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### The Evangelistic Methods of Dwight L. Moody

Richard F. Wagner

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, richard0626@sbcglobal.net

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**THE EVANGELISTIC METHODS OF**

**DWIGHT L. MOODY**

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Practical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Divinity

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by

**Richard F. Wagner**

**June 1953**

Approved by:

Alex. J. Guebert  
Advisor

Richard F. Wagner  
Reader



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
II. THE METHODS USED BY MOODY IN HIS EVANGELISTIC CAMPAIGNS . . . . .	3
Location . . . . .	3
Advertising . . . . .	5
Financing . . . . .	8
Schedule of Revivals . . . . .	9
Music . . . . .	11
Follow-up Work . . . . .	14
III. PREACHING METHODS USED BY MOODY . . . . .	16
Use of the Bible . . . . .	16
Use of Illustrations . . . . .	17
Style of Delivery . . . . .	19
Outstanding Characteristics of Moody's Preaching . . . . .	22
IV. THE EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES EMPLOYED BY MOODY . . . . .	25
Moody Bible Institute . . . . .	25
Northfield Seminary and Mt. Hermon School for Boys . . . . .	28
Summer Bible Conferences . . . . .	30
Sunday School . . . . .	31
Young Men's Christian Association . . . . .	32
V. THE EVANGELISTIC METHODS USED BY MOODY IN HIS PRIVATE LIFE . . . . .	34
Personality and Training Factors which Brought Success . . . . .	34
Examples of Moody's Personal Approach to His Fellow-Man . . . . .	43
VI. CONCLUSION . . . . .	48
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	50



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

There is always a human side to every spiritual movement. It shall be the purpose of this thesis to discover the human side of Dwight L. Moody in relation to the methods which he used in his evangelistic activity. The word "evangelistic" in this thesis title means: that which pertains to winning others "to Christian discipleship."<sup>1</sup> The word "method" means: the devices, plans, procedures which are used in the dissemination of the Gospel; therefore, this thesis will concern itself with devices, plans, and procedures which were used by Dwight L. Moody to win others to Christian discipleship.

No attempt will be made to follow any chronological order in the thesis proper; thus the following chronological table consisting of the more important events in Moody's life might prove helpful to the reader:

Born, Northfield, Massachusetts, February 5, 1837  
Began business career in Boston, 1854  
Admitted to church membership, 1856  
Removed to Chicago, 1856  
Married Emma C. Revell, 1862  
Organized "Illinois Street Church," 1863  
Visited England, 1867  
Secured the services of Ira D. Sankey, 1870  
Second visit to England, 1872  
First extended British campaign, 1873-1875  
American evangelistic campaign, 1875-1877  
Established Northfield Seminary, 1879  
Established Mt. Hermon school, 1881  
Conducted first Northfield Summer Conference, 1881  
Second campaign in Great Britain, 1881-1884

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<sup>1</sup>Bryan Green, The Practice of Evangelism (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, c.1951), p. ix.



Organised Chicago Bible Institute, 1887  
 Third Tour of Great Britain, 1891  
 Visited Palestine, 1892  
 World's Fair evangelistic campaign, Chicago, 1893  
 Last public service, Kansas City, November 16, 1899  
 Died, Northfield, December 22, 1899

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<sup>2</sup>This table was taken from: Charles R. Erdman, D. L. Moody, His Message for Today (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co., c.1927), p. x.



## CHAPTER II

### THE METHODS USED BY MOODY IN HIS EVANGELISTIC CAMPAIGNS

#### Location

Dwight L. Moody conducted three major campaigns -- two in England and one in America. Moody's methods in picking locations during these campaigns are worthy of note.

In the first place, he always went to the cities where he could reach the greatest number of people, no matter what the apparent hindrances might be. The city of London, which might have proved an unconquerable metropolis for a faint-hearted evangelist, was divided into four sections by Moody, and four different meeting places were acquired.<sup>1</sup> On his second trip to England, Moody made use of two iron and wooden collapsible structures. In London alone, these buildings were set up in eleven different places.<sup>2</sup>

Moody's policy of going where the greatest number of people could be found is quite evident when he held an evangelistic campaign during the World's Fair in Chicago. This was during the summer months, and even many of the established churches had discontinued services completely because of the diverting attraction of the Fair. Moody considered this a challenge. He hired men who could speak in various

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<sup>1</sup>Charles R. Erdman, D. L. Moody, His Message for Today (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co., c.1927), p. 55.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 69.



languages so that the foreign visitors to the Fair might be reached. He also rented Forepaugh's Circus tent which seated eighteen thousand people. It was filled to capacity every Sunday, while the circus itself discontinued operations because of non-attendance. On the Fair Grounds, tents and hotel lobbies were used to carry on evangelistic services.<sup>3</sup>

Secondly, Moody was not afraid to preach in locations where his audience would consist of those who belonged to the intelligentsia. During his second trip to England Moody preached at Cambridge and Oxford. At first the students jeered at Moody and Sankey. For instance, during the third meeting night at Oxford, the students disrupted the service by heckling Moody with questions and epithets. Mr. Moody then said to his audience:

We came to this city expecting to meet the flower of British gentry. I put it to you, gentlemen: Have you treated us strangers with ordinary courtesy? Whatever you may think of us and our message, we demand that you should behave at least as gentlemen toward us.<sup>4</sup>

This appeal met with a chivalrous response, and at the next meeting, all those in attendance were on their good behavior.<sup>5</sup>

In the third place, Moody often made it a point to return to a city for a second campaign whenever that was possible. In the years 1881-1884, Moody visited most of the same cities where he had been during his first British campaign. The results were as great and often

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 75-77, passim.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>5</sup>Loc. cit.



greater than before.<sup>6</sup>

These are the important factors which Moody considered when picking locations for his revivals. These considerations always proved beneficial.

### Advertising

Mr. Moody used many and varied methods for gathering an audience for his evangelistic services after he had picked a location. As one of his biographies states: "Everything that print and light and noise would do was legitimate, if only it really served its object."<sup>7</sup>

Moody made use of the newspapers in both a direct and indirect way. He used them directly when during the campaign in Boston in 1877, a daily paper, The Tabernacle, was published. This paper had as its primary purpose the furtherance of Moody's evangelistic work in that city.<sup>8</sup>

Mr. Moody also used the newspapers in an indirect way. After his fame had spread, newspapermen considered his activity to be front-page material, and would often print the entire text of an outstanding sermon.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 65-72, passim.

<sup>7</sup>Samuel Bradford, D. L. Moody, A Worker in Souls (New York: George H. Doran Co., c.1927), p. 252.

<sup>8</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, The Life and Work of Dwight L. Moody (New Haven, Connecticut: Butler and Alger, c.1900), p. 167.

<sup>9</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 19.



"Preparatory meetings" were also used as methods of advertising. In Glasgow<sup>10</sup> and in Dublin,<sup>11</sup> prayer meetings were held for a period of weeks before the evangelists, Moody and Sankey, arrived.

