

# Missionary to American Indians

by David Brainerd

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*David Brainerd's life exemplified dedication to missionary work among American Indians, marked by hardship and spiritual legacy.*

**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 4:16, Philippians 3:13, 2 Timothy 4:7, Hebrews 12:1, 1 Peter 4:19

**Topics:** "Missionary Work", "Persevering Faith"

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## Description

David Brainerd, a missionary to the American Indians, faced expulsion from Yale College due to his support of the 'New Lights' during the Great Awakening. Despite hardships and suffering, he displayed heroic fortitude and self-devotion while laboring among the Indians at various locations. His life was marked by dedication to spreading the Christian faith, even as his health deteriorated, leading to his death from consumption. Brainerd's journals and writings, including accounts of his work and experiences, were published posthumously, leaving a legacy of faith and perseverance.

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## Transcript

Missionary to the American Indians; born at Haddam, Connecticut, [United States], April 20, 1718; died at the home of Jonathan Edwards (to whose daughter [Jerusha] he was engaged), Northampton, Massachusetts, October 9, 1747.

He entered Yale College in 1739 and was expelled in his junior year; it was the time of the Great Awakening and Brainerd, who was "sober and inclined to melancholy" from childhood, sympathized with the "New Lights" (Whitefield, Tennent, and their followers); he attended their meetings when forbidden to do so, and criticized one of the tutors as having "no more grace than a chair"; as a consequence he was expelled.

He was licensed at Danbury, Connecticut, July 29, 1742; was approved as a missionary by the New York correspondents of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, November. 25, 1742, and labored among the Indians at Kaunaumeeek (Brainerd, Rensselaer County, New York, 18 miles southeast of Albany) April 1743-March 1744; was ordained as a missionary at Newark, New Jersey, June 12, 1744; ten days later began work at what was intended to be his permanent station, at the forks of the Delaware, near Easton, Pennsylvania; in October he visited the Indians on the Susquehanna, and June 19, 1745, began to preach at Crossweeksung (Crosswick, 9 miles southeast of Trenton), the scene of his greatest success.

His life among the Indians was one of hardship and suffering borne with heroic fortitude and self-devotion; his health gave way under the strain and he relinquished the work, March 20, 1747, dying from consumption. The portions of his diary dealing with his work at Crossweeksung (June 19-November 4, 1745, and November 24, 1745-June 19, 1746) were published before his death, by the commissioners of the Society (*Mirabilia ddi inter Indicos: or the rise and progress of a remarkable work of grace among a number of the Indians in the provinces of New Jersey and Pennsylvania; and Divine Grace Displayed: or the continuance and progress of a remarkable work of grace, etc.*, both published at Philadelphia, 1746, and commonly known as "Brainerd's Journal"). All of his papers, including an account of his early life and the original copy of his diary, were left with Jonathan Edwards, who prepared *An Account of the Life of the Late Rev. David Brainerd* (Boston, 1749), omitting the parts of the diary already published. The life and diary entire, with his letters and other writings, were edited by S. E. Dwight (New Haven, 1822) and by J. M. Sherwood (New York, 1884).

His place as missionary was taken, at his request, by his brother John (born at Haddam, Connecticut, February 28, 1720; died at Deerfield, New Jersey, March 18, 1781)...

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