

BECAUSE OF WHO HE IS

... AND **BECAUSE YOU GIVE**, IMB HELPS CHURCHES SEND MISSIONARIES TO THE BILLIONS **WHO HAVE YET TO HEAR**.



2015 **WEEK OF PRAYER**
FOR INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS
NOVEMBER 29–DECEMBER 6, 2015

PRAY » GIVE » GO » SEND

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» DAY ONE: Family on a Mission in Lesotho

When Jim and Teresa Flora think about their life and ministry in the mountains of Lesotho, two needs come to mind: the support of their children and support from Southern Baptists.



They rely on the prayers and encouragement of their three grown sons and their families in the United States, but daughters Gracie, Anna, and Rebekah are a part of each day's

work in Africa. Whether they are preparing meals for volunteer teams, playing with children, or telling Bible stories, the girls consider themselves fully committed to the task of sharing the gospel with unreached Basotho people. They know every believer has a part in God's mission.

The Floras' work is an extension of Southern Baptists' dedication to reach the nations. They are grateful for long-term partnering churches such as First Baptist Church, Perryton, Texas; First Baptist Church, Clarendon, Texas; and River Oak Church, Chesapeake, Virginia. They thank God for faithful giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and the continued prayers of hundreds of churches.

"It's going to take a joint effort, all Southern Baptists joining together to make sure the gospel is accessible to all the people in these mountains," Jim says.

He explains that more than mountains trap the Basotho. They are captives of extreme poverty, epidemic HIV and AIDS rates, and a long tradition of ancestor worship.

PRAY for more churches to commit to joining the Floras by sending teams of workers.

PRAY the Flora family will be protected and God's glory will be revealed in Lesotho.

» DAY TWO: Water of Life for Central Asians

In the mountains and valleys of a Muslim Central Asian country, Christian aid worker Gary Warrior* and a team of Christian aid workers and national believers help meet people's physical and spiritual needs.

In a desire to do their part to fulfill the Great Commission, the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists and the Mountain State Association sent Warrior, 51, and his family to exalt Christ through meeting human needs.

In 2009, Warrior's team began digging wells to provide clean drinking water for Central Asian villages. It is satisfying to "have the opportunity to make the connection between clean drinking water and the Water of Life," Warrior says.



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In this area, it often takes a long time for someone to come to know Jesus, and those

who know Him face persecution from their family and community. But slowly, Warrior is seeing Muslim people come to Christ and become excited to share the gospel.

He is grateful for the faithful givers to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering who have "stuck with him" for his 17 years overseas. Warrior and his team have planted five house churches that still meet today.

"God has done that because we've been faithful, and the people in the pews back in America have been faithful to keep giving and to keep sending...and the result is there's a church here and there wasn't when I came," Warrior says.

**Name changed.*

PRAY for more opportunities to share the gospel and for the country's key leaders to accept its truth.

PRAY for protection for Warrior's team and for Warrior's family members separated by distance—their four children live in four different countries.

» DAY THREE: Trading Karma for Compassion in South Asia

Karma. Its meaning goes beyond “what comes around, goes around.” For Hindus, karma means undergoing a cycle of actions and consequences. To them, being saved from it would rob them of paying the price for their deeds and hoping for a better future through reincarnation.



That’s why the neighbors of a wounded man crying out in pain also cried out—not for help but in complaint that he was too loud and unaccepting of his fate, especially since he

had lit himself on fire in a fit of drunkenness and dissatisfaction over his dirt-poor life.

It would be easy to call those neighbors crass, but many of them don’t recognize any other way to believe. Yet God desires and deserves the worship of all people.

Donald and Helen McKinney* reach out to the down-trodden in South Asia and have opened a center for the poorest of the poor. Helen uses Lottie Moon Christmas Offering funds to distribute food and school supplies to women and children at the center.

Through Helen’s outreach to these families, the wounded man’s wife believes in Christ. A local pastor whom Donald helped train in discipleship led the wounded man in a prayer to Jesus before he died. But there are so many more who need to hear that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.

**Names changed.*

PRAY the McKinneys will not be overwhelmed by the sheer number of needs and people who need the Lord there.

PRAY for Hindus to hear that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life—and the only hope of a better future.

» DAY FOUR:

Syria's Hope

It's hard to imagine anything but a continued descending darkness closing in on Syrian and Iraqi refugees, victims of brutality caused by ISIS and the Syrian regime. While images and reports of beheadings, cruelty, and pure evil continue to shadow refugees—numbering in the millions—from any light of hope, there is hope in the good news of Jesus Christ.

Only a loving God Who cares deeply for all who are fleeing violence can push back that darkness. Christian worker Peter Matheson* works tirelessly to bring refugees God's shining hope. But his work comes at great



cost to the many he serves and to him, personally, as he ministers in the midst of tremendous suffering.

"The hardest thing in this ministry is just sitting down

and listening to their hurts," Matheson says. "They come, they arrive with little children just with the clothes on their back, because back in Syria their homes are destroyed, their businesses are destroyed...women have been raped...real torture goes on among men and young men in Syria."

Through the support of Southern Baptists, Matheson is able to work along the Syrian border, distributing boxes of food and other critical necessities.

As more Syrians flee the violence, Matheson hopes he can provide a way out of their current condition and give hope through Christ—a message they have never heard.

**Name changed.*

PRAY for open hearts among hurting Syrian refugees as Matheson tells them of God's love.

