

## **Evelyn Brand**

In the year 1879 Evelyn Brand was born as the ninth child to the Ooris couple in the land of England. Ooris had not just given his children good education but also had earned enough of possessions for their well being and had also rightly divided the portions among his children. They were actively involved in church ministry, giving of tithes, helping the poor and many such good deeds. Their ninth child Evelyn was well talented in arts and painting. She was also trained in the field of Homeopathy. In the year of 1911, Evelyn came to India sent as a missionary by the Strict Baptist Society and reached Tamilnadu. She began to learn Tamil language. She began her ministry in the Kolli mountain range, at Namakkal, Tamilnadu. The tribal people there were skilled in farming and hunting. They did not even have primary education.

Missionary Jesse Brand and Evelyn were united in marriage in the year 1913 at the Sengamangalam Church located down the mountains of the Kolli range. After their marriage, they took their first immediate trip to the mountains beginning their life's vision. They had to go about 6 miles upward to reach the wooden bungalow prepared for them. It is almost 3700 foot high. The canvas dhooli (carrier) was prepared for the journey. Jesse had to walk by foot and Evelyn in the canvas dhooli reached their wooden bungalow. They lived in there for almost 16 years and faced all the trials that came against. Their life's faith statement was, "Believe and you shall be victorious". To make their requests known to God and to thank God for what He's given were the two practices that they followed until the end.

Child marriages, forced marriages, forsaking the wife, to hear of the soothsayer, witchcraft, sorcery, divination, magic, visitation of evil spirits and many such were the practices of the people living there. In those times the people of the mountains knew nothing about education. If a soothsayer says that the time of a child's birth was not favorable, the parents would even find means to kill the new born or else they would cast away the child. The Brand couple began their gospel mission by giving those people medical aid. Later they began to educate the people who never heard of education, they also trained them in skillful works and thus continued to preach the gospel among them. They established 12 schools in that mountain range. They treated all the sick people who came for their help.

They established churches, hospitals and orphanages. In the orphanage, they also joined in the wives forsaken by their husbands and the children cast away by their parents because of the soothsayers. Along with the education and training they gave to the people, they also preached Christ. As they were tirelessly ministering in the villages of the mountains, they would also stay at some villages during night and continue their work. In the midst of this ministerial mission, Jesse Brand became sick with Malaria. The sickness became severe and he went on to be with the Lord on 15th of June, 1919. Even at that point, Evelyn did not waver in her commitment to God towards ministry.

She later began her independent ministry at the Kalrayan Mountain near Salem and Aathoor. For her expenses she used the income that was earned from the possessions that her father had left for her. Since she was aged, she bought a horse to use for her travels. Though she was 66 years old then, she worked like a young missionary and reached new mountain regions with the Gospel of Christ. In the year 1948 she went to Pachai Maintain and stayed there to carry on the work of the Gospel. There were more than 85 villages in that region. In 1962 she bought a land there and built a hut to stay and continue the work. The ministry was also carried out at Chitheri mountain, Podhu mountain, Payithur mountain and Arnuthu mountain. She named the ministry among these mountain regions as Mountain Gospel Fellowship.

In the month of September, 1974, when she had come to Vellore for a short visit to meet her son, she had a fall and was injured. The injury was very painful and thus she became bedridden for a few days. The treatments made no difference. On 18th of December at the age of 95 she went on to be with the Lord. As per Evelyn's desire, her body was carried back and buried beside her beloved Jesse there on the Kolli Mountain. She was zealous with the vision, "Kolli Mountains Belongs to Jesus".