Another form of advertising was a ticket system. Tickets were given to members of the Christian churches in a city. They in turn were to give these tickets to unchurched friends.<sup>12</sup> When a revival was held at the Clarmont Avenue skating rink in Brooklyn, churchgoers were asked to stay away from the meetings, and tickets were given only to those who promised to hand them on to unconverted persons.<sup>13</sup>

The most effective advertising was done by direct house-to-house and saloon-to-saloon advertising. This statement is supported by Mr. Moody's own testimony, as he describes his work in Chicago:

It was pretty hard to preach to empty chairs, but I got a few interested in the meeting and then we got some hand-bills that cost about sixty cents a thousand, and then we took some of the young men and got them together every night in the hall, [at the Bible Institute] and we gave them some tea and they prayed together; and they took these hand-bills and went out in the street and every man had a district, and they visited every saloon and billiard hall and bowling alley....And when a man was converted we yoked him up with another, two and two, and sent them out to bring others, and that is the way we did it, and we have always had an audience ever since.<sup>14</sup>

Chapman tells us that every home in Boston was visited by Christian

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>13</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 159.

<sup>14</sup>D. L. Moody, To All People (New York: E. B. Treat Co., c.1877), p. 168.



workers during the campaign there in 1877.<sup>15</sup> This kind of advertising of course required a lot of help from the laity and Moody knew how to get it. "He knew how to lead men, all kinds of men, to make them do what he wanted, to make them want to work."<sup>16</sup>

This ability of Moody to enlist the help of others is worthy of note. Although we shall discuss the matter more fully in a later chapter,<sup>17</sup> nevertheless we shall speak of it briefly at this point, because it is in the advertising field that Moody used much lay help. In Philadelphia, for instance, the cooperation that he received from laymen is noteworthy. John Wansmaker, a Philadelphia business man, purchased the Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Station, and offered it rent-free for Moody's use. The tracks inside the terminal were removed, chairs were set up, and a platform was erected.<sup>18</sup> In this same city, William G. Fischer, gathered and drilled a volunteer choir of three hundred members.<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps the most striking example of Moody's use of lay help occurred when a campaign was held at the Hippodrome in New York. Five hundred ushers and twelve hundred volunteer singers offered their services during this campaign.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 167.

<sup>16</sup>Gamaliel Bradford, op. cit., p. 53.

<sup>17</sup>Infra., p. 34.

<sup>18</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>19</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>20</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 163.



## Financing

The question arises: How did Moody meet the expenses which he inevitably incurred while conducting his campaigns?

In the first place, it must be noted that Moody was very ingenious in matters of fund-raising both for his own causes and also for those of others.<sup>21</sup> He would convince men of his absolute honesty, and then they were willing to contribute toward his work.<sup>22</sup> In Kansas City, the Convention Hall in which Moody's services were held was rented by various businessmen of the city. At Moody's suggestion, each member volunteered to pay for one day's rental.<sup>23</sup>

Secondly, we can be sure that the great evangelist did not hesitate to use high pressure when that was necessary.<sup>24</sup> Chapman<sup>25</sup> tells of an incident which took place during the campaign in Chicago. During one of the services, Moody asked, "How many people believe that we ought to go on [with the evangelistic effort]? Just raise your hands." When they had them raised, he said, "Now put them down deep into your pockets and help us carry it on."

Moody often collected more money than was spent on his campaigns.

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<sup>21</sup> Gamaliel Bradford, op. cit., pp. 247-8.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>23</sup> J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 257.

<sup>24</sup> W. H. Daniels, D. L. Moody and His Work (New York: American Publishing Co., c.1875), p. 127.

<sup>25</sup> J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 256.



These excess funds usually went to further the work of the Young Men's Christian Association. In Philadelphia, for example, \$127,000 was collected by offerings taken during the Campaign in that city. Most of those funds were handed over to the Y.M.C.A.<sup>26</sup>

As far as Moody and Sankey were personally concerned, they did not work for a regular salary. They received whatever the committee on finance in a certain city decided to give them, and they both had to face the inevitable criticism that the evangelists were "in the business for the money they could get out of it."<sup>27</sup>

Moody often plunged into a venture without knowing at all just how he would pay for it. When he undertook his first campaign in England, he had a guarantee from no one, not even for his personal expenses.<sup>28</sup> Yet he seldom lacked anything. The railroads gave him passes for free travel, interested individuals paid his lodging expenses, and personal friends furnished him with sufficient clothing, "although he never solicited a dollar for himself."<sup>29</sup> He died on December 22, 1899, with five-hundred dollars to his credit.<sup>30</sup> We must conclude very definitely that Moody was completely honest in all financial matters.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>27</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 119.

<sup>28</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

<sup>29</sup>E. J. Goodspeed, A Full History of the Wonderful Career of Moody and Sankey in Great Britain and America (Cincinnati: Henry S. Goodspeed and Co., c.1876), p. 30.

<sup>30</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 103.

<sup>31</sup>Samuel Bradford, op. cit., p. 53.



### Schedule of Revivals

One of the distinctive features of Moody's methodology is the fact that he always set a gruelling schedule of preaching for himself and for his co-workers. In London, he sometimes preached five times a day.<sup>32</sup> The campaign in York, England, closed with an all-day meeting which included the following:

One hour for conversation and prayer  
 One hour for praise  
 A praise meeting  
 A witness meeting  
 A Bible lecture by Mr. Moody  
 A communion service.<sup>33</sup>

The schedule of services which Moody carried out in Brooklyn, New York, is particularly significant. Here is a typical week-day schedule: There was a morning service at 8:00 a.m. followed by a woman's prayer meeting. In addition to regular evening meetings held at 7:30 p.m., there was also a Bible reading in the afternoon, and a young men's meeting held after the evening service for the benefit of late workers. At the same time inquiry meetings<sup>34</sup> were constantly being held at neighboring churches.<sup>35</sup>

According to Chapman, a regular preaching service usually followed this informal pattern:

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<sup>32</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 69.

<sup>33</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 140.

<sup>34</sup>Infra, p. 14.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 159.



He would call out the number of the hymns, and he well knew when the singing was good. Sometimes he would call for one part of the congregation to sing, then another....Then several prayers, then his own sermon, and then close with prayer.<sup>36</sup>

Once this preaching service had begun, he would let nothing interfere with its progress. One night a woman fainted during the service, and he remarked very quickly, "Never mind that person who has fainted. Let us attend to the interests of our souls tonight."<sup>37</sup>

Another significant aspect of Moody's scheduling of revivals lies in the fact that it was his custom to remain in a city for a considerable length of time. In Chicago, for example, the campaign lasted almost four months.<sup>38</sup> In the smaller American cities, his stay was not as long, but the schedule was nevertheless very intense.<sup>39</sup>

Another scheduling technique which is particularly peculiar to Moody's work was his scheduling of services to which men only or women only were invited. This may account for the fact that Moody was singularly affective in influencing men to accept his message.<sup>40</sup>

#### Music

Dwight L. Moody was one of the first to demonstrate "the fact that even simple songs could become the vehicle for conveying to human hearts

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 542.

<sup>37</sup>D. L. Moody, op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>38</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>40</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 164.



the melody and transforming power of the gospel of Christ.<sup>41</sup> Moody did not use music for music's sake; in fact, he was able to form no opinion of a piece of music by hearing it sung or played in private. He had to see it tried before an audience, and then was able to judge in an instant whether the hymn was capable of arousing its hearers to Christian action.<sup>42</sup>

Moody's close friend, Ira D. Sankey, brought the "Gospel hymn" into universal vogue. These two men met in Indianapolis in 1870. Moody immediately recognized Sankey's talents and persuaded him to accompany him on the first campaign to England.

