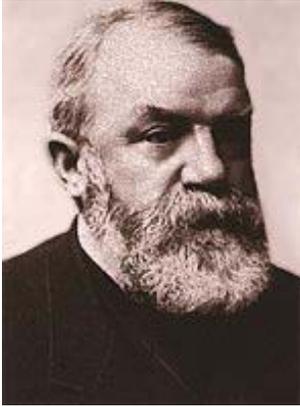


YMCA Spiritual Legacy Series

Dwight L. Moody – Great YMCA Leader of the 19th Century



D.L. Moody

Dwight Lyman Moody (February 5, 1837 - December 22, 1899), also known as D.L. Moody, was an [American evangelist](#) and [publisher](#) who founded the Moody Church, Northfield Schools in Massachusetts, the

[Moody Bible Institute](#) and Moody Press.

On his seventeenth birthday (1854), Dwight Moody went to Boston to seek employment. He became a clerk in Holton's Shoe Store, his uncle's enterprise. One of the work requirements was attendance at the Mount Vernon Congregational Church, pastored by Edward Kirk. Church seemed boring, but a faithful Sunday School teacher encouraged him along. One Saturday, April 21, 1855, the teacher, Edward Kimball, walked into the store and found Moody wrapping shoes. He said, "I want to tell you how much Christ loves you." Moody knelt down and was converted. Later he told how he felt, "I was in a new world. The birds sang sweeter, the sun shone brighter. I'd never known such peace." Not sure of his spiritual perception, it was a year before the church admitted him for membership!

As a young man of 21 in [1858](#), Moody's work in [Chicago](#) led to the largest [Sunday School](#) of his time, with 1,500 in attendance weekly. 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 [American Civil War](#) started, he was involved with the U.S. Christian Commission of the [YMCA](#), and ministered at several battlefields. He was president of the Chicago YMCA from 1866 to 1869.

Active in the 1859 prayer revival in Chicago, Moody helped establish Chicago's YMCA and became its first full-time employee. In 1861 Moody became a city missionary for the YMCA. Moody rose to its presidency from 1866 to 1869. He had a part in erecting the first Y.M.C.A. building in America when he

supervised the erection of Farwell Hall in 1867, seating 3,000.

Moody became one of the most prominent Young Men's Christian Association workers in America, and it was at a Y.M.C.A. convention in Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1870, that he first met Ira David Sankey, who was destined to become his great singing partner. Moody was so impressed with his singing that he asked him to come with him and sing for him, and in Indianapolis they held their first meeting together, in the open air. Some months afterward Sankey gave up his business and joined Mr. Moody in his work.

Following the Chicago fire in October, 1871, which destroyed the YMCA, the church and D.L. Moody's home, he sprang into action and within a few weeks rebuilt a new building, the Northside Tabernacle, and turned it into a relief center to help feed and clothe the thousands who had lost their homes.

It was in a trip to [England](#) that he became well known as an evangelist, to the point that some have claimed he was the greatest evangelist of the [19th century](#). His preaching had an impact as great as that of [George Whitefield](#) and [John Wesley](#) within Britain, Scotland and Ireland.

It was during this first visit to Britain that Moody heard the words which set him hungering and thirsting after a deeper Christian experience and which marked a new era in his life. The words were spoken to him by Mr. Henry Varley, the well known evangelist, as they sat together on a seat in a public park in Dublin. The words were these: *"The world has yet to see what God will do with and for and through and in and by the man who is fully consecrated to Him."* "He said 'a man'" thought Moody, "he did not say, a great man, nor a learned man, nor a 'smart' man, but simply 'a man.' I am a man, and it lies with the man himself whether he will or will not make that entire and full consecration. I will try my utmost to be that man."

*Rev. Tom Welch
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