



Who was Lottie Moon?

Lottie Moon—the namesake of Southern Baptists’ international mission offering—has become a legend. But in her time, Lottie was anything but an untouchable hero. In fact, she was like today’s missionaries. She labored tirelessly so her people group could know Jesus.

Backstory

Born Charlotte Digges Moon, December 12, 1840, in Albemarle County, Virginia. Lottie rebelled against Christianity until she was in college. In December 1858, she dedicated her life to Christ and was baptized at First Baptist Church, Charlottesville, Virginia. Lottie attended Albemarle Female Institute, female counterpart to the University of Virginia. In 1861, she was one of the first women in the South to receive a master’s degree. She stayed close to home during the Civil War but eventually taught school in Kentucky, Georgia and Virginia.

Woman on a Mission

Edmonia Moon, Lottie’s sister, was appointed to Tengchow, China, in 1872. The following year, Lottie was appointed and joined her sister there. Lottie served 39 years as a missionary, mostly in China’s Shantung province. She taught in a girls’ school and often made trips into China’s interior to share the good news with women and girls. Lottie Moon was passionate about people knowing Christ. She didn’t hesitate to speak her mind. Today’s China is a world of rapid change. It’s home to 1.4 billion individuals – one-fifth of the world’s population. Village dwellers flock to trendy megacities with exploding populations. And China holds its own in the world’s

economy. It’s very different from the vast farmland Lottie Moon entered in the 1800s. But one thing hasn’t changed: China’s need for a Savior.

When she set sail for China, Lottie was 32 years old. She had turned down a marriage proposal and left her job, home and family to follow God’s lead. Her path wasn’t typical for an educated woman from a wealthy Southern family. God had gripped her with the Chinese peoples’ need for a Savior.

Lottie wrote letters home detailing China’s hunger for truth and the struggle of so few missionaries taking the gospel to the 472 million Chinese in her day. She also shared the urgent need for more workers and for Southern Baptists to support them through prayer and giving.

She once wrote home to the Foreign Mission Board, “Please say to the [new] missionaries they are coming to a life of hardship, responsibility and constant self-denial.”

Disease, turmoil and lack of co-workers threatened to undo Lottie’s work. But she gave herself completely to God, helping lay the foundation of what would become the modern Chinese church, one of the fastest-growing Christian movements in the world. Lottie Moon died at 72 — ill and in declining health after decades ministering to her beloved Chinese. But her legacy lives on. And today, when gifts aren’t growing as quickly as the number of workers God is calling to the field, her call for sacrificial giving rings with more urgency than ever.

Letters Home

Lottie frequently sent letters back home detailing Chinese culture, missionary life and the physical and spiritual needs of the Chinese people. Additionally, she challenged Southern Baptists to go to China or give so that others could go. By 1888, Southern Baptist women had organized and helped collect \$3,315 to send workers needed in China.

What is the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering?

In 1918, Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU) named the annual Christmas offering for international missions after the woman who had urged them to start it.

"Why should we not ... do something that will prove that we are really in earnest in claiming to be followers of him who, though he was rich, for our sake became poor?" Lottie Moon, Sept. 15, 1887, Tungchow