

# The Modern Crusade

Addresses and Proceedings of the  
First General Convention of the  
Laymen's Missionary Movement,  
Presbyterian Church in the U. S.,  
Birmingham, Ala., Feb. 16-18, 1909

Edited by  
H. C. Ostrom, Secretary



UNIVERSITY  
OF VIRGINIA

Laymen's Missionary Movement,  
Presbyterian Church in the United States,  
Southern Mutual Building,  
Athens, Ga.

BV  
2570  
A7568  
233075  
1909

COPYRIGHT, 1909, BY  
LAYMEN'S MISSIONARY MOVEMENT  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U. S.,  
ATHENS, GA.

Y18000000  
A18000000

### III. OUR WORLD FIELD.

---

**The World Field of the Southern Presbyterian Church.**

**Dawn in the Dark Continent.**

**The Appeal of the East to the West.**

**Immediate Needs of Our Fields.**

## DAWN IN THE DARK CONTINENT.

By REV. MOTTE MARTIN, *Congo Free State.*

The men of the church, as a rule, are ignorant of the actual condition in Africa to-day. Ah, could you men realize that infant fatality there is about sixty or seventy per cent., that is, about sixty or seventy out of every 100 die in infancy, simply because their parents know nothing of hygiene. A mother will place a baby on its back in her lap, and with her dirty fingers will place gruel in the child's mouth. The child eats as long as it is hungry, then spews it out; the mother gathers it up and pokes it back down its throat as one would stuff a goose. The feeding operation goes on, until the little fellow strikes out with his feet and hands. When the mother finds out that the little waist is sufficiently tight then, and not until then, is the operation over. When the child gets older, it will take great portions of bread and break off large pieces and gulp them down whole. You will find them working in places reeking with vermin and filth. They know absolutely nothing of the principles of hygiene. Is that not a need? Does not that appeal to us men, since we have so much at our disposal with which to remove these conditions?

The darkness there is awful. Would that you could see how the bondage of slavery is oppressing this people. If you will visit any of the districts you will find that wholesale slavery still exists. You will find a father selling his child, as he would a goat or a sheep; you will hear them cry painfully to the Christians, "Oh, men of God, save me, save me, don't let them take me far away from our people." Men such as Livingstone and other Christian missionaries, who have given up their life for a lost people, can do more than the combined power of all the governments to heal this open sore. Even England with her splendid policy has failed again and again to remove the abuses and vices that are there.

Not only does infant fatality and slavery exist there, but polygamy reigns supreme. You will come across a woman in tears, the King has decreed that she shall be his wife, that she will have to enter his wifehood, within the walls of his harem; she can never look on the face of man in purity, again. You will find her in bitter agony when she hears of the decree. A king sometimes has as many as a thousand wives,

and only recently his subjects declared that one king could not have any more than 3,333. Of course, he does not honor or respect them, they are just to satisfy his sensual pleasure, they have to earn their own support, and in a good many instances have to contribute to his support as well. And when one of them does something that he does not like, her back is stripped and subjected to the lashes of the hippopotamus hide. Oh, if you could see some of the tortures these slaves have to endure; if you could see some of the pictures of despair, and most often the baby is the innocent victim of it all.

Not only is there great need to put down this atrocious practice, but they believe that within men there is the flesh spirit, this life is in the flesh and cannot be separated from it. Cannibalism exists; I myself have seen portions of a human being carried to their feeding place. They believe that if they kill their brother, or kill an opponent in battle, the flesh spirit is still dominant, and so exists their desire to eat their opponent. As long as this superstition abounds, it will be absolutely impossible for us to wipe out the cannibalism that exists there. Their superstition fills them with unrest, for they believe the life of the soul is present always to do them harm. To us who know the Peace of God, is that no appeal?

They believe that there is also a mind spirit, which can become separated from the human body, and that it can return to the body at will. Suppose sickness or death comes upon one of them, they suspect some one, as being the cause of the misfortune, and he is brought before the Chief and the man is examined. He declares he knows nothing about it, and then they take the poison cup and mix it, and if his constitution is such that he can throw it off, he is innocent; but if he dies in horrible convulsions, the spirits have found him out, and he is guilty. Another method of trying them is to place a flint-lock gun at their breast and pull the trigger. We know that even an old flint-lock gun will go off sometimes. If it does not go off, he is innocent, and other men are subjected to this test until it does go off, and the guilty one is thus found. Is this not a need, this wholesale murder of innocent people?

They also believe that the spirit exists in the reptiles. You will, perhaps, see a reptile making his way toward a crowd of men; I attempted to kill one of these snakes, and I was told that I must not do that, that I must not touch the serpent, that it was their protection from the avenger. Yes, they cannot kill the deadly serpent, although if it happened to bite a man he would die in horrible convulsions.

Leopards from the jungles sometimes become very bold, and then they are called "man-eaters." In one village they had taken away one of the villagers. I said, "Are you not going to hunt for him and slay him?" They looked at me, and seemed to pity me for my ignorance, and said, "Don't you know better than that? He is not a leopard, he is a spirit." Then they explained the transmigration of souls; they believe the avenger may temporarily enter into the soul of the leopard. When a person falls a victim, either by a leopard or by a flash of lightning, they suspect someone; then the poison cup or the flint-lock gun is brought into play. Is this not a need? Even from the humanitarian standpoint, to say nothing of the intense need from the Christian standpoint.

