

Charlotte “Lottie” Moon – A Life of Sacrifice

Lottie Moon was born into an aristocratic Southern family in 1840. Viewmont, the largest of her grandfather's 10 Virginia plantations, was home for Lottie, her six siblings and her parents, Edward and Anna Maria Moon.

As a young girl, Lottie had heard too many denominational debates and arguments among family members to place much value on the church. But one night after attending a service and finding nothing to mock, she lay in bed, recalling the preacher's words. By morning, she had decided to become a Christian.

Lottie was highly educated and one of the first Southern women to earn a master's degree. She took a job teaching young girls after the Civil War and began dreaming of becoming a missionary.

Lottie appealed to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. On October 7, 1873, she set foot in Shanghai, China.

In addition to teaching in a school she established for girls, Lottie enjoyed joining her friends on trips into the countryside to share the gospel. She was a vocal advocate for those serving abroad, and her frequent appeals to the Foreign Mission Board led to changes that improved the lives of Baptist missionaries.

China was still an extremely dangerous mission field. The Boxer Rebellion of 1900 was responsible for the killing of more than 32,000 Chinese Christians and 230 foreign missionary men, women and children.

But the persecution revived the zeal of American Christians,

and soon the country was flooded with missionaries. China had thousands of Christians by 1911, but the needs were great because of a continuing famine.

Eventually people were dying in the streets from hunger. The Foreign Mission Board was unable to send additional funds or workers.

Without anyone's realizing it, Lottie slowly began starving herself so she could feed others. When she was forced to go on furlough, she weighed just 50 pounds.

On December 13, 1912, Lottie departed for America. On board the ship one morning, she raised her arms, her hands formed into fists in the traditional greeting of one Chinese friend to another. With that gesture, she died on Christmas Eve, 1912.

In 1918, the Woman's Missionary Union of the Southern Baptist Convention officially renamed its yearly fundraising event the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions. This is the kind of memorial she would have wanted—not one of stone, but one of action. *

Janet and Geoff Benge are a husband-and-wife writing team and the authors of the Christian Heroes: Then and Now series. Published by YWAM Publishing.

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