

Real Life Stories *David and Svea Flood - Sowing In Tears*

In 1921 David and Svea Flood went with their two-year-old son from Sweden to the heart of Africa, to what was then called the Belgian Congo. This missionary couple met up with the Ericksons, another young Scandinavian couple, and the four of them sought God for direction. In those days of much devotion and sacrifice, they felt led of the Lord to set out from the main mission station to take the gospel to the village of N'dolera, a remote area.

This was a huge step of faith. There, they were rebuffed by the chief, who would not let them enter his town for fear of alienating the local gods. The two couples opted to build their own mud huts half a mile up the slope.

They prayed for a spiritual breakthrough, but there was none. Their only contact with the villagers was a young boy, who was allowed to sell them chickens and eggs twice a week. Svea Flood—a tiny woman only four feet, eight inches tall—decided that if this was the only African she could talk to, she would try to lead the boy to Jesus. And she succeeded!



Meanwhile, malaria struck one member of the little missionary band after another. In time, the Ericksons decided they had had enough suffering and left to return to the central mission station. David and Svea Flood remained near N'dolera to carry on alone.

Then, Svea found herself pregnant in the middle of the primitive wilderness. When the time came for her to give birth, the village chief softened enough to allow a midwife to help her. A little girl was born, whom they named Aina. The delivery was exhausting. Svea Flood was already weak from bouts of malaria so the birthing process was a heavy blow to her stamina. She died only 17 days after Aina was born. Something snapped inside David Flood at that moment. He dug a crude grave, buried his 27-year-old wife, and then went back down the mountain with his children to the mission station.

Giving baby Aina to the Ericksons, he snarled, "I'm going back to Sweden. I've lost my wife, and I obviously can't take care of this baby. God has ruined my life!" With that, he headed for the port, rejecting not only his calling, but God Himself.

Within eight months, both the Ericksons were stricken with a mysterious malady and died within days of each other. Baby Aina was then turned over to another American missionary family who changed her Swedish name to "Aggie". Eventually they took her back to the United States at age three.

This family loved Aggie. Afraid that if they tried to return to Africa some legal obstacle might separate her from them, they decided to stay in their home country and switch from missionary work to pastoral ministry. That is how Aggie grew up in South Dakota. As a young woman, she attended North Central Bible College in Minneapolis. There she met and married Dewey Hurst.

Years passed. The Hursts enjoyed a fruitful ministry. Aggie gave birth first to a daughter, then a son. In time, her husband became president of a Christian college in the Seattle area, and Aggie was intrigued to find so much Scandinavian heritage there. One day she found a Swedish religious magazine in their mailbox. She had no idea who had sent it, and of course she couldn't read the words, but as she turned the pages, a photo suddenly stopped her cold. There, in a primitive setting, was a grave with a white cross—and on the cross were the words SVEA FLOOD.

Aggie got in her car and drove straight to a college faculty member whom she knew could translate the article. "What does this article say?" The teacher shared a summary of the story.

"It is about missionaries who went to N'dolera, Africa, long ago. A baby was born. The young mother died. One little African boy was led to Jesus before that. After the whites had all left, the boy all grown up finally persuaded

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the chief to let him build a school in the village. He gradually won all his students to Christ and the children led their parents to Him. Even the chief became a follower of Jesus! Today there are six hundred believers in that village, all because of the sacrifice of David and Svea Flood.” Aggie was elated!

For the Hursts’ 25th wedding anniversary, the college presented them with the gift of a vacation to Sweden. Aggie sought out her birth father. David Flood was an old man now. He had remarried, fathered four more children, and generally dissipated his life with alcohol. He had recently suffered a stroke. Still bitter, he had one rule in his family: “Never mention the name of God! God took everything from me!”

After an emotional reunion with her half-brothers and half-sister, Aggie brought up the subject of her longing to see her father. They hesitated.... “You can talk to him, but he’s very ill now. You need to know that whenever he hears the name of God, he flies into a rage.” Aggie walked into the squalid apartment, which had liquor bottles strewn everywhere, and slowly approached her 73-year-old father lying in a rumpled bed. “Papa,” she said tentatively. He turned and began to cry.

“Aina! I never meant to give you away!”

“It’s all right, Papa,” she replied, taking him gently in her arms. “God took good care of me.”

Her father instantly stiffened and his tears stopped. “God forgot all of us. Our lives have been like this because of Him.” He turned his face back to the wall.

Aggie stroked his face and then continued, undaunted. “Papa, I’ve got a marvelous story to tell you!”

“You didn’t go to Africa in vain. Mama didn’t die in vain. The little boy you won to the Lord grew up to win that whole village to Jesus! The one seed you planted in his heart kept growing and growing! Today there are 600 people serving the Lord because you were faithful to the call of God in your life!”

“Papa, Jesus loves you. He has never hated you or abandoned us.”

The old father turned back to look into his daughter’s eyes. His body relaxed. He slowly began to talk. By the end of the afternoon, he had come back to the God he had resented for so many years. Over the next few days, father and daughter enjoyed warm moments together. A few weeks after Aggie and her husband returned to America, David Flood died.

And a few years later...Aggie and her husband were attending an evangelism conference in London, England, when a report was given from Zaire (the former Belgian Congo). The superintendent of the national church, representing some 110,000 baptized believers, spoke eloquently of the Gospel’s spread in his nation.

Aggie could not help going to ask him afterward if he had ever heard of David and Svea Flood. “Yes, madam,” the man replied in French, his words being translated into English. “Svea Flood led me to Jesus Christ! I was the boy who brought food to your parents before you were born. In fact, to this day, your mother’s grave and her memory are honored by all of us.” He embraced Aggie for a long time, sobbing.

“You must come to Zaire! Your mother is the most famous and honored person in our history.”

When Aggie and her husband went to N’dolera, they were welcomed by cheering throngs of villagers. Aggie even met the man who had been hired by her father to carry her down the mountain in a hammock-cradle. Then the pastor escorted Aggie to see her mother’s tomb with a white cross bearing her name. She knelt in the soil to pray and give thanks to God.

Later that day, in the church, the boy turned pastor read....

“I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”

John 12:24

“Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy.”

Psalms 126:5