The singing of Sankey was looked down upon by many clergymen in England. It was considered to be "not worship,"<sup>43</sup> but it was very popular with the vast majority of the laity. The people could understand and appreciate the songs which Sankey sang. He enunciated his words with such distinctness, that upon one occasion when the evangelists were holding an open-air service, a man who was a mile away from the place of the revival heard every word of the song "Ninety and Nine," and was converted thereby.<sup>44</sup> Sankey's favorite hymn was this song, "Ninety and Nine." It was used very effectively in Scotland, because it appealed to the shepherd folk of that country.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 116.

<sup>42</sup>Charles F. Goss, Echoes from the Platform and Pulpit (Hartford, Connecticut: A. D. Worthington and Co., c.1900), p. 100.

<sup>43</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 116.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>45</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 131.



Like Moody, Sankey believed that the words should be significant, and that the tune should be used to make these words appealing. He wanted the words of the hymn to be adapted to the occasion.<sup>46</sup> When Moody preached on the Biblical hero, Daniel, then Sankey usually sang the two hymns, "Dare to be a Daniel," and "Are your Windows open to Jerusalem?".

Sankey usually picked an opening hymn which had a "light, joyous melody;" then as the service proceeded, he would introduce the familiar long-meter hymns. He followed this procedure so that the more majestic harmonies would not "roll ineffectively around souls still insensible from worldly influence."<sup>47</sup> Sankey used a small "parlor organ" for accompaniment with all types of hymns. He would play the organ and sing at the same time.<sup>48</sup>

Although men like Philip Paul Bliss and George C. Stebbins<sup>49</sup> were undoubtedly more talented as hymn-writers, the fact remains that Ira D. Sankey was the outstanding contributor to the musical aspect of Mr. Moody's evangelistic campaigns. A collection of twenty-three of Sankey's hymns were printed by R. C. Morgan. A few months later, a "words only" edition was printed and copies were sold for a penny.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Gamaliel Bradford, op. cit., p. 155.

<sup>47</sup> E. J. Goodspeed, op. cit., p. 294.

<sup>48</sup> J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 132.

<sup>49</sup> Stebbins was probably the most musically gifted of all Moody's associates. He is the one who wrote the music to the hymn, "Savior Breathe an Evening Blessing" (Lutheran Hymnal, No. 565, Second Tune).

<sup>50</sup> Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., pp. 47-8.



## Follow-up Work

Hoody used one very effective method by which to cement relationships with those who had become interested and aroused by his preaching. He established "inquiry rooms" which were located near the public platform. Before the closing benediction was spoken, interested persons would come to these rooms. There Hoody and his associates would attempt to lead them to make a definite and immediate commitment to Christ.<sup>51</sup>

The inquiry rooms used in the New York campaign were set up as follows: There were two "general directors" and sixteen "Christian leaders." Each leader had approximately twelve helpers; thus there were usually two leaders and about twenty-five helpers in each of the seven inquiry rooms that were in use.<sup>52</sup>

In Brooklyn, these inquiry rooms were held in neighboring churches.<sup>53</sup> Here the converts were divided into classes and were placed under the care of pastors to whose congregations they properly belonged.<sup>54</sup>

Aside from the fact that there were sometimes other evangelists who moved into a city to do follow-up work after Hoody's campaign,<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>52</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 163.

<sup>53</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 58.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 98.



there seem to have been few other efforts to make sure that converted persons became connected with a church.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the following steps be taken to insure that converted persons become connected with a church.

One of the ways

is to have a special study in the Department of Religion... (The text is very faint and difficult to read.)

Another way is to have a representative person like John the Baptist... (The text is very faint and difficult to read.)

It is also suggested that the following steps be taken... (The text is very faint and difficult to read.)

It is suggested that the following steps be taken... (The text is very faint and difficult to read.)

Another way is to have a representative person like John the Baptist... (The text is very faint and difficult to read.)

It is also suggested that the following steps be taken... (The text is very faint and difficult to read.)



## CHAPTER III

### PREACHING METHODS USED BY MOODY

In this chapter, an attempt will be made to clarify the various schemes and techniques which were employed by Moody in his preaching style.

#### Use of the Bible

Early in his career Moody learned the importance of Biblical preaching. Henry Moorhouse, the English Bible preacher, visited Moody's church in Chicago one day and later said, "If you will stop preaching your own words and preach God's Word, you will make yourself a great power for good."<sup>1</sup> From that time on, "his first, last, and only weapon of warfare was the English Bible..."<sup>2</sup>

Moody was a repentance preacher like John the Baptist,<sup>3</sup> thus one of his favorite texts was:

Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, The Life and Work of Dwight L. Moody (New Haven, Connecticut: Butler and Alger, c.1900), p. 284.

<sup>2</sup>Gemalial Bradford, D. L. Moody, A Worker in Souls (New York: George H. Doran Co., c.1927), p. 51.

<sup>3</sup>Charles R. Erdman, D. L. Moody, His Message for Today (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co., c.1927), p. 61.

<sup>4</sup>Gal. 6:7-8.



Yet it must be said that he was primarily a Gospel preacher,<sup>5</sup> and his messages almost always contained a strong element of joy as is found in Luke 2:10, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy."

The book of Isaiah was one of Moody's favorites. One day, an orthodox churchman asked him for a copy of his beliefs. Moody answered: "It's already in print and circulation; the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah."<sup>6</sup> In his use of this and other books of the Bible he wasted no time on higher critical theories. He once remarked at a convention:

I don't see why you men are talking about "two Isaiah's;" half of the people in the country do not know there is one Isaiah yet; let's make them know about one, before we begin to tell them about two.<sup>7</sup>

Moody learned from Henry Moorehouse a rather unique method of using the Bible in evangelistic meetings. He conducted "Bible Readings," which consisted in gathering very carefully a number of texts which spoke of the same truth. At the meeting, each text was read, illustrated and applied.<sup>8</sup>

#### Use of Illustrations

A study of Moody's use of illustrative material in his preaching reveals that his main source of illustrations was the Bible. He spoke of "Bible Characters, Bible parables, of Bible incidents, of Bible

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<sup>5</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>6</sup>Lyman Abbott, Silhouettes of my Contemporaries (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., c.1921), p. 199.

<sup>7</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 288.

<sup>8</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., pp. 41-2.



truths."<sup>9</sup> For instance, his sermon on the prodigal son was actually one illustration throughout the sermon. He took the parable of Jesus, and applied each incident in the story to the circumstances of his day.<sup>10</sup>

Moody also followed the practice of grouping a series of Bible illustrations in order to bring out a point. In his book, Sowing and Reaping, he is pointing out how sin leaves its scars, even though the sin itself is forgiven. In order to support his statement he uses the following group of illustrations:

God forgave Moses and Aaron for their sins, but both suffered the penalty;...Jacob became a "prince of God" at the ford of Jabbok, but to the end of his days he carried in his body the marks of his struggle. Paul's thorn in the flesh was not removed, even after the most earnest and repeated prayer.<sup>11</sup>

Moody also used much illustrative material which he gathered from the writings and sermons of other men. He was not a plagiarist, yet he always seized upon every opportunity to make use of any material which might make his message more appealing and more forceful.<sup>12</sup>

Moody's son related how his father collected illustrative material from other preachers: "With what keenness he listened to other preachers for good thoughts and illustrations, and how his face lit up as he took

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>10</sup>D. L. Moody, Glad Tidings (Philadelphia: E. B. Treat Co., c.1876), pp. 204-14.

