

D. L. Moody (Dwight Lyman)

Historical Theology/History of Christianity

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- I. New England
 - A. Sad Beginnings
 1. Born Feb 5, 1837
 2. Northfield, Massachusetts
 3. Mom (Betsy) had a strong Puritan background
 4. Dad was a handsome stone mason but too fond of alcohol
 5. Family owned a decent house and a small farm, but was deep in debt
 6. When D.L. was four years old, his father had a heart attack (age 41)
 7. Dwight (D.L.) was the sixth of seven at that point, but his mom gave birth to twins not too long after his dad's death
 8. The family was deep in debt with no income, yet mom was determined to keep the family together.
 9. Creditors came to the house and took many things, including all of the firewood.
 10. Betsy's brothers brought firewood and paid the mortgage for a year
 11. Rev. Oliver Everett from the First Congregational Church brought food and often came to help with the children.... Dwight never forgot this pastor's kindness and gentleness.
 12. The children had to get jobs to make the family work. Pennies and milk cows.
 - B. Not necessarily a nice young man
 1. False posting for a temperance meeting
 2. Final school program
 3. Believed himself to be his own master. "thought of himself as a man when he was only a boy" (Betsy Moody)
 4. Swearing, outbursts of temper, fist fights
 5. Hiding in a barn to scare the neighbor's steers
 6. Nearly kicked out of school when he was 16
 7. Lost his job delivering newspapers (did not understand street names and house numbers)
 8. Age 17, he decided that he was leaving home and would go to Boston.
 - C. Boston and Change
 1. He thought his mom's brother would hire him to work in the shoe business
 2. An older brother of Dwight had told the uncle not to hire, "In a short time, he will think he should be running the store"
 3. A second uncle (Lemuel) told Dwight he could stay with him till he got a job.
 4. No job was found. He swallowed his pride and asked Uncle Samuel for a job.
 5. Yes, but with strings. He was an employee and not the boss and he had to go to church.
 6. Became a hard worker, joined the YMCA for books and lectures (Longfellow and Holmes)
 7. The church was sound, but the Bible class was better especially his teacher: Edward Kimball

8. A few weeks later, Kimball decided it was time to talk directly to Dwight about salvation. He almost talked himself out of it. Walked past the shoe store door. Then turned and ran to the door.
9. Found Dwight in the back of the store putting shoes on the shelf. Kimball said, "Christ loved you so much he gave his life on the cross." Moody began to cry and said, "I want to give my life to Christ."
10. There is a plaque on the building that had the shoe store in Boston: D.L. Moody, Christian Evangelist, Friend of Man, Founder of Northfield Schools, Was Converted to God in a Shoe Store on this Site, April 25, 1855
11. Moody wrote later, "it seemed to me that the sun was shining brighter than before... the birds were singing for my benefit... the old elms waved their branches for joy."

II. Chicago

A. Ambition

1. For two years after being saved, D.L. was mentored by his uncle and Edward Kimball.
2. Then D.L. decided it was time to move to Chicago (he was only 19)- he believed he could get rich there like Marshall Field
3. Another of Betsy Moody's brother's lived near Chicago. With his help, D.L. secured a job at a shoe store.
4. He also got involved with the Plymouth Congregational Church
5. He set about to fill two pews with young men and boys from the streets of Chicago
6. Moody was a great worker, made money, invested in land and was well on his way to becoming wealthy. Lived cheaply. Even was sending money home to his mother. Planned to save to get \$100,000. He had no plans for full time ministry.
7. Started attend to attend 3 different churches going a morning service, noon and evening. At the Baptist church he discovered Emma Revell- they would marry several years later.
8. Dwight and a friend (John Farwell) started a Sunday School in 1858 in the roughest neighborhood of Chicago. Became so large and so well known that President-elect Abraham Lincoln came to visit when on a trip to Chicago.

