

Three Women Who Changed the World - March is Women's History Month

Demian Dunkley
March 2, 2020



March is Women's History Month!

There have been countless women who have made an incredible impact on the world despite oppression and adversity. Let's take a look at a few of the well-known and lesser-known powerful historical figures.



Corrie ten Boom

Cornelia (Corrie) Arnolda Johanna ten Boom, born in 1892 in Haarlem, Netherlands to a devoted Christian family, is world-renowned for saving hundreds of Jewish lives during World War II and spreading her powerful message of forgiveness when faced with unspeakable evil.

During World War II, the ten Boom family sacrificed everything by providing refuge for Dutch fugitives and Jewish people, saving an estimated 800 lives. Unfortunately, on February 28, 1944, Nazis raided their

home and arrested many of the ten Boom family members, including Corrie.

Corrie and her sister Betsie were sent to a number of concentration camps, including Ravensbrück, a women's labor camp in Germany. Every evening, Corrie and Betsie held a worship service and discussed Jesus' word, despite the brutality and hardship they experienced. Following the devastating death of her sister, Corrie ten Boom was miraculously released. She returned to the Netherlands to set up a rehabilitation center for concentration camp survivors and spent the remainder of her life traveling the world to testify to God and spread the message, "God will give us the love to be able to forgive our enemies," visiting more than 60 countries in 30 years.

In 1947, Corrie ten Boom came face-to-face with a Nazi she had encountered at a concentration camp and somehow, despite everything she felt, she mustered up the ability to forgive. "And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes," shared ten Boom in her memoir *The Hiding Place*. "For a long moment we grasped each other's hands, the former guard and the former prisoner. I had never known God's love so intensely as I did then." Read her full story by [getting her book here](#).



Wangari Maathai

Born in 1940, Professor Wangari Maathai was at the forefront of democracy, human rights initiatives and environmental conservation in Kenya from the latter half of the 20th century into the early 2000s. The pinnacle of her efforts occurred when she received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 for her outstanding contributions to not only Kenyan society, but to the world.

She pioneered as a woman in a patriarchal time, becoming the first woman in East and Central Africa to earn a doctorate degree. She held many positions in the Kenyan government throughout her life despite constant pushback, and addressed the United Nations on multiple occasions on behalf of women and the environment.

While serving on the National Council of Women in Kenya in 1976, Maathai introduced the grass-roots Green Belt Movement, an initiative aimed at reducing poverty and preserving the environment through encouraging locals, especially women, to plant indigenous trees in their communities. She fought against foresters and government officials who insisted that diplomas were necessary to plant, proving with vigor that anyone can simply dig a hole, drop in a tree and nurture it to full growth. Maathai worked alongside the rural women on her hands and knees, digging in the earth.

In her memoir, Maathai shares, "What I have learned over the years is that we must be patient, persistent, and committed. When we are planting trees sometimes people will say to me, 'I don't want to plant this tree because it will not grow fast enough.' I have to keep reminding them that the trees they are cutting

today were not planted by them, but by those who came before. So we must plant the trees that will benefit communities in the future. I remind them that like a seedling, with sun, good soil, and abundant rain, the roots of our future will bury themselves in the ground and a canopy of hope will reach into the sky."

"Those of us who witness the degraded state of the environment and the suffering that comes with it cannot afford to be complacent. We continue to be restless. We cannot tire or give up. We owe it to the present and future generations of all species to rise up and walk!" Maathai did not just call for others to take a stand, she herself 'walked the walk.' Her incredible faith and determination to do God's work carried her through the many obstacles in her life.

If you would like to learn more about her life, check out her book *Unbowed: A Memoir*, [available on Amazon](#). And it's made from 100% recycled paper!



Hak Ja Han Moon

Last but certainly not least, let's talk about the [Mother of Peace](#) herself, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, also known as True Mother! True Mother's global efforts in the 77 years of her life have drastically changed the scope of interfaith dialogue, creating an extraordinary legacy of peace.

True Mother co-founded the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), a global movement aimed at uniting people of all religions, cultures and backgrounds under the banner of world peace, alongside her late husband, Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon. The movement has attracted millions and sprouted various subdivisions, including the [Women's Federation for World Peace](#) and most recently, the [World Clergy Leadership Conference](#), which was inaugurated this past December 2019.

True Mother's incredible efforts in the past seven years alone have transformed lives and initiated peaceful collaborations between global leaders. "You should be able to embrace the nation and the world with true love, living for the sake of others, instead of living only for yourselves," said Dr. Moon to an audience of over 20,000 clergy, leaders, Unificationists, and guests at the global [Peace Starts With Me Clergy Rally](#) in December. "I pray that you will all become the righteous people and religious leaders standing in the vanguard and that you will not look back, but run forward."