King Leopold was given this territory, supported by a treaty with the other powers, and protected by them. He has changed that whole government into a private plantation, and now claims that it is his own private property. The products of the Congo are his. The people having no money to pay their taxes, must pay them in labor, and he keeps this government under his control merely by intimidation; they are his slaves and subject to his command. The only way to wipe out these atrocities and deprivations is for men to stand for truth and for righteousness, and in this way, and only this way, will it be carried out. The Presbyterian Church stands for justice, and this principle shall always be upheld, wherever a Christian, an American Christian, is stationed, and we call on the people of this country, not only to support us financially, but to support us with their prayers. At this time, Dr. Morrison, as some of you know, is sued by the government of that country, for declaring these abuses, which are everywhere manifest to those who have investigated. The testimony is abundant; Secretary Root and President Roosevelt have been convinced, and England has been convinced of the truth of conditions existing there to-day, and because Dr. Morrison has testified as to the truth, he has been sued, and is in need of our prayers and support. You men can help him out of this difficulty, and shame on you, if any harm befalls him. Will our people respond, and pray for and help our men and women who are serving God in the mission field?

The people are wanting to know of the love of Christ; some of these delegations come hundreds of miles; we have known them to walk three hundred miles to hear us speak about God and about heaven, and they say, "We will never depart until you send teachers." When we

take the ivory horn and blow the blast, not in hundreds but in thousands will they flock to hear us expound the word of God, and there, in the night time, after we have told them all we could, they will linger around the candle light, asking us to tell them more. If the news gets out ahead of us that we are going to preach, hundreds, yea, thousands will meet us; they will fight for the privilege of getting near us, and as they take us on their shoulders and bear us around and around, they will listen intently to what we have to say, and then bear the message away to their people. God has turned the hearts of those thousands to the gospel. We are simply holding back the thousands who are advancing forward. You will find the kings themselves say: "This is the prince of our tribe, this is the hope of our race, teach him how to read the Bible, and to understand it."

We preach three times every day, and in the noon-day service at our mission over two thousand gather daily to hear the word of God. Something like ten or twelve thousand are able to read and write, and to keep simple accounts; and great companies of these are going hither and thither, preaching the word of God.

When Stanley, the newspaper man, was in East Africa, he told them of the white man's land, and made friends with them and with their powerful king. When he left, the king escorted him to the shore, and as he was sailing away called to him, "When you go back to the white man's land, tell them that I am as one sitting in darkness, or as one born blind, and that I ask, only to see." Men, that is the picture of all of these people in the centre of Africa; they want to see, pleading only to see. They are appealing to us to give them light. They are holding out their hands, and asking us to free them from bondage and give the gospel to them. Do you understand that they are willing to do everything and give up everything for the sake of the gospel? As to giving up their possessions, twenty-eight young men gave up their 345 slaves and said to us, "Man of God, write them out certificates of freedom, and let them go." Is not that a glorious spectacle, the liberating of these slaves? These men giving up their riches and their luxuries in that whole district, simply that they may be right with God? Willing to do anything that they may be right with their Creator?

We have seventy-five young evangelists in our mission, that are now able to read and write. The merchants and traders have said to them: "Leave the employ of the missionaries, the people of God,

and we will give you positions as buyers of rubber for us; we will pay you ten, twenty, yes, thirty times the salary which the missionaries are paying you." We have yet to lose the first one. The universal answer of these young men is: "We are not in this thing for money, but for the good of our souls." Not only are they doing that, but when they receive their wages for a whole year, they give it back "for the cause of Christ."

Not only are they giving themselves and their money, but conscientiousness is manifested, which I value most of all. When passing bread at communion, you will see young men refuse to partake. I would ask them why they refuse to commune, and they will say: "I had a quarrel with my friend, the anger is still cherished there." I ask another, and he says his heart is not right with God, that he cannot eat with that sin hidden and cherished there.

You will find the people there willing to give up their lives for the Master. Men, is that not character? When a man will die rather than change his religion? We have abundant evidence that they will lay down their lives for the Master; we have seen it done in so many cases. After one great persecution in Central Africa, a young man came and asked to know about the white man's God. I said: "Do you know what you ask; have you heard of the persecution abroad in the land?" He said: "Yes, my brother died just yesterday. I am now convinced that there is something in this religion. I would rather die with Him than live without Him, baptize me." Others would be brought before the chief and asked to change their belief, and they would say, "You may kill us, we cannot change."

I can show you a sergeant who refused to recant after punishment had been threatened. He was led before the captain, and was told that they would give him until the following morning, and then, if he did not recant, he would be shot. He tells us that he spent the whole night in prayer. When he appeared before the captain in the morning, he was asked: "What is your answer?" He said, "You may kill my body, but you cannot kill my soul; it is in the hands of God; you may shoot." The captain looked at him in a peculiar way and then said, "Maybe you are right; go back and worship God as you will." Many people have gone out of their way to see such a man as this.

One fact, in conclusion, is that those people out there are the most pliable people on the face of the earth. Their doors are open



both ways, and if evil influences get there first, they will yield to them, and if we get there first, they will yield to us. We know that when they are converted, they hold out. Charles Darwin—you recall his testimony about Terra del Fuego. He sent twenty-five pounds to the London Missionary Society, after the facts there were personally called to his attention. If there is a skeptic of foreign missions present, may you not possibly be mistaken?