B. Realization

1. One of his colleagues in the Sunday School ministry became terminally ill.
2. He confided to Moody that made him the saddest about his illness was that he felt like he had been totally infective in his ministry to the girls in his Sunday School classes. None had trusted Christ as Savior.
3. Moody suggested that they go visit each girl so his friend could tell them that he could share his concern for their spiritual condition.
4. In ten days- they visited each girl at their homes. Each one prayed to trust Christ.
5. Moody had never thought that he could or should share the Gospel that way. He had thought he would get the kids to church and the preacher would do the work of sharing the Gospel.
6. He realized that he needed to put his business ambitions aside and put his life into leading others to Christ.

C. Stronger stamp for ministry

1. Had always been a strong abolitionist even back to his days in Boston
2. When the Civil War began in 1861, Moody was for the cause of ending slavery, but could not bring himself to take up arms against another man.

3. He served with the YMCA, going to training camp and to battlefields. Was at the battlefield nine times.
 4. He met the physical needs of the wounded and shared Christ to meet their spiritual needs.
 5. He had known hardship before but he had not been around men in so much pain and so close to death. He became even more convinced to spend his time in service to God.
- D. Full time ministries
1. He became the head of the Chicago YMCA
 2. He started a church: Illinois Street Independent Church
 3. He was involved in several committees in Chicago
 4. He was a popular speaking at YMCA conventions in the U.S. and England
- E. The Great Fire
1. He was preaching at the Illinois Street church when Chicago caught on fire in 1871
 2. They did not pay attention to the sirens because they were common
 3. Eventually they realized they were in danger and quickly ended the service
 4. Everyone there lost their homes including Moody. (The church also burned to the ground)
 5. Moody realized that he had become so busy with committee work and fund raising that he would have told someone if they walked up to him and asked him how to be saved, he would have said, "I have a committee meeting to get to, can you wait till later?"
 6. He was determined to focus on the preaching of the Gospel for he believed social work was important but that the world would only really be changed with the return of Christ.
- F. Evangelistic Crusades
1. The plan was to go to England in 1872 for Emma to visit relatives and for D.L. to get teaching from the best preachers and scholars including Spurgeon. (in later years collaborated with Spurgeon on the Wordless Book)
 2. Early on at one of the churches, the pastor asked Moody to preach. The morning service seemed bored with his preaching. The evening service saw so many people stand to become Christians, that Moody thought they misunderstood his invitation.
 3. Moody found out that two sisters had been praying for revival at their church for years and then had begun to pray that Moody would come to preach. They and pastors at other churches requested that Moody stay and hold evangelistic services in England.
 4. Moody promised he would return.
 5. Moody, Ira Sankey and their wives set out for England in the summer of 1873.
 6. When they arrived, they discovered that their sponsors had died and that nothing had been organized for meetings.
 7. Moody had a letter from the director of the YMCA in York to speak there if he were ever in England.
 8. After evangelistic services in York, they received more invitations.
 9. Posters were put up around the cities where they were to hold evangelistic services reading: Moody will preach the Gospel—Sankey will sing the Gospel.
 10. Nearly all church denominations welcomed Moody and Sankey except the Church of England --- Moody and Sankey were not ordained.
 11. They held services throughout much of England, Scotland and Ireland.

12. Thousands attended the services and thousands responded to the call of the Gospel.
13. Lord Shaftesbury spoke about the crusades held by Moody and Sankey:
Here come two simple, unlettered men from the other side of the Atlantic. They have no theological training,.....they are totally without skill in delivery, and have no pretensions to the highest order of rhetoric. They are calm, without an approach to the fanatical... They seek neither to terrify nor to puff up... So it is, nevertheless, thousands of all degrees in station and mental culture bow before them. Are we not right in believing—time will show—that God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise?
14. Moody and Sankey were uncomfortable with the hymns in Britain, but they could not get a publisher to make them a small hymnal. Moody paid to have a short hymnal printed with just the words to have at the meetings. They soon sold out. So, the publisher told them they would publish and give Moody a share in the profits. Moody thought they might be able to recoup his original investment, so he agreed.
15. The hymnal sold so well, Moody's share was \$35,000. They gave the money to the London Gospel Committee which in turn gave the money to the Illinois Street Church in Chicago to finish the rebuilding after the fire.

