



Moody Bible Institute
Dr. Paul Nyquist — Inauguration Address
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Good morning. As I stand before you today as just the ninth president of this fabled institution, I find myself identifying with the words of David in 2 Samuel 7. After consolidating his kingdom, there David told God he wanted to build Him a Temple. God told David that this would be a task his son would complete. However, God said to David, "I will make you a promise...your house, your throne, and your kingdom will endure forever."

Forever! The Davidic Covenant. I identify with David's response back. As he considered this marvelous blessing from God, he said, "Who am I, and what is my house, that Thou has brought me thus far?"

That's the question I am asking: "Who am I—that you would put me in a position like this, and in a school like this?" I cannot explain it.

I do know that spiritually, my life's trajectory radically changed when Jesus powerfully invaded my life. Without that intervention, I shudder to think of what I may have become...perhaps successful in the world's eyes; perhaps not. But I know I would have tasted deeply of the folly of chasing materialistic pleasures.

A life devoted to ministry does not usually create fat bank accounts, but it does bring an unusual satisfaction to each day of life. And I thank God for the privilege of serving Him fulltime. After I became marked by the Gospel, it is really all I ever wanted to do.

And in that regard, I want to thank Dr. Charles Ryrie for blessing me with his presence and his wisdom today. Dr. Ryrie is the reason I went to Dallas Seminary. As a sophomore in college, I heard Dr. Ryrie give a series of messages on Romans 6 at a conference over Christmas break. I had never heard the Bible taught like that before, and I decided that wherever that man was from, I was going to go there. It was a great decision. He planted in me a love for theology that remains in full bloom today. Thank you, Dr. Ryrie, for putting your mark on my life.

Obviously, I am deeply indebted to my parents. Mom and Dad, I am so glad you could be here today. Thank you for providing a loving, stable environment that allowed a tender shoot like me to grow. I considered my healthy home life to be typical. Unfortunately, it is not.

Last, I must mention my bride of twenty-eight years. Cheryl, many speak hopefully of finding an excellent wife. Well, I have one. And the humbling thing is, everyone we meet is able to figure that out. They may question why you would want to hitch your wagon to me, but they fully understand why I threw a rope around you. You make tackling a challenging role like this an exciting and unpredictable adventure.

As you know, the world's crystal balls have clouded over the past couple years. Twelve months ago there was worldwide panic as the collapse of the sub-prime mortgage market led to a meltdown of global financial systems. As a result, some multi-billion dollar corporations no longer exist today, having been swallowed up by predators. Others are wading through bankruptcy court. The wounds have been deep, not only on Wall Street but also on Main Street. An unemployment number reaching double digits represents a harsh reality that few would have thought possible today.

Mere mortals are unable to know the future. That's God's business. But, as Christian leaders, we do have a responsibility to understand the times. And while confusing, I believe there are four forces radically shaping the world today. As world-shapers, they also impact where Moody needs to go. If we ignore these, we do so to our own peril. While I do not have the time to go into these with much detail, let me quickly list them for you.

First, there is globalization. The world is not only flat, but also increasingly interconnected through a mobile, wireless web. Twenty-five percent of the world (1.6 billion people) is now online. Two-thirds of the four billion mobile phone subscriptions are in the emerging world. If only half of these people get online access in the near future, another billion could easily join the web. This means we are all linked in real time, providing cyber-conduits for teaching, training, educating, and evangelizing.

A second force radically shaping the world is urbanization. The first mega-city of the world of over ten million people did not come until 1950 in New York City. Just sixty-five years later, by 2015, it is predicted there will be thirty-three mega-cities of over ten million people. However, what is most interesting is that of those thirty-three mega-cities, twenty-seven of them will be in the developing world. Today 3.3 billion people live in cities. That is a number larger than the entire population of the world in 1967. It's a trend that shows no signs of abating. The future of the world is in the cities.

A third force radically shaping the world is secularization. And while global communication has a secularizing effect on every part of the world, the most disturbing trends are happening right here in North America.

According to the 2008 American Self-Identification Religious Survey, the fastest growing religious group in the US is the non-religious—those who claim religion has no role in their life. In just eight years, between 1990 and 2008, the number of non-religious people in this country nearly doubled from eight percent of the population to fifteen percent of the population. And perhaps most concerning to me is the fact that the number was significantly higher among young people. Twenty-two percent of those between eighteen and twenty-nine years of age claimed to be non-religious.

Lastly, a fourth force radically shaping the world is pluralization. Some may call this multi-culturalism, but I prefer to call it pluralization. And what I mean is, the days of a monolithic culture are gone. Today, the reality is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual society. Homogeneity has been replaced by diversity. Urban centers are not a melting pot where cultures are blended but increasingly a mosaic of different, distinct cultures operating side by side. People who are fluent in only one language are increasingly going to be marginalized as effectiveness will be determined by your ability to move seamlessly between languages and cultures.

Now, these do not represent all the forces at work in our world today, but these are certainly some of the giants ... globalization, urbanization, secularization, and pluralization.

The