PRAY for strength, boldness, and wisdom for Matheson to minister in the midst of overwhelming needs.

» DAY FIVE: Church Takes Gospel to Unreached in Southeast Asia

Old Town Baptist Church had no idea their prayers to take the gospel to an unreached people group would lead them from North Carolina to remote Southeast Asia villages.

The church already participated in international missions by going on missions trips and supporting missionaries by giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.



But knowing billions without hope in Christ is intolerable, they wanted to do more.

"We have an on-going commitment to supporting the missions offering," said Mark Harrison, Old Town missions pastor. "We also have a deep commitment to come alongside our IMB partners and work with them on the ground."

As the church prayed, God led them to the "T" people. Most are Buddhist and have never heard about Jesus.

Missionaries helped Harrison learn about the T people and Southeast Asian culture. Since then, Harrison and Old Town members have made multiple trips a year to help take the gospel to the T people.

"The T people have been very isolated for a long time and it's difficult to get where they are," said Harrison. "But they have welcomed us and are in the process, many of them, of beginning to understand what it means to follow Jesus."

PRAY for the T people who are coming to faith in Jesus to stand firm in the face of opposition and persecution.

PRAY for more churches to partner with missionaries in reaching people groups who have yet to hear the gospel.

» DAY SIX: Called as a Church Family in Mexico

"Wherever you go, we go."

First Baptist Church in Oxford, Mississippi, made this commitment to Jeff and Liesa Holeman long before they began serving as IMB missionaries in 2008.

Investing in young lives has come full circle. The Holemans now mentor dozens of students and young adults from across the United States each year, many who return to the missions field for extended terms of service.

"That's who first invested in me—my church," Liesa says. "We want other churches to do the same. ...God called the church to do this. And we as missionaries have a responsibility to help our churches touch, feel, and understand our stories...to help them understand the importance of going to the nations."

In the three years since the Holemans began serving as cluster strategy leaders in Oaxaca, Mexico, the Oxford church has adopted the Tlacolula Valley Zapotec.



"We have a huge support group behind us...they don't let go of us," Jeff says. "That's a two-way street. We value our relationship with one another. Just because we're out

of sight, we're not out of mind. We know this because of the way they love us."

PRAY for the Holemans as they reach people groups in Mexico, some who have no access to the gospel.

PRAY for more churches to send missionaries to the nations, and thank God for the Holemans' partnership with the Oxford church.

» DAY SEVEN: Training the Next Generation in the Philippines

When someone shouted, “Your uncle is coming,” everyone in the Philippine village knew it was the secret code that really meant “run and hide.” Neighbors disappeared into small concrete homes until IMB missionaries Dave and Ivette Daggett had come and gone.

A few, including curious children and teenagers, stuck around to hear what the foreigners had to say.



The Daggetts led Bible studies, and some youth came against their parents’ wishes.

Now, 11 years later, a church meets here, led by some of the same

children and youth who met with the Daggetts years ago. They have even seen God use them to help start several Deaf churches.

“It’s the younger ones who have stepped up in leadership,” Dave said. “They share the gospel and are going with us to evangelize in other areas.”

Through weekly training sessions and Bible studies, Dave and Ivette continue discipling youth in the Philippines to go out and train others to lead. They give them opportunities to lead and to share their faith through events such as medical and dental clinics, anti-smoking and dental hygiene seminars, and True Love Waits seminars.

“The more fruit we see, the more joy we have,” Dave said. “We don’t want to slow down or hold back.”

PRAY *young leaders will grow in their faith and disciple more youth who are ready to become leaders.*

PRAY *the Daggetts will see more churches, including Deaf churches, started in the Philippines.*

» DAY EIGHT:

Because of Who He Is

God deserves the worship of all people, and that is why we send to the nations.

Redeemed and made new in Christ, we have a missionary identity which compels us to do all we can to see God exalted. Christ commanded us as a church to reach the nations. In a beautiful partnership, IMB helps your church send ordinary Christians, empowered by God's extraordinary presence, to proclaim His Word.

This gospel is the only hope for the billions of people who haven't yet heard His name. Most of them live in hard places—like cities, jungles, deserts, and war zones—with no access to the gospel.

We each have a part in fulfilling God's commission to reach these people if we are faithful to live out our missionary identity, if we are faithful to pray, give, go, and send to plant churches around the world for the glory of God. How do you fit into God's creative global plan? How does your church fit in?



"Declare His glory among the nations, His wonderful works among all peoples"
(Psalm 96:3, HCSB).

As you **PRAY** during this season of prayer and giving to support missionaries like these featured during the week of prayer, seek the Lord's guidance for what He would have you give to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering to support those who are sent.

DECLARE HIS GLORY AMONG THE NATIONS

HIS WONDERFUL WORKS AMONG ALL PEOPLES

PSALM 96:3

Week of Prayer for International Missions is an opportunity for churches to come together in focused, specific prayer for the work of missionaries they send to proclaim the glory of God to the nations. It's also a time to reflect on giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® for International Missions that supports them.

This year's workers represent those who minister in tough places, physically as well as culturally. They take the gospel to people living in mountains and valleys, remote villages, cities, places where refugees of war have fled, places where false religions have a stronghold. Churches are partnering—some taking sole responsibility for reaching a people group.

Your prayers and gifts make an essential difference.

In-depth week of prayer stories are available at imb.org/weekofprayer and in the December 2015 edition of **Missions Mosaic** by Woman's Missionary Union®. Call 1-800-968-7301.



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