III. Northfield

- A. Returning to the U.S., Dwight and Emma moved to his old home in Northfield
 1. They built onto the house – it had been a four-room house in D.L.'s youth
 2. He planned to go on crusades in the U.S.
 3. Oct 1875 through May 1876, toured several large cities on the Atlantic, the Midwest and the West Coast.
 4. President Grant and some of his cabinet attended one of the meetings.
- B. Schools
 1. 1879, Moody started the Northfield Seminary for Young Women.
 2. 1881, Moody started the Mount Hermon School for Boys
 3. Both schools were to educate the poor and minorities
 4. Moody also started the Bible Training Institute in Glasgow Scotland

IV. Some his last ministry impacts

- A. 1880, started the Northfield Conferences
 1. Emphasized: Holiness, pre-millennial eschatology, nondenominational missions
 2. J. Hudson Taylor spoke at one of the conferences
- B. 1886, YMCA Conference
 1. Led to the formation of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions
 2. Slogan: The evangelization of the world in this generation.
- C. 1889, the Chicago Evangelization Society
 1. Worked with Emma Dryer, principal of Illinois State Normal University
 2. School to train urban evangelists
 3. School to train foreign missionaries (has sent more missionaries out than any other institute)
 4. After D.L.'s death the name was changed to Moody Bible Institute
- D. He preached his last sermon in Kansas City 1899

Extra thoughts:

Possibly because of the size of her brood, Betsey Moody never encouraged Dwight to acquire a good education or to study the Bible. Consequently, his total schooling was the equivalent of a fifth-

grade education today. At age 18, when he attempted to join a Congregational Church, he failed a simple test of Bible knowledge administered by the deacons. Moody's education was, by most standards, inadequate: he never went to college or seminary, nor was he ever ordained as a clergyman. He spelled phonetically, so his adult letters and sermon outlines abounded in spelling errors, as well as grammatical ones.

He pioneered techniques of evangelism that remain largely unchanged today. He proclaimed a new eschatology of premillennialism and fostered a new ecumenical spirit.

It is believed that he presented the Gospel to one hundred million people during his lifetime by personal witnessing, preaching or his writing.

Moody Quotes:

"The voice of sin is loud, but the voice of forgiveness is louder."

"No man can resolve himself into Heaven."

"Character is what you are in the dark."

"There are many of us that are willing to do great things for the Lord, but few of us are willing to do little things."

"The world has yet to see what God can do with a man fully consecrated to him. By God's help, I aim to be that man."

"Don't wait for something to turn up. Go and turn up something."

"The devil tempts most men, but a lazy man tempts the devil."



The house at Northfield-was 4 rooms in Moody's youth



London

From the Northfield's school's website:

After Moody's death in 1899, his eldest son, William, continued his father's work at the schools, consolidating them into a single corporation called the Northfield Schools. Throughout the 20th century, a new Christian view was taking hold, stressing social justice and good works in place of personal salvation.

A special all-school meeting is held in Memorial Chapel featuring a keynote address by a faculty member who reflects on Moody's life and legacy. Students also give speeches and perform music. It's a day when we set aside time to focus on the values of service and leadership that were important to our school founder — and how we carry on those values at NMH today.

In 2023, NMH expanded the celebration by launching "Founder's Week," with fun activities to brighten up the winter, including "rock, paper, scissors" and lip sync competitions and a dessert night for seniors and postgraduates. On the evening before Founder's Day, students fanned out around campus to decorate trees and bushes with white winter lights to brighten up campus at night.

Karl Barth on Moody and other evangelists:

Barth said that the *conditional* Gospel of Revivalism, gave people a false sense of freedom, or assurance of their salvation, that was brought about by their personal decision. Barth said this false freedom is not the true freedom of the Gospel, and is a false reality. The true reality is that the Gospel proclaims the good news of Jesus Christ to the whole world, not just those who respond. Barth's criticism of Revivalism is of key importance even today, because it is still common to hear preachers ask people to "*ask Jesus into your hearts*" or "*receiving Christ into your heart*" or "*pray the Sinners prayer*" or preform "alter calls" and other forms of call to action to obtain an immediate response. Barth believed we may respond to the Gospel in thankfulness, but the Gospel is not conditional upon our acceptance of it.