



Bible Day

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## William Haas: Missionary to Central Africa

William Haas is probably not a household name to many. But the Lord knows him well, and has undoubtedly honored him. William was born in Michigan on January 4, 1873. His life ended on May 28, 1924. In those few, short decades, William accomplished much for the Lord.

As a teenager, William gave himself completely to the Lord, was baptized, and joined the church. He loved studying music and linguistics, as well as the profound truths of the Word of God. These interests would be used of the Lord in future years.



William and Genevieve Haas

As a young man, he believed the Lord was calling him to serve as a missionary. He studied missions and missionaries, developing a deep interest in Livingstone and Stanley, both missionaries to Africa. But he had a great fear of Africa. "Would I go to Africa if the Lord should call me there?" He repeatedly cried out, "Lord, any land but Africa. I'll go anywhere but there." After years of struggle, Haas came to realize God was calling him there, and he submitted to the Lord's call on his life.



Haas baptizing

Other struggles lay before him. He married, but lost his wife and children to illness. After several years as a young widower, he married a

friend, Genevieve, who shared his burden for Africa. They were blessed with a son, Billy.

The three traveled to what is now Kenya, where they began their trek into the central part of Africa. As they traveled, Haas was able to pick up bits of the Sango trade language. He recognized that it was the language spoken by people of various tribes, and that it would be a useful language to acquire, allowing him to converse with many tribal groups.

Haas began writing the language. He learned it well enough to preach and teach in it, and began translating the Bible into Sango. His desire to see men and women come to Christ, and to see all people have the Scriptures in their language became the heart of Baptist Mid-Missions, the mission he founded. His interest in languages might be seen as the precursor to Bibles International.

Haas laid down his life in Africa. But God had used him greatly in his few decades on this earth. Today, there is a strong, though persecuted, body of believers in the country of Central African Republic, where William's earthly body is buried. His candle burned brightly for Christ until it was extinguished in Africa.

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