

# WHO IS

## LOTTIE MOON

*"I have a firm conviction that I am immortal till my work is done."*

- Lottie Moon

Charlotte "Lottie" Digges Moon was born Dec. 12, 1840 to wealthy slave owners in Virginia. She was small – 4 ft. 3 in. – but spirited with sparkling blue eyes and dark brown hair. She was described by many as kind but fearless; delightful and forceful; selfless yet powerfully persuasive.

Despite their Baptist roots, Lottie and her siblings didn't like church and rebelled from faith at an early age. In college, she attended a prayer meeting as a curious skeptic, but ended up making a public profession of faith on Dec. 21, 1858. Soon, she felt the call to missions, but single women weren't encouraged to go into the field.

She began a career as a teacher instead and became a popular girls minister to young teens. Her sister Edmonia (Eddie) went to China, becoming one of the first single female missionaries of the Southern Baptist Convention. One Sunday, Lottie's pastor preached on the need for missionaries overseas. She prayed at length about it and knew the Lord required her in China as well.

It was hard to leave, though. As a single woman in her early 30s, she knew she was giving up the opportunity for a family of her own. Once the Foreign Mission Board officially appointed a missionary, they expected them to die on the field. By sailing for China, Lottie knew she was giving away her life for the sake of the Gospel.

She joined her sister in Tengchow in 1873. It would be her home for the next 39 years.

The city was hostile, cursing the missionaries as "foreign devils." They were

under constant fear of attacks from soldiers and received death threats. Sickness was common and Eddie fell chronically ill. Despite these hardships, the missionaries worked teaching women and children about basic biblical truths and sang hymns.

Eventually Lottie's sister Eddie became too ill to stay in China. Lottie went back to the U.S. with her for Christmas 1876. By the time Lottie returned in 1877, she was a drastically different woman from the rookie who had left America four years before. Her furlough had renewed her conviction and confidence.

Upon her return, she fought the traditional Chinese foot-binding of the girls in her boarding school, saying it went against Christianity. She also started child sponsorships so her students could afford to go to school.

Lottie was widely known in the U.S. from her letters. The need for financial and prayer support from back home contributed to the formation of women's missionary societies in the South, organized into the Women's Missionary Union, which still exists today.

She advocated for prayer support and furloughs for missionaries as many of her co-laborers encountered both physical and mental illness from the stresses of their work. She faced intense loneliness herself and longed for other single women to join her. She put her gift for persuasive words into use, using her letters to the Foreign Mission Board to call others into the mission field.

Eventually she closed her school when a bad fever broke out among the girls. She traveled to villages farther inland, always sharing the Gospel and teaching the Bible. She believed in a deeply relational style of evangelism, writing in a letter to a friend, "We must go out and live among them, manifesting the gentle, loving spirit of our Lord. We need to make friends before we can hope to make converts."

In the 1910s, famine, flood and revolution swept her province. Lottie nursed the wounded and sick when everyone else gave up. With rampant starvation and death around her, compounded by the Foreign Mission Board's financial inability to send more missionaries or funds to help, Lottie fell into deep depression, not eating so that her Chinese friends would have food. Malnutrition set in, making her too sick to stay in China. By the time a medical missions team carried her to the next ship bound for the U.S., she weighed a mere 50 lbs.

She died on Christmas Eve of 1912, as the ship stopped to get coal at one of her favorite ports, Kobe, Japan. In her book, "The New Lottie Moon Story," Catherine B. Allen describes Lottie's final moments as recorded by the attending nurse. After a night of reciting lines from "Jesus Loves Me," Lottie "silently smiled and looked about. Then, with great effort, she raised her fists together in the fashion of a fond Chinese greeting. Her spirit went out to meet the One coming for her."

Each year since 1918, a special Christmas offering for mission work has been given in memory of her sacrifice. In 2013, the Foreign Mission Board, now known as the International Mission Board (or IMB), reported receiving \$154 million. According to IMB correspondent Erich Bridges, this money is used for "missionary salaries, housing, medical care, children's education, field transportation and other expenses" to help missionaries outside the United States reach the unreached.