

The background of the entire page is a photograph of several people's hands raised in prayer. The hands are of various skin tones and are positioned in a way that suggests a collective act of worship. The lighting is warm, and the focus is slightly blurred, emphasizing the gesture of prayer.

# OBEY

**HIS HEART / HIS HANDS / HIS VOICE**

**2012 Week of Prayer for International Missions / December 2-9**



## Day 1



BE  
♥ ✎ ☺

A glimmer of light shines in Egypt. It's not pretty and it smells worse, but it's hope. It's a sign of God at work. In the middle of a city dump, which more than 3,000 people call home, God is raising a church.

Leading the vision to build this garbage city church is a 31-year-old man who moved to the community as a teenager. "I have a strong sense for what it is like here, since I have lived here myself," says Joseph\*. "So God put in my heart to build a church here. That has been my dream."

Joseph's church is but one of many in a country with a rich history of Baptist ministry. "Southern Baptists were very influential through the Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon," says Ron Robinson\*, who served in Egypt for 29 years and witnessed the beginning of Baptist work. "When we first went [to Egypt], the work was evangelism that resulted in churches. That was our state-

# EGYPT

ment." The work has had a vital impact on Egyptian churches who are answering the call to reach their own people.

Especially with the unrest in the region, Southern Baptists need to stay focused on how God is working in Egypt, says Ron. "He sent His Son to die for these people, and we cannot lose the eternal big picture. [We] have to stay on track."

**Pray for Joseph and other leaders who are carrying out the vision to BE His heart, His hands, His voice.**

**Pray that Southern Baptists will act now with generosity and obedience while the doors of opportunity in Egypt are open.**

## Day 2



BE  
♥ ✎ ☺

Grace\* shakes her head. Feathered earrings dance, framing her face with motion and color. She is a member of one of the indigenous tribes of South America and is talking about the future of her people.

There are outsiders who would keep them in something of a museum—as living history, she says—stuck in a time that has not been a reality for several generations. It's not what she wants. Yet the identity of her people in the global community is not an easy issue. "A lot of our people don't even know our (culture)," she says. "They say they do, but they hide behind it."

She wants her people to move ahead—to "win." She wants them to take advantage of all that is going on about them while retaining the best of their culture. That means having to change.

Grace and her tribe are among 3,400 unengaged, unreached peoples across the world. Nearly 400 are in South America. Isolated by language, culture, history, and—in some cases—geography,

## Embracing the UNENGAGED

they live mostly in small clusters of fewer than 3,000 people. Most will never have a missionary assigned to them. Yet the church is called to take the gospel to all peoples.

Gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering allow IMB personnel to identify and understand these often forgotten people, offering Southern Baptist churches committed to embracing unengaged, unreached peoples a basis for beginning their work among them.

**Pray that Grace's people truly will "win" and have the opportunity to hear about their Savior.**

**Pray that your church will be one to embrace a people group that might not otherwise hear the gospel. (Learn how at [call2embrace.org](http://call2embrace.org).)**

## Day 3



BE  
♥ ✎ ☺

Before he found Christ, Bishwa Karmacharya was destined to become the temple priest, making sacrifices on behalf of others. Instead, the Nepalese church planter grew up to tell others about Jesus' sacrifice.

Karmacharya is Brahmin, the priestly and highest caste in Hinduism, the religion followed by most Nepalese. It's typically unthinkable for Brahmins and high-caste Hindus to associate with lower-caste Hindus.

But Christ has no caste, says Karmacharya, who was trained in church planting by IMB worker Carl Russell\*. Russell watched God develop in Karmacharya a gift for sharing the gospel and church planting. Now he and his wife, Ramila, plant churches among all castes and peoples in Nepal.

His radical obedience has permeated a growing generation of Nepalese pastors who, like Karmacharya, have chosen the road less taken, braving threats and bombs to see Christ's name glorified in the Himalayas.

# NEPAL

"We don't pray for one more church," Karmacharya says. "We pray for one more healthy church." This means having local, indigenous leadership. That's why the Karmacharyas regularly pile into their car and drive down roads that hug the hips of mountains to train these leaders.

Many Nepalese would call Karmacharya a radical because he's chosen obedience to Christ over caste, culture, family, and Hinduism. He sees himself as only obedient.

**Pray for healthy churches and other godly leaders to be raised up in the Himalayas; pray for safety for the Karmacharyas.**

**Pray that the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal will be met so more obedient workers like Carl Russell can disciple and train national leaders.**



## Day 5



BE

IMB workers Nik and Ruth Ripken\* have served in some of the toughest Muslim areas of Africa. They've known believers who have been martyred for Christ. They've interviewed hundreds of other persecuted Christians in more than 70 countries.

After all that, they've learned something about persecution: "The most persecuted person is a lost person who has no access to Jesus," Nik says. "Satan wants to keep people from hearing about Jesus. If he can't do that, he wants to shut you up, to silence your witness."

Most American Christians fall into that second category. They experience no persecution because they tell no one about Jesus. Yet persecution of Jesus' true followers has been normal from New Testament times to our day. The primary cause? People coming to know Jesus. The key is how to make persecution count for God's glory as the early Christians did.

When Ibrahim's wife died, the community refused to bury her. She was a Christian and, like Ibrahim and other believers, faced daily persecution from Muslim neighbors. "We'll treat your wife like we would a dog or a donkey—she's just an animal that should rot," they told Ibrahim.