<sup>11</sup>D. L. Moody, Sowing and Reaping (London: Morgan and Scott, c.1896), pp. 94-5. (Note the irrelevance of the last two of the three illustrations.)

<sup>12</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 86.



out the notebook which he kept in his hip-pocket."<sup>13</sup> In this notebook he jotted down any phrase, illustration, or sermon outline which he thought could be of use.

Moody also found pertinent thoughts while reading the works of men like Spurgeon, Beecher, Talmadge, Luther, and others. These thoughts he later collected and arranged according to the Scripture passages to which they applied.<sup>14</sup>

The following observations were made after the study of four different chapters in Moody's book, Sowing and Reaping: we found a total of sixty-six illustrations. Of these, seventeen were Bible illustrations, seven came from personal experience, seventeen from everyday life, three from fiction, and twenty-two from history.<sup>15</sup> These four chapters (one, two, five, seven) are equivalent to four short revival sermons. Thus he used an average of approximately sixteen illustrations in every sermon. This does not include his many quotations from famous men.<sup>16</sup>

#### Style of Delivery

Unlike many evangelists, Moody's style of delivery was conver-

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<sup>13</sup>W. R. Moody, The Life of Dwight L. Moody (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., c.1900), p. 441.

<sup>14</sup>A collection of such material is embodied in his volume, One Thousand and One Thoughts from My Library (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co., c.1898), passim.

<sup>15</sup>Under "history" were included illustrations relating little incidents which may or may not have historical foundation.

<sup>16</sup>D. L. Moody, Sowing and Reaping, pp. 9 ff., pp. 71 ff., pp. 91 ff.



sational and natural.<sup>17</sup> Yet his voice had such strength that fifteen to twenty thousand people could hear him at one time, and this without the aid of our modern loudspeaker systems. In Edinburg, Scotland, he preached to twenty thousand people in one open-air service.<sup>18</sup>

Abbott relates that although Moody was "intense in spirit," he was nevertheless "quiet in method, generally conversational in tone, never shouted, rarely was dramatic,..."<sup>19</sup> It cannot be said that Moody's sermons were highly emotional; neither was the reaction to them unduly demonstrative. "Excitement, yes; he wanted excitement and believed in it; but a true fruitful, spiritual excitement, not the morbid manifestations of encroaching hysteria."<sup>20</sup> Although Moody was not highly emotional, nevertheless he had an "earnestness that could be felt as the speaker pleaded with the people to yield their wills to God."<sup>21</sup>

Moody's style of delivery was also kindly and sympathetic. By his quietness of style and by his disarming earnestness, he made people feel his love for them. "Even though he viciously denounced sin, he nevertheless tenderly approached sinners."<sup>22</sup> Moody tells us the method which he employed in order to make people feel that he was earnestly and

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<sup>17</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 98.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>19</sup>Lyman Abbott, op. cit., p. 200.

<sup>20</sup>Samuel Bradford, op. cit., p. 72.

<sup>21</sup>Henry Kolboch Rowe, Modern Pathfinders of Christianity (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co., c.1928), p. 203.

<sup>22</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 100.



sincerely interested in them as individuals. He says, "I always select a few people in the audience here and there, to whom I speak. If I can interest them and hold their attention, I have the entire audience."<sup>23</sup> His style of delivery was free from all attempt at elegance in phrase or diction.<sup>24</sup> Everything, especially his choice of words, was very real and poignant. In his sermon series entitled, Sowing and Reaping, he is pointing out how nations always bring destruction upon themselves when God is forgotten. He mentions that France suppressed religion during the eighteenth century and then says:

The Bible was suppressed and God was denied. Hell broke loose. Half the children born in Paris were bastards. More than a million of persons were beheaded, shot, drowned, outraged, and done to death between September, 1792, and December, 1795.<sup>25</sup>

Notice the terse, short phrases and sentences, in addition to the striking choice of words.

Mr. Moody was not concerned about extensive logical argument in his sermons; however, he did follow a certain method so as to give his sermons a progression of thought.

The preacher [Moody] got a thorough hold of his subject. Then he chose topics that would develop it, sometimes cumulatively, sometimes by contrast, and handled them one by one with direct vividness of appeal, so as to bring the whole home to his auditors.<sup>26</sup>

Moody's style of delivery was very rapid and also very brief. He

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<sup>23</sup>D. L. Moody, To All People (New York: E. B. Treat Co., c.1877), p. 61.

<sup>24</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 99.

<sup>25</sup>D. L. Moody, Sowing and Reaping, p. 11.

<sup>26</sup>Samuel Bradford, op. cit., p. 105.



spoke at the rate of approximately two hundred and thirty words per minute;<sup>27</sup> thus such errors of speech as "ain't," "taint," "comin'," were hardly noticed because of his rapidity of delivery.<sup>28</sup> This ability to speak rapidly coincided with his belief that an evangelist should preach short sermons. He said:

Then these [Gospel] meetings ought to be short. I find a great many are killed because they are too long....Long sermons drive people out of the spirit before the meeting is over. When the people leave, they are glad to go home, and ought to go home. Now, you send the people away hungry and they will want to come back....<sup>29</sup>

Nelson Blake sums up Moody's style of delivery by stating that "...straight forwardness, simplicity, and earnestness gave his preaching an appeal unmatched by any of his contemporaries."<sup>30</sup>

#### Outstanding Characteristics of Moody's Preaching

One of the outstanding characteristics of Moody's preaching lies in its accent on the positive. Moody did not waste time with religious controversialists, but felt that religious argumentation did more harm than good. He would state his beliefs with definite firmness and conviction, but he did not spend a lot of time with those who differed with him.<sup>31</sup> Moody's chief goal was to save souls and he did not believe that

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<sup>27</sup>In publisher's note on page iii of D. L. Moody's Glad Tidings.

<sup>28</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 98.

<sup>29</sup>D. L. Moody, To All Peoples, p. 52.

<sup>30</sup>Nelson Manfred Blake, A Short History of American Life (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., c.1952), p. 505.

<sup>31</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 84.



controversy was a means for reaching that goal.<sup>32</sup>

Throughout his entire life, he was always seeking harmony between religions, and this desire was constantly echoed in his preaching. He seemed to sense an "utter necessity" for peace and conciliation in the "face of the encroaching dominion of evil."<sup>33</sup> He must not assume, however, that Mr. Moody was weak and vacillating, unwilling to uphold truth. He was definitely a "magnificent fighter," but his chief role was that of a peacemaker.<sup>34</sup>

Secondly, Moody's message was practical and closely knit with everyday life. His mind simply did not think in abstractions. Being intensely human himself, he "spoke as one who was consciously addressing human beings."<sup>35</sup> He understood that one of the best ways in which to motivate someone to action was appeal to the heart instead of the head; thus, he stirred the emotions, without reducing his appeals to sentimentality.<sup>36</sup>

Another outstanding characteristic of Moody's preaching was its simplicity. "His ideas were simple. So were his sentences, as well as his words." An average of one out of eight words that he used contained more than one syllable.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>33</sup>Samuel Bradford, op. cit., p. 238.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 239.

<sup>35</sup>Charles R. Krieger, op. cit., p. 56.

<sup>36</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>37</sup>Andrew W. Blackwood, Preaching in Time of Reconstruction (Great Neck, New York: The Pulpit Press, c.1915), p. 28.



