them with his fervent spirit, his inspirational preaching and his continual praising of Christ. Soon they attended their first Pentecostal meeting where believers spoke in tongues, all this they readily received as in accordance with the New Testament. They accompanied these new friends in 1912 to the Sunderland Whitsuntide Convention where Boddy, Wigglesworth, Barratt and others ministered. They were in awe of the clear powerful preaching and the beautiful singing in tongues.

After trying to bring this great blessing back to the Church of Christ they were quickly struck off membership. The next two years they attended this conference hearing speakers from Germany, Holland, Norway, Switzerland, America and Britain. Many laid hands upon them to receive the Baptism but still they did not receive, Howard was holding unto strong views that you didn't need to speak in tongues to be baptised in the Holy Ghost. In 1915 they attended a convention in Bedford, while kneeling to pray he was mightily caught up in the Lord and without realising, was making a great noise and disturbing the meeting. The Pastor asked an elder to take this noisy brother to the vestry. As he crossed the threshold he broke forth in tongues for the first time. The cross and the atonement seemed so much more wonderful and a deep consciousness of the Lords presence was his from then on.

It was not long before he was left with responsibility of Pastoring this small flock in Birmingham which soon started to grow. Feeling the call of God he moved to part time work and gave himself to the study of God's word. When approached by a brother who would pay his way at a Bible college he turned down this offer feeling he must trust the Lord totally. He then resigned work altogether just leaving a box at the back of the church for offerings.

When war came in 1916 he was imprisoned as a conscientious objector in Wormwood Scrubs, London and later at Dartmoor. He was fed on bread and water, his hair cropped off, was made to ware prison cloths and locked in a cell by himself. It was at this time that he became absorbed in studying the nine gifts of the Holy Ghost. It was during secluded times of prayer and study that God opened to him a beautiful revelation of these nine distinct gifts which he would later teach across the world. In 1918 at the end of the war he returned to Pastor the Church in Birmingham. From this time forward he was greatly used in the gifts of interpretation of tongues, prophesy and the word of wisdom.

Reluctantly after much wrestling he answered a call to London and stepped out with a word from the Lord which was: "Gather my people together and build for me. A great company shall come and ye shall build for me. And their shall be heaps of money." He started by purchasing a building in London and held an opening campaign with George Jeffreys as the speaker. Out of this a strong work was established. He was then approached by a Mr.Mundell who believed he was to be the new principle of the PMU Bible School now in Hampstead. Howard felt he was mistaken, but after an hour of persuasion he finally consented to fill the gap for a couple of months until a suitable man was found. In February 1921 at the age of thirty he took this responsibility. Just 18 months later the PMU informed him that due to lack of funds they were going to close this school. Howard and the students prayed fervently then he offered to take on the full responsibility of the work and finances.

Progressively other gifted teachers were added such as C.L. Parker and Harold Horton. By 1925 their were 40 staff and students and those students had come from England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Norway, Sweden, Holland and Switzerland. In 1924 Harold was one of the 13 founding members of AoG and soon one of seven elected members. The School although remaining independent did become a recognised part of AoG. In 1925 he was invited on the missionary council and also took over the running of the Friday night rallies at Sion College from Polhil. During this time he exercised great faith to see the financial needs met. In 1926 he started the School Evangelistic society pushing the students out to start new works. He purchased buildings around the country where these labourers could minister. Next came a womens Bible School, then a Bible Correspondance Course. From this Bible School missionaries went forth to China, Japan, Korea, Ceylon, Africa, Egypt, Palistine, Russia and many other nations. In Great Britain over 140 evangelists and pastors were now labouring and the correspondence course had students in five continents.

Howard Carter's life's motto and what became the motto of the Bible School under his care was "Let me never lose the all-important truth that to be in Thy will is better than success, and grant that I may ever love Thyself more than Thy service."

In 1934 the call came to go minister in America which led into his first world tour starting with just 5 pounds in his pocket. In America Lester Sumrall who was half his age became his travelling companion. Over the next two years they travelled 150000 miles through about 30 different countries, visiting every British AoG missionary and many others. They faced death, danger and hardship in every manner, but saw multitudes saved, healed and baptised in the Holy Ghost, including 19 missionaries. This was the first of three such trips which came to an end at the beginning of the war in 1939.

In 1945 the war ended and Donald Gee replaced Howard as Chairman of the AoG. This was to mark the beginning of some monumental changes for the sphere of his calling and life. Again he headed for the United States and began a new season of ministry and travels. After that he pressed on to South America carrying out extensive ministry. When he returned to Britain in 1948 he took a momentous decision: after 27 faithful years as Principal of the Bible School he stepped down from his responsibilities .

In the following years he ministered across Canada, Algiers, the Middle East, India, Burma, Ceylon, Hawaii, Fiji, New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, India, Ceylon and France. This was only interrupted in his marriage in 1956 when he married Ruth Steelberg. Shortly after this they moved to New Zealand where they pastored the Assemblies of God Church in Auckland for the next two years to the blessing of all the saints. After this they set out on more ministry travels across America and Britain.

In 1965 his brother John took over the Bible School in Britain as principal in its new home at Kenley in Surrey, England. John very quickly called on Howard to come as resident-tutor of the college and as they settled into this new task it was soon apparent that Ruth made a great matron. Those were great years as these two brothers ministered side by side. The students were greatly benefited to have these two godly pioneers in their midst. Again Howard could pour out his many years of experience as a teacher, pastor and missionary, stirring the young men to believe God for great things.

In 1969 Ruth's health began to deteriorate so Howard resigned his position and they moved to Springfield in the States. It wasn't to retirement that they went however as they continued to minister but in local assemblies in the area. In January 1971 he was making plans to minister in Europe, but this was not to be the will of God. After a very busy day of visitation as well as a long period of time in his library he ministered that evening on 'Labour in the Word.' When he arrived back home he took a pain in his chest and he was gone - home to glory, only hours apart from the departing of another great pioneer, Willie Burton. It had always been his desire to be active in ministry to the end. His body was laid in a simple grave in Springfield, Missouri. On his gravestone was simply written "Man of faith" his brothers biography was called "Man of the Spirit".

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