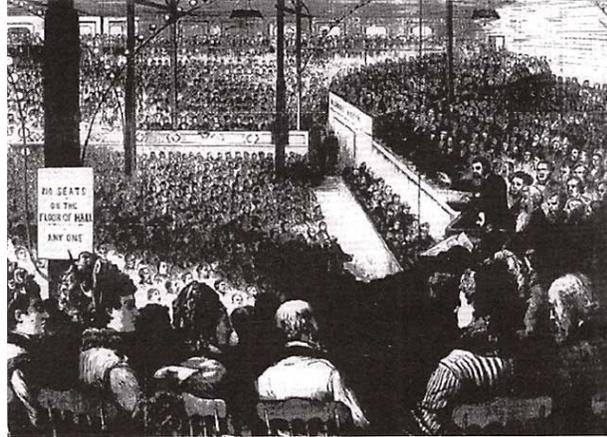


Dwight Lyman Moody – The New England country boy who preached to presidents

On February 5, 1837, a few months before Queen Victoria began her reign, Dwight Lyman Moody was born in Northfield, MA. He had five older brothers and a younger sister, with an additional twin brother and sister born one month after his father's death at the age of 41. Although Dwight was only a 4-year-old at the time, he was deeply impressed by death's intrusion into the family. Years later, in his sermon on the Prodigal Son, he said: *"The first thing I remember was the death of my father. It was a beautiful day in June when he fell suddenly dead. The shock made such an impression on me, young as I was, that I shall never forget it. I remember nothing about the funeral, but his death has made a lasting impression upon me."* His mother struggled to support the family. She would live to be 90, dying in 1895.



When he was 17, Moody went to Boston to work as a clerk in a boot and shoe store owned by his uncle, Samuel Holton. One of the conditions of his employment was that he should regularly attend his uncle's church, the Mount Vernon (Orthodox) Congregational Church, and also its Sunday school. This promise he faithfully kept. On April 21, 1855, Moody trusted Christ when his SS teacher, Edward Kimball, visited him at the shoe store and talked to him about how much God loved him. Later, Mr. Kimball stated, *"I can truly say, and in saying it I magnify the infinite grace of God as bestowed upon him, that I have seen few persons whose minds were spiritually darker than was his when he came into my Sunday school class; and I think that the committee of the Mount Vernon Church seldom met an applicant for membership more unlikely ever to become a Christian of clear and decided views of Gospel truth, still less to fill any extended sphere of public usefulness."*

In September 1856, he went to Chicago, his heart set on earning \$100,000. Diligent in his business and uncommonly successful he made a reputation as a salesman and traveler in the shoe trade and accumulated \$7,000. But he was becoming absorbed more and more in religious work. In the spring of 1857, he began to spread the Gospel among the sailors in Chicago's port, then to gamblers and thieves in the saloons. He also worked tirelessly reaching out to street children, building up a Sunday school work until it had a membership of 1,500. It became so well known that the just-elected President Abraham Lincoln visited and spoke at a Sunday school meeting on November 25, 1860.

After the Civil War started, he was involved with the U.S. Christian Commission of the YMCA, and paid nine visits to the battle-front.

On August 28, 1862, he married Emma Revell. His engagement to her had been formalized by the unassuming announcement that he "would no longer be free to escort other young ladies home after church meetings."

In 1869, Emma's 20-year-old brother, Fleming, boarded with them. It was at Moody's urging that Fleming established a publishing company that year – the Fleming H. Revell Publishing Company. It initially published weekly Sunday school papers. As Moody's reputation spread around the world, his sermons appeared in newspapers and then in books—all pirated editions. Dissatisfied with the quality of these volumes, he named Revell the publisher of his sermons. In 1880 Revell issued Moody's *Twelve*

Select Sermons and his *Select Sermons* in 1881. These volumes, as well as several more during the last five years of Moody's life, helped to establish Revell by 1900 as the largest American publisher of religious books.

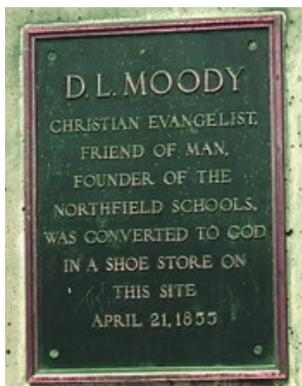
In October 1871, the Great Chicago Fire destroyed his church, his home, and the dwellings of most of his members. His family had to flee for their lives, and, as Mr. Moody said, he saved nothing but his reputation and his Bible. His wife was able to save a portrait of her husband and nothing more.

Moody and Sankey (whom he had met in 1870) made extended evangelical tours in Great Britain (1873–75, 1881–84). They landed at Liverpool on June 17, 1873, and held their first services in York. Moody's straightforward preaching and Sankey's soul-stirring singing won attention, and as they passed from city to city they were heard by great crowds. They labored for two years in Great Britain. On several occasions they filled stadiums that had capacities well into the thousands. Over 15,000 people heard Moody preach in the Botanic Gardens Palace. This turnout continued throughout 1874 and 1875, with crowds of thousands at all of his meetings. As a result of his visits to England, Moody became personally acquainted with George Muller, the orphanage founder; Lord Shaftesbury, the great social reformer; and Charles H. Spurgeon, the prince of preachers.

When he returned to the United States, crowds of 12,000 to 20,000 were just as common as in England. President Grant and some of his cabinet attended a meeting on January 19, 1876. His evangelistic meetings were held from Boston to New York, throughout New England, and as far as San Francisco and other West coast towns from Vancouver to San Diego.

Moody promoted the use of "The Wordless Book," a teaching tool that had been invented by Charles Spurgeon in 1866. In 1875 he added a fourth color to the design of the three-color evangelistic device: gold - to "represent heaven". This "book" has been used to communicate the Gospel to untold thousands of illiterate people around the world.

Moody preached his last sermon on November 16, 1899, in Kansas City, KS. Becoming ill, he returned home by train to Northfield, MA. Surrounded by his family, he died on December 22, 1899, just nine days before the turn of the century. It is estimated that in his lifetime, D. L. Moody traveled more than 1,000,000 miles and reached 100,000,000 people with the good news of Jesus Christ.



This plaque is at Court Square, Boston. On this site Sam Holton's shoe store once stood. Here Edward Kimball won Moody's soul for Christ. The concern of **one** Sunday school teacher for **one** of his students resulted in thousands being saved and millions hearing the Gospel of Christ

"Some day you will read in the papers that D. L. Moody, of East Northfield, is dead. Don't you believe a word of it! At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now. I shall have gone up higher, that is all—out of this old clay tenement into a house that is immortal; a body that death cannot touch, that sin cannot taint, a body fashioned like unto His glorious body."

If you have Internet access, you may enjoy downloading this recap of Moody's life:

http://www.moodyministries.net/uploadedfiles/corporate/about_moody/our_rich_heritage/dlmoodyhistory.wmv