This complete simplicity and extreme homeliness of style worked as a positive advantage in Mr. Moody's favor. He was looking only for the approval of his message by the hearers. His apparent carelessness of form and disarming simplicity emphasized his singleness of purpose.<sup>38</sup>

Finally, the message of Dwight L. Moody was a Christian message, and therein lay its greatest strength. "It cannot be said of all preachers that the centre and sum of their preaching is Jesus Christ. That could be said of Moody."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>William Cleaver Wilkinson, Modern Masters of Pulpit Discourse (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., c.1915), p. 380.

<sup>39</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 90.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES EMPLOYED BY MOODY

Moody himself received very little formal education. Although he was a diligent student of the Bible, he never attended a theological institution of any kind and was never ordained as a minister of the gospel. He was keenly aware of the handicap which a lack of education can place upon a worker in the kingdom; and in order that people might be adequately trained to witness for their Lord, Moody founded several different educational institutions. In this chapter, we shall make a study of the methods which Moody and his associates employed in these schools.

Moody was interested in seeing to it that his schools would supply the best of modern thought, that they would be thoroughly up-to-date in all modern methods and equipment, that they would be staffed by competent and trustworthy instructors. But above all, he was interested in seeing to it that the Word of God would serve as a foundation for everything that was taught.<sup>1</sup>

#### Moody Bible Institute

Moody saw that there was a definite need for training laymen, not to be pastors, but to help in various forms of Christian activity such as canvassing, advertising revivals, and working in the inquiry rooms.

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<sup>1</sup>Samuel Bradford, D. L. Moody, A Worker in Souls (New York: George H. Doran Co., c.1927), p. 280.



He desired particularly that laymen should know the basic truths of the Christian message well enough so that they might help in leading others to Christ. This was one of the original purposes for founding the "Bible Worker Institute," which later came to be known as "Moody Bible Institute."<sup>2</sup>

It was in no sense a theological seminary. It was never designed to be. Nor was it to be a supplement to the education which could be obtained through a professional theological institution.<sup>3</sup> It was a training school for those who were "called of God" into Christian work too late in life to become ministers, and for those who wished to "devote their time to Christian work while pursuing some other calling."<sup>4</sup>

Another purpose of the Bible Institute was to train women to go from house to house as "Bible readers" and "city missionaries." Miss Emma E. Dryer was picked by Moody to conduct this type of evangelistic work.<sup>5</sup>

The courses of training included systematic study of the Bible and instruction in various forms of Christian service. A musical department was also established for those who were intending to serve in

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<sup>2</sup>Charles R. Erdman, D. L. Moody, His Message for Today (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co., c.1927), p. 130.

<sup>3</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, The Life and Work of Dwight L. Moody (New Haven, Connecticut: Butler and Alger, c.1900), p. 239.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 553. (Chapter thirty-four, from which this excerpt was taken, was written by Rev. H. M. Wharton, D.D.).

<sup>5</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 129.



the capacity of choir leaders and Gospel singers.<sup>6</sup>

The chief pedagogical emphasis at the Bible Institute was based on the practical side of evangelistic work. The students were required to make house-to-house visitations and conduct prayer meetings for women and for children. The students also visited jails and orphanages in order to bring the gospel to others.<sup>7</sup> Before going out in the evening for their practical work, the students gathered together after supper and said prayers for the benefit of those whom they would visit. Then when the work for the evening had been completed, they came together again in order to discuss their individual experiences, disappointments, and successes.<sup>8</sup>

One of the outstanding features of the Bible Institute was its "Colportage Association." This agency was brought into being so that religious books could be printed in large numbers and sold at a low price. Colporteurs distributed these books in Chicago and sold them for as little as ten cents apiece.<sup>9</sup>

Moody Bible Institute is today a well-established agency for the training of men and women for religious work. It is located in Chicago, Illinois.

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>7</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>8</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., pp. 232-6, passim.

<sup>9</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 135.



### Northfield Seminary and Mt. Hemon School for Boys

Northfield Seminary, a school for girls, and Mt. Hemon, a school for boys, were both founded by Moody and were located near Northfield, Massachusetts, Moody's home town.

The great evangelist had three reasons for building Northfield Seminary: 1. To provide young women with a good Biblical education; 2. To train women for mission work, particularly among the poor in the larger cities; 3. To use the buildings for "Bible Conferences"<sup>10</sup> during the summer months.<sup>11</sup>

The physical plant of the school consisted of dormitories, an administration building, music hall, science building, and a chapel. The most prominent building was an auditorium which was built to seat two thousand people. Moody was criticized for building such a large structure away from any big cities. Most people thought that it would never be used to full capacity; however, it proved to be almost too small during the Bible Conferences which were held every summer.<sup>12</sup>

Northfield Seminary was built especially for girls of limited means. In order "to protect the independence and preserve the self-respect of the students," each student paid or earned at least one-half the cost of board and tuition. Every student worked one hour each day,

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<sup>10</sup>infra, p. 30.

<sup>11</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 206.

<sup>12</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., pp. 17-8.



either in the buildings or on the farm owned by the school.<sup>13</sup>

Northfield Seminary must not be confused with the Northfield Training School where young women were taught the various branches of domestic economy which would make them useful in mission work with the poor. At the training school they were especially instructed in preparation of foods for the sick. These young women were hired by various churches and mission agencies all over the nation to carry on charitable work.<sup>14</sup>

Mt. Hermon School for Boys, established in 1879, had the same basic goals as Northfield Seminary. Pupils who were financially independent were not admitted,<sup>15</sup> and the industrial system was necessarily a prominent feature of the school.<sup>16</sup>

At first, the school accepted boys between the ages of eight and eighteen. Later, however, the institution accepted only those who were sixteen or over. The school's leaders came to realize that the influence of a home was greatly needed in the younger years of a child's life. They saw that no institutional system was an adequate substitute for this need.<sup>17</sup>

With the establishment of these two schools, Northfield and Mt. Hermon, Moody succeeded in sending into the world students who had the

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>14</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 214.

<sup>15</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 137.

<sup>16</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 209.



"conviction that service is the standard of greatness."<sup>18</sup>

### Summer Bible Conferences

Our present-day Lutheran Service Volunteer schools are quite similar to Moody's Summer Bible Conferences. These conferences were held at Northfield, at Lake Niagra and Winona Lake, and also at Keswick in England.

These conferences, which were largely devotional in atmosphere, usually lasted about ten days during the summer months.<sup>19</sup> The conferences held during the month of August became the most popular.

These gatherings usually included separate meetings for young men and for young women. There were also separate meetings dealing with home missions and foreign missions.<sup>20</sup>

It was Mr. Moody's custom to invite to the Bible Conferences such great evangelistic leaders as Andrew Bonar, F. B. Meyer, and Andrew Murray. These men led in Bible discussions and also instructed in the various methods of missionary endeavor.<sup>21</sup>

Some have held that Moody tried to advocate the doctrine of "sinless perfection" through these conferences. This is denied by him and his associates, although they did put much stress on the "definite and

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<sup>18</sup>Charles R. Erdman, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

<sup>19</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

<sup>20</sup>Charles R. Erdman, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 139.



immediate abandonment of every known sin or hindrance to holy living."<sup>22</sup>

Through these informal conferences, many of which were held out-of-doors to a large extent,<sup>23</sup> Moody helped to deepen the spiritual insights and increase the missionary zeal of his co-workers in evangelistic endeavors.

