

KITTY ANNA GRIFFITHS
(1919-2014)



Kitty Anna Griffiths was born on July 6th, 1919 in Essex, England, in the immediate aftermath of the First World War. She grew up in rural Suffolk at Suttons Farm, a sixteenth-century home beloved by her and still farmed by her nephew, Christopher Coe, son of her cherished brother, Ian. Kitty's father, Percy George Coe, was a sincere Christian and a kind and gentle man, who encouraged Kitty in her faith. Her mother, Annie Grey Arnot, had come to England from Scotland as a Faith Missioner; she instilled in Kitty a fervent desire to become a missionary. At the age of eight, Kitty put her trust in Jesus as her Lord and Saviour.

Kitty's life was an adventure in which she was guided by faith. In 1941, at the height of the Blitz, she was evacuated to Cardiff from London, where she had been a student at Furzedown College. At a meeting of Christian students in Cardiff, she met Gerald Griffiths, her husband and soulmate of more than seventy years. Gerald and Kitty were married at Brockley Chapel, near Bury St Edmunds on December 29, 1943. Together they committed themselves to serve

God, which they did, ministering at churches in the UK, South Africa, and Canada for fifty years, and also worldwide through Bible Stories Alive.

Kitty delighted in children and was the loving mother of Ian, Myfanwy, and Jonathan, and, in time, the much loved mother-in-law of Christine, Michael, and Anne. She took a special pleasure in each of her eleven grandchildren: Jennifer, Fiona, Jonathan; Anna, David, Miriam, Elizabeth; Gerald, Joanna, Malcolm, and Christopher. Her door was always open for visits and she loved one-on-one time with each grandchild. Dinners with family were a special pleasure for her, and she loved – in recent years – regular evening meals with Ian and Christine, as well as treasured visits to Michael and Myfanwy in Waterloo, and many happy family gatherings at the welcoming home of Jonathan and Anne. She was a faithful friend and correspondent to grandchildren who moved away. As her family grew (she was great-grandmother to 27!), Kitty took new pleasure in each great-grandchild. She prayed faithfully for every member of her family, remembering them all daily.

In 1973, Kitty was called to a new ministry: A Visit With Mrs G. From its beginnings as a North American Bible story program for families, A Visit With Mrs G. grew to be an international ministry. Children and young adults around the world listened to her radio stories, which have been heard in more than one hundred and eighty countries and in sixteen languages. Through her, they learned of the saving love of the Lord Jesus. Listeners of all ages wrote to “Mrs G.” telling her of their families, their struggles – and in many cases their new life in Christ, thanking her warmly for her life-changing ministry and her love. To each one who wrote, Mrs G. responded personally, sending a book of Bible stories. During the course of her ministry, she gave away more than five hundred thousand books. She worked tirelessly in this ministry at the “Granary” until recent weeks, thrilled and encouraged by the ongoing project to translate the stories for the children of China.

Kitty loved beauty. Her home was a wonder to her family – especially children! Her garden in summertime was a sea of blossoming flowers (she especially loved the Lily of the Valley). Her home was adorned with memories of a life rich in Christian service: a red Venetian glass lamp given to her by the African women to whom she told Bible stories (translated into Zulu and Sotho) at their weekly meeting in Johannesburg... precious Kente cloth, made by hand and sent to her from listeners in Ghana... and valued treasures from Israel, which she visited three times as a guest of the government—stones from the brook where David battled Goliath, thorns from the Sinai desert where Moses met God in the Burning Bush, and buoyant water from the salty Dead Sea. The beauty of her home was enriched by her own many luxuriant tapestries, treasures that she sewed over many years. She loved music and, in recent years, especially enjoyed evenings in Waterloo, singing hymns as Myfanwy played the piano.

Kitty was tremendous fun and enjoyed life to the full, a life made all the richer by her many friends around the world. She loved the Welsh hills, the English countryside, and the Scottish highlands, as well as the landscapes of her adopted homes: South Africa and Canada. On Gerald's preaching trips in 1963 and 1964, Kitty was excited to be driving (she loved to drive!) through Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Bechuanaland Protectorate (Botswana). As a child, her mother had told her stories about the Scottish missionaries Robert Moffat and his son-in-law David Livingstone, who had preached the gospel in these places. Everywhere, she marveled at God's creation. In Canada, she loved the beauties of Muskoka and the small towns and rolling farmlands of southern Ontario. Her ravine garden in Toronto was a special joy to her, where she wrote many of her Bible stories in the very early morning, listening to the dawn chorus.

People's sorrows affected Kitty deeply – and she acted. In South Africa, she collected money to build a soup kitchen for African out-patients at a missionary hospital at Hammanskraal (Jubilee Mission Hospital) and later raised the funds to build a children's ward for African children suffering from Kwashiorkor, a form of malnutrition. In Edinburgh, she organized a Christmas party for boys in a residential school for young offenders, arranging for each one to be welcomed into the home of a Christian family for Christmas Day. Many had never experienced the warm love of a family. In Canada, she took on a difficult class of boys at Sunday School, bringing them breakfast on Sunday mornings, and feeding them with the Word of God. One of these boys wrote to her later, remembering her warmth and love, "I thank you for what you have done in my life and others. I am sure that some day you will hear God say, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant'."

Kitty (Nana to her family) was a loving wife, a devoted mother, mother-in-law, and grandmother, and an encourager of many worldwide. We rejoice that she is now with the Lord, whom she loved, trusted, and served throughout her life.

