

Second Mile People

Isobel Kuhn

Book review by Rachel Weaver



Isobel Selina Miller Kuhn, (December 17, 1901 – March 20, 1957), was a Canadian missionary to the Lisu people of Yunan province, China and northern Thailand. She and her husband John served with the China Inland Mission. He was a Bible translator, church planter, Bible teacher, and evangelist. She was his invaluable aid and authored several books about

her experiences, one of which is *Second Mile People*.

“Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain” (Matthew 5:41).

Second Mile People is the last of Isobel Kuhn’s many books.

While I enjoyed reading Isobel’s other books ever since I was ten years old, I only discovered her *Second Mile People* in the last ten years. I was so inspired by it that I wondered how I could have missed it before. Interestingly enough, this manuscript was discovered tucked away in a file years after Isobel’s death by cancer. It was first printed in 1982.

Second Mile People is a must-read for serious Christians of all ages. It is easy to read and yet compelling. The book is a composite of inspiring glimpses of long-gone missionaries, but the spiritual truths portrayed there have a timeless relevance that makes them applicable to us today.

The six “second-mile people” that Isobel included in this book were friends and colleagues whose lives made a deep impression on her for eternity. Some she identified by name and others have been written of anonymously. These lives were, as she put it,

“Splendid meteors trailing such radiance after them that something of their own celestial fire has sought to enter into us also.”

These people’s lives are amazing and as you read, you will realize how often, in Christianity today, we fall short of going the second mile with a willing heart. The second mile will, of course, cost you everything, which is very evident by the six lives portrayed in this book.

I was deeply impressed as I read and pondered what it was that made a second mile person in her book. In every case it was selfless sacrifice and devotion. Isobel portrays servants, working in difficult circumstance, who displayed faith and courage. They went above and beyond the call of duty. They lived for Jesus.

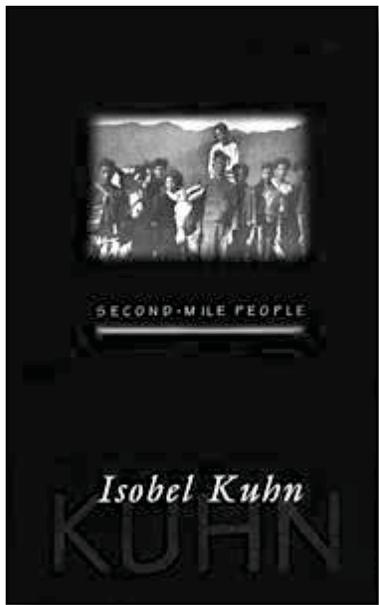
One of these people, named Bachelor, puts me to shame with his burning desire to seek first the Kingdom of Heaven. He lays aside any noticeable accomplishments and goes to the end of the earth

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to serve the Lisu people. He turns his musical ability to training mountain people to sing in four part harmony, something that is seldom heard on any mission field. His heart is so full of love for his Master that even when he is home on furlough,

you find him passionately investing his heart in the younger generation to further their desire to serve God.

I was taken in by the chapter about her friend entitled: "Dorothy - Are You Willing for This?"



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Isobel writes how we fall into defeat when trying to judge the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Our work is to yield to Him in joyous faith and not to worry about the value of the fruit He is producing. She writes of her friend Dorothy who so wanted to speak a word into the lives of others and felt defeated when she did not do what she had wanted to do.

"Dear Dorothy's special gift of the Spirit was her radiance, her shining happy joy in her walk with the Savior, but I doubt if she ever knew she possessed it. She thought she should have been preaching, when as a matter of fact the Holy Spirit was using her gift of shining to the very fullest extent in the life she had prayed to touch, and she need not have been so discouraged."

The life Dorothy touched was Isobel's. She uses a poem that bears repeating to express what she saw in Dorothy.

Indwelt

Not merely in the words you say,
Not only in your deeds confessed,
But in the most unconscious way
In Christ expressed.

Is it a beatific smile,
A holy light upon your brow?
Oh no, I felt His Presence while
You laughed just now.

For me 'twas not the truth you taught,
To you so clear, to me still dim.
But when you came to me you brought
A sense of Him.

And from your eyes He beckons me,
And from your heart His love is shed,
Till I lose sight of you and see
The Christ instead.
(A.S. Wilson)

In the book Isobel describes four other beautiful lives that challenged and inspired her with their "second mile" living. Read it to be inspired to be a "second mile" Christian.

"I need men, consecrated men, men willing to live a lonely life for Christ, willing to suffer and do without the comforts of civilization."
-Isobel Kuhn