### Sunday School

Moody was one of the first to recognize the missionary possibilities of the Sunday School. He said, "If I had the trumpet of God and could speak to every Sunday School teacher in America, I would plead with each one to lead at least one soul to Christ this year!"<sup>24</sup>

Moody himself was very active in Sunday School work. He founded the North Market Sunday School, which was located in one of the worst slums areas of Chicago. After only three months of labor, he had enrolled two hundred children in this school; within six months there were over three hundred; and after one year there were over six hundred in attendance. On certain Sundays the number reached a thousand.<sup>25</sup>

Two of the reasons for Moody's phenomenal success in Sunday School work was his division of children into age groups and his use of a uniform system of lessons for all these groups. In connection with J. H.

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<sup>22</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., pp. 215-8.

<sup>23</sup>The sessions at Northfield were often held on Round Top Hill near the seminary.

<sup>24</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>25</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 96.



Vincent and B. F. Jacobs, Mr. Moody advocated the use of uniform lessons in all Sunday Schools. The result was the appointment by the National Sunday School Convention, in 1869, of a committee to arrange what became ultimately the series of International Sunday School lessons.<sup>26</sup>

Moody had a very effective way in which to handle a perennial problem which plagues most Sunday Schools - that of getting rid of unsuitable teachers. He handled the matter in this way: Moody contended that no teacher had the right to teach unless he could interest his pupils; therefore a rule was made giving each pupil, under certain limitations, the privilege of leaving his class and going to another if he so desired. In that way the superintendent was relieved of the unpleasant task of taking a class away from an incompetent teacher, because the class would take itself away in time.<sup>27</sup>

#### Young Men's Christian Association

The Young Men's Christian Association found one of its greatest supporters in the person of Dwight Moody. Almost all of the money which was collected over and above the expenses incurred on his campaigns was given to the Association.<sup>28</sup>

Moody always emphasized that there is an inseparable relation be-

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<sup>26</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>27</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 95.

<sup>28</sup>Supra, p. 9.



tween the Association and the Church.<sup>29</sup> He stressed the fact that the first purpose of the Association was "to win followers for Christ,"<sup>30</sup> and that was his reason for supporting it as he did.

In connection with the Young Men's Christian Association, a group known as the Student Volunteers was invited by Mr. Moody to Northfield. This group was composed of missionary-minded students who were attending colleges which were connected with the Association. At this Northfield meeting, they discussed various phases of College Association work, listened to outstanding evangelists, and discussed foreign missions.

The purpose of the Student Volunteers movement was fourfold:

1. To foster interest in foreign missions among all college students.
2. To train students for missionary work in North America.
3. To train students for foreign missionary work.
4. To instill a missionary spirit in the home church.<sup>31</sup>

Although the evangelistic aim is no longer emphasized in the Young Men's Christian Association as it was in Moody's day, it is still a powerful and wholesome influence on contemporary American youth.

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<sup>29</sup> Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>31</sup> J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., pp. 221-5.



## CHAPTER V

### THE EVANGELISTIC METHODS USED BY MOODY IN HIS PRIVATE LIFE

Dwight Moody is remembered in history because of his success with large masses of people; but he could never have gained that success, had he not the ability to approach the individual. In this fourth chapter, we shall study the factors in his personality and training which made him successful in dealing with people; then we shall observe the various techniques by which he made use of these personality assets.

#### Personality and Training Factors which Brought Success

Moody was endowed with an independent attitude which showed itself very early in his life when at seventeen he left his Northfield home and went to seek adventure in the great city of Boston.<sup>1</sup> This self-sufficient attitude, although sometimes a liability, was primarily an asset. It gave him the courage to stride "right out into the unknown, with his eye so firmly fixed on one glorious object, that doubt and tremor and hesitation were forever abandoned."<sup>2</sup>

The mere conception of taking orders unhesitatingly, of surrendering his will without dispute to the will of an-

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<sup>1</sup>Charles R. Erdman, D. L. Moody, His Message for Today (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co., c.1927), p. 22.

<sup>2</sup>Gamaliel Bradford, D. L. Moody, A Worker in Souls (New York: George H. Doran Co., c.1927), p. 31.



other, would have been so utterly foreign to him that it is doubtful whether it would have had any meaning.<sup>3</sup>

He seldom doubted his own abilities or mistrusted himself, and this attitude added to the keen enjoyment which he received from his work.<sup>4</sup> He knew that his work was very important, that his message was needed by all men. In order to bring this message to people, Moody was more inclined to use a hammer than to use "delicate irony and subtle grace."<sup>5</sup>

This "purposeful disposition and masterful character made him a natural organizer and leader of men."<sup>6</sup> His leadership ability was another personality factor which proved to be a great asset in his work. The guiding hand of Moody was felt in everything with which he was connected, and all those who worked with him in his campaigns and institutions were definitely under his direction.<sup>7</sup>

Moody's leadership ability became very evident when he picked men for various tasks. He had the gift of choosing the "right men for the right work."<sup>8</sup> He chose men like Ira D. Sankey,<sup>9</sup> an effective Gospel singer; Paul P. Bliss, writer of Gospel songs; Major D. W. Whittle,

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 240.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>6</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>7</sup>Gamaliel Bradford, op. cit., p. 249.

<sup>8</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, The Life and Work of Dwight L. Moody (New Haven, Connecticut: Butler and Alger, c.1900), p. 289.

<sup>9</sup>Supra, p. 12.



efficient in the inquiry room; John C. McNeil, preacher during the Chicago campaign; and many others.

Moody "made men discover themselves, find out in their own nature powers they had never suspected."<sup>10</sup> He also gave them a chance to use these powers without "hovering" over them every minute to see if they were doing their job properly.

...his habit was to get helpers whom he could trust, men and women who knew their business thoroughly and then leave them to do it, with none of that nagging criticism and suspicion which make executive efficiency so difficult, if not impossible.<sup>11</sup>

This ability to lead men was one of the keys to Moody's great success. Writing on the preparations for the Kansas City Revival, Chapman relates:

The preliminary discussions of the proposed meetings afforded proof of the confidence reposed in Mr. Moody by many minds. About him the religious forces of the city crystallized with enthusiasm. His name was a power making Christian unity.<sup>12</sup>

Moody has occasionally been accused of being "brusque, sometimes almost to the point of rudeness" toward his co-workers;<sup>13</sup> thus he sometimes stepped on the feelings and sensitivities of his fellow-laborers.

Goss tells us:

When he dropped men as if they were "hot coals"...it was impossible for those from whom he had received such loyal and almost passionate devotion at one time not to feel as

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<sup>10</sup> Gamaliel Bradford, op. cit., p. 233.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 259.

<sup>12</sup> J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 256.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 518.



if he were unkind and untrue when he turned away.<sup>14</sup>

Why were men willing to stand for such treatment? Why did they follow him at all, if he treated his co-workers in such a manner?

Bradford answers that question:

If it seems a matter of surprise that men submitted to such arbitrary treatment, the answer is, first that they were convinced of Moody's absolute sincerity and unselfishness, second, that he had the supreme gift of inspiring a belief in his success.<sup>15</sup>

The followers of Moody realized that they were being used for a worthy cause -- a cause that would inevitably be successful, because Dwight L. Moody was at the head of it. For these reasons, men followed him willingly, although they knew that they would be dismissed when their services were no longer needed.