The Songhai people are primarily Muslim but have many beliefs rooted in animism. IMB missionaries and volunteers share the gospel with villagers and disciple the few Songhai who have placed their faith in Jesus. Despite the persecution, missionaries have witnessed great zeal and dedication in the Songhai church.

Determined to bury his wife, Ibrahim began digging her grave as Muslim villagers yelled insults at him. When his Christian brothers heard what he was doing, they came immediately to help. That day was a turning point for the Songhai believers. One of Ibrahim's close friends, Boubacar, said he greatly admired Ibrahim's loyalty to Christ that day. That day, the believers showed the inspiring

It's a brutal place to live, let alone practice medicine. But that hasn't stopped Doug Page\* from being Christ's hands and feet in a rugged, remote corner of Central Asia. Together with his wife, Alice\*, the Southern Baptist doctor is sharing Christ's love in a place with only a handful of known believers.

Obedience hasn't come without sacrifice. The Pages live in a mud home with unreliable electricity. Winters are especially harsh, with temperatures dropping to minus 40—cold enough to coat the walls *inside* their house with ice. The public hospital where Doug volunteers is dirty and poorly equipped. He regularly treats patients for diseases rarely encountered in the United States, like typhoid fever, tuberculosis, and dysentery.

Doug has amputated limbs from landmine victims, removed handfuls of worms from intesti-

# BELIEVERS

*in persecution*

Everywhere the Ripkens go in the world, they meet Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and others hungry to know about God. "Every time we send a missionary through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, we're saying, 'We will not stop until every man, woman, boy, and girl on earth has access to Jesus,'" Nik says. "Being His heart, His hands, and His voice means we're representing Jesus among all the nations."

**Pray for boldness for believers in persecution as they proclaim Christ.**

**Pray that the worst persecution—no access to Christ—will end in our generation as missionaries take the gospel to all peoples.**

## Songhai of WEST

# AFRICA

power of a true family of Christ.

The Songhai church is small but full of dedicated members who cling to the gospel. Thank you for being faithful to send workers through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering—workers who disciple leaders like Ibrahim and Boubacar.

**Pray for the doors to open—for more US churches, volunteers, and national partners to take the gospel into places it's never been. There are still many Songhai villages waiting to hear the message of Christ.**

## Central ASIA

opportunities to share his faith. But open cultural and political animosity toward the gospel also means those who share Jesus Christ do so at great personal risk, including prison, kidnapping, torture—even death.

But the couple's greatest fear isn't personal safety. It's that their time in Central Asia won't count for something eternal. "We want to be faithful ... knowing that we did our best, that we didn't hold anything back," Doug says. "Everything is on the table."

**Pray the Lord will work miracles and hearts will soften toward the gospel.**

## Day 7



BE



## Day 8



A young, unbelieving Lottie Moon told classmates her middle initial stood for "Devil." She pulled pranks, missed chapel, and scoffed at religion. Eventually, her questioning nature led her to choose Christ and obey her Lord's calling to China.

There, Lottie experienced isolation and loneliness. She had a chance to marry and return home. Her response: "God had first claim on my life, and since the two conflicted, there could be no question about the result." Lottie persisted through war and famine; the Chinese needed to know her Lord.

She wrote home, "Please say to the missionaries they are coming to a life of hardship, responsibility, and constant self-denial."

But that didn't deter the thousands who've followed Lottie during these 100 years since her death—going just as boldly, obediently, and sacrificially.

"You have such a love and burden for the people, there is a certain amount of trust you have to give away to God" says a modern-day missionary in East Asia. "It's hard ... to let go." But God gave

Lottie Moon

## CALL TO OBEDIENCE

and sacrifice

this young woman a clear "Yes, this is where I want you to go."

And, like Lottie, she's dependent on Southern Baptists' gifts to support her.

Lottie said it best more than 100 years ago: "How many there are ... who imagine that because Jesus paid it all, they need pay nothing, forgetting that the prime object of their salvation was that they should follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ in bringing back a lost world to God."

**Pray Southern Baptists will obediently and sacrificially give and go.**

**Pray that each and every one of our churches will BE His heart, His hands, His voice!**



Engaging people groups in the hard places comes with risk and sacrifice for all who obediently choose to be His heart, His hands, His voice. Most of us aren't threatened because of our faith, but we need to be in prayer for those who are—not that persecution will end but that believers in persecution will stay courageous and bold.

Giving is also a call to obedience and sacrifice. The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® enables IMB missionaries to live and work at the forefront of lostness and extend our witness through their full-time ministry.

Each of us and our churches are called continually to take the next step in our obedience so that Christ is glorified and to ask, "What am I doing and what is my church doing to be obedient—to BE His heart, hands, and voice, no matter the cost?"

# BE



## in PRAYER

In-depth week of prayer stories are available at [imb.org/weekofprayer](http://imb.org/weekofprayer) and in these publications:

**Missions Mosaic**  
December 2012  
Woman's Missionary Union®  
1-800-968-7301

**CommissionStories**  
Winter 2012 (Vol. 4, #4)  
International Mission Board  
1-800-999-3113

**Focus Scripture**  
Matthew 16:24–25

**imb**  
*connecting*

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\*Names changed

HIS HEART / HIS HANDS / HIS VOICE

2012 Week of Prayer for International Missions / December 2–9



Pastors brave threats and bombs in the Himalayas. In Central Asia, an IMB doctor's greatest concern isn't for safety but that his ministry will make a difference for the kingdom. A worker in war-torn Somalia of the '90s knew he'd have to be willing to die for Jesus and spent years learning why believers in persecution grow unimaginably strong in the faith.

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## in PRAYER

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