Another personal asset which helped to make D. L. Moody a success was his ability to bear up under gruelling work. "He was tireless in his ceaseless labors, and when his co-workers were exhausted, he was in fine form for another task."<sup>16</sup>

....back of the tongue was the torrent rush of incomparable energy, the unfailing muscular and nervous strength which made him stand out even among the revivalists....No difficulty, no opposition, could daunt him, and no fatigue could wear him out.<sup>17</sup>

Robert Duffus gives us an insight into the vast amount of strength-sapping work which Moody accomplished during his lifetime. He says:

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<sup>14</sup>Charles F. Goss, Echoes from the Platform and Pulpit (Hartford, Connecticut: A. D. Worthington and Co., c.1900), p. 85.

<sup>15</sup>Gamaliel Bradford, op. cit., pp. 231-2.

<sup>16</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>17</sup>Gamaliel Bradford, op. cit., pp. 52-3.



In his rage to save souls he travelled more than a million miles, addressed more than a hundred million people, and personally prayed and pleaded with seven hundred-and-fifty thousand sinners. All in all, it is very probable, as his admirers claim, that he reduced the population of hell by a million souls.<sup>18</sup>

It cannot be doubted that Moody's physical strength and remarkable physique had much to do with making him the success that he was.

Another aspect of Moody's personality which aided him in evangelistic work was his sense of humor. This trait became evident at a very early age when, in school, he was giving a recital of Mark Antony's oration over the dead body of Caesar. He provided a wooden box to make the oration more vivid. Then at a very crucial point, he struck the box and out jumped a cat. This was, of course, a source of shocked surprise to the audience and of deep satisfaction to the orator.<sup>19</sup>

Moody's wit was "ready and effective in serious crises and served to bring out the deepest points of argument as dazzling as it was simple."<sup>20</sup> When Moody and Sankey had differences of opinion, as most men working closely together do, then they joked with each other and soon their differences would be straightened out.<sup>21</sup>

This sense of humor also helped him to face the crises in his personal life. In the mad confusion of the Chicago fire, while all of

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<sup>18</sup>Robert L. Duffus, "The Hound of Heaven," American Mercury, IV (April, 1925), p. 424.

<sup>19</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 22. Another childhood prank in which Moody indulged was to post a notice of a temperance lecture and draw a crowd for nothing.

<sup>20</sup>Ganassial Bradford, op. cit., p. 204.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 160-1, passim.



Moody's personal belongings were going up in flames, his wife thrust an oil painting of himself into his hands and said that above all else she wanted to save that painting. Even though disaster had struck with intense fury, he could still see the humor in her request and he laughed, "How would I look carrying a picture of myself through the Chicago streets?"<sup>22</sup>

Moody often combined wit with determination to accomplish his purposes. One day he approached a man for a large sum of money to be used for the Young Men's Christian Association. This man had a standing rule that he would not give away over one hundred dollars at a time. Moody asked for ten thousand. The man said, "You know my rule, don't you?" Moody answered, "Yes, but I thought it would save your time and mine to give it all at once and not require a hundred calls." Moody received the money.<sup>23</sup>

Another one of Moody's natural gifts which he used to good advantage in his work was his acute business mind. "He was to religion what Carnegie, Rockefeller, Jim Hill, Harriman, Morgan and Wanamaker were to their varying trades."<sup>24</sup> One of the reasons why his revivals were so successful was that they were well-engineered and every detail was carefully considered before a step was taken.<sup>25</sup> He handled with ease all the business problems that automatically go with any large venture. He

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 199-200.

<sup>23</sup>Lyman Abbott, Silhouettes of My Contemporaries (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., c.1921), p. 192.

<sup>24</sup>Robert L. Duffus, op. cit., p. 424.

<sup>25</sup>Samuel Bradford, op. cit., p. 234.



personally looked after the smallest details. "The seating of the congregation, ventilation, arrangement of the singers, all passed under his observation and direction."<sup>26</sup>

Moody's work as a travelling salesman in his younger years later proved to be of invaluable aid to him. This travelling work took him "to the railroad stations, hotels, and other business places in search of customers;"<sup>27</sup> thus he received a good insight into human nature and learned to feel at ease around all classes of people.

The great evangelist employed much shrewdness in his work as a salesman. He never misrepresented a commodity, but he was a master at eliminating sales resistance. This ability later became very useful when he approached the individual with the Gospel.<sup>28</sup>

This commercial instinct becomes evident in many ways during Moody's evangelistic career. "He had the Yankee instinct for meeting all sorts of situations, for seizing the appropriate, and perhaps even more important, for shunning the inappropriate."<sup>29</sup> His ability to recognize a sound venture when he saw one is exemplified by an incident which occurred during the campaign in Liverpool, England. At one of the meetings, a speaker stated that the city needed cheap houses of refreshment in order to counteract the drawing power of the saloons. Moody asked him to keep talking for ten minutes, and at the end of that

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<sup>26</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 541.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>28</sup>W. H. Daniels, D. L. Moody and His Work (New York: American Publishing Co., c.1875), p. 29.

<sup>29</sup>Samuel Bradford, op. cit., p. 199.



time Moody had organized the "British Workmen Company, Limited." All the shares in the company were sold before the meeting was adjourned. This later proved to be a very profitable business.<sup>30</sup>

Moody's business mind also becomes evident in his preaching. He expounded the Bible in business-like fashion, "and directly urged people to accept the obligation of personal discipleship to Christ."<sup>31</sup> Moody had the greatest commodity in the world, not to sell, but to give away, and he used every honest means to let people know about it.<sup>32</sup>

"Endless, unflinching, unconquerable persistence was his asset, one of them, and we all know that few forms of capital bear better interest."<sup>33</sup>

The question arises: "If Moody was so successful in the business world, what was it that caused him to turn to evangelistic activity?" Moody himself gives us the answer. The final decision came when he and a group of girls from a Sunday School class said good-by to a dying Sunday School teacher who had to leave Chicago because of his health. Here is his story:

The next morning I went to the depot to say good-by to that teacher. Just before the train started, one of the class came, and before long, without any pre-arrangement they were all there. What a meeting that was! We tried to sing but we broke down. The last we saw of that dying teacher, he was standing on the platform of the car, his finger pointing upward, telling that class to meet him in heaven. I didn't know what this was going to cost me. I was disqualified for business; it had become distasteful to me. I had got a

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<sup>30</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 152.

<sup>31</sup>Henry Kalbock Rowe, Modern Pathfinders of Christianity (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co., c.1928), p. 201.

<sup>32</sup>Gamaliel Bradford, op. cit., p. 252.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 250.



taste of another world, and cared no more for making money. For some days after, the great struggle of my life took place. Should I give up business and give myself to Christian work, or should I not? I have never regretted my choice. Oh, the luxury of leading someone out of the darkness of this world into the glorious liberty of the Gospel.<sup>34</sup>

Moody's most valuable asset for carrying on his work was his heroic faith in God and in His ability to answer prayer. It was this faith that led him through many distressing and sometimes perilous circumstances. One of the more outstanding examples of Moody's faith took place during one of his return trips from England. The steamer "Spree" suffered a broken shaft. There was a huge hole in the hull and the ship was in real danger. Moody held inspiring and comforting services every day on board ship, and he had a service of thanksgiving after the ship had been towed back to England.<sup>35</sup>

Moody's firm belief in prayer became very evident in his private life with his personal friends. One day he was driving along a country road with Dr. Wilton Merle Smith of New York. The conversation had been very general, and all of a sudden Moody stopped his horse under a tree and there spoke a fervent prayer.<sup>36</sup> Incidents like this occurred many times during Moody's regular day, especially in the evenings when he and his co-workers gathered together. They all knelt and Moody led them in prayer.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>D. L. Moody, To All People (New York: E. B. Treat Co., c.1877), p. 86.

<sup>35</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 71.

<sup>36</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 543.



This faith also permeated the lives of those who were associated with him. Although he was a very busy man and always had many pressing matters on his mind, "there was still a calmness and courage characteristic of him that at once inspired hope..."<sup>38</sup>

Moody's entire personal make-up made him a dynamic individual - one who was well able to use his personality and training to the best interests of Kingdom work.

#### Examples of Moody's Personal Approach to His Fellow-Man

We shall now study some of the ways in which Moody put his personality traits into use. We shall observe some of the methods whereby he approached his fellow-man with the Gospel.

It must be remembered that Moody was filled with a love for all people of all classes, and this is perhaps one of the most important factors in bringing about his success with people.<sup>39</sup> He was not at all adverse to doing mission-work, even among the lowliest of people. In Chicago, he rented four pews in a church and each Sunday filled them with young "ragamuffins" whom he enlisted from the surrounding slums.<sup>40</sup> Soon he established a Sunday School of his own, and although it did not follow the exact methods of pedagogy,<sup>41</sup> it was nevertheless success-

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 545.

<sup>39</sup>Charles F. Goss, op. cit., p. 85.

<sup>40</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>41</sup>Loc. cit.



ful.<sup>42</sup> At first he was known as "Crazy Moody," but he later became well-known for his boldness and skill in the fine art of personal evangelism.

It was sometimes difficult to enlist the young "Street Arabs" into his Sunday School, so he filled his pockets with maple sugar, and he distributed it "judiciously" to those who promised to come. "Soon he had his little room overflowing with barbarians."<sup>43</sup>

Although Moody was very successful with the masses, he nevertheless laid much stress on personal contact with individuals. He realized that enduring results are obtained only by getting a man where you can look into his eyes "and lay a quiet controlling finger upon his arm, and so upon his heart."<sup>44</sup> Moody laid out this policy for himself:

I made it a rule that I wouldn't let a day pass without speaking to someone about their soul's salvation, and if they didn't hear the Gospel from the lips of others there will be 365 in a year that shall hear it from my lips.<sup>45</sup>

Moody realized that it was just as important "to help the clerk who worked beside him in the store and the stranger whom he met casually upon the street, as to endeavor to sway large audiences from the rostrum."<sup>46</sup> In order to help individuals by means of the Gospel message, Moody made it a practice to use a very direct approach with them. The

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<sup>42</sup>Supra, p. 31.

<sup>43</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 93.

<sup>44</sup>Samuel Bradford, op. cit., p. 266.

<sup>45</sup>D. L. Moody, Glad Tidings (Philadelphia: E. B. Treat Co., c.1876), p. 52.

<sup>46</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 91.



following incident is typical of his approach: One day, he met a man on the train. Moody made a few casual remarks about the beauty of God's landscape. The man sitting next to him confessed that he was not a Christian. Upon hearing this confession, Moody knelt down in the coach and prayed that his fellow-traveller would become a Christian. Then Moody got off at the next stop.<sup>47</sup>

It is true that he often stepped up to a man and asked very bluntly, "Are you a Christian?",<sup>48</sup> but it is also true that especially in his later years, "he selected his subjects, was careful in his approaches, and cast his questions with care."<sup>49</sup>

Moody always made it a point to center his efforts upon the will of an individual. He felt that a man's will had to be molded, bent, and even broken. After the will was broken, the remaining barriers crumbled easily enough.<sup>50</sup> In order to break the will of a man, he did not reason with him, he did not dictate to him, but he prayed with him. "When he got his patients really to pray, he felt that his task was done."<sup>51</sup>

The following story illustrates one of the ways in which Moody made use of praying aloud when approaching the non-Christian: One night

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<sup>47</sup>E. J. Goodspeed, A Full History of the Wonderful Career of Moody and Sankey in Great Britain and America (Cincinnati: Henry S. Goodspeed and Co., c.1876), pp. 25-6.

<sup>48</sup>Charles R. Erdman, op. cit., p. 30.

<sup>49</sup>Ernest Trice Thompson, Changing Emphases in America Preaching (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1943), p. 114.

<sup>50</sup>Gamaliel Bradford, op. cit., p. 288.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 287.



Moody persuaded a group of women in a certain home to let him pour a jug of whiskey into the street. The next morning he came back to the house to get the children for his Sunday School. The men of the household then surrounded him and were going to beat him. Thereupon Moody said, "See here, men, if you are going to whip me, you might at least give me time to say my prayers." He then fell to his knees and prayed fervently for his work and for the people in that home. The men were at first astonished, then repentant, and they later offered their support for his school.<sup>52</sup>

In spite of the fact that Moody was very busy attempting to lead souls to Christ, nevertheless he did not forget his obligation to his own family. His home was often the scene of much laughter and play. He entered into games with his children, and he often used these happy settings to bring home some Scriptural truth to the members of his family.<sup>53</sup> This happy family life was an inspiration to the many people who were guests at the Moody home. He used the example of his own home to show that Christianity works in everyday life.<sup>54</sup>

Moody's approach to his fellow-man can best be summed up by the following words of William Sweet:

He had intense sympathy for and insight into the individual and great practical skill and tact. His singular large-

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<sup>52</sup>J. Wilbur Chapman, op. cit., p. 96.

<sup>53</sup>Gamaliel Bradford, op. cit., pp. 194-5.

<sup>54</sup>Rufus W. Clark, The Great Work of God in Great Britain Under Messrs. Moody and Sankey (New York: Harper and Brothers, c.1875), p. 36.



ness and sweetness of spirit and his consuming passion for mending souls gave him a unique place as a religious worker.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>William Warren Sweet, The Story of Religion in America (Second Revised edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, c.1950), p. 336.



## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

What can the Christian minister of the Twentieth Century learn from the example of Dwight Moody? The writer of the thesis feels that there are three important aspects of Moody's personal make-up which should be emulated by Christian ministers of today.

In the first place, his persistence was a trait which played a major role in making him the successful evangelist that he was. He did not have an apologetic attitude toward his calling. He knew it was important and he would let no obstacle stand in the way of his message. This dynamic persistence is a necessary prerequisite to the Christian ministry of today.

Secondly, the writer feels that one can learn from Moody the real efficacy of prayer. We are able to see from his life that the power of prayer is unlimited. He didn't doubt when he prayed. The results show that his prayers were heard.

Finally, the Christian minister of today must have the same love for individuals that Moody displayed throughout his entire life. A true servant of God must be able to see in every person a precious soul, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

These are the three important characteristics that ministers of all ages can learn from him of whom it will not be denied that "in his



day none worked more passionately, more lovingly, and more successfully to bring God to man...."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Gamaliel Bradford, D. L. Moody, A Worker in Souls (New York: George H. Doran Co., c.1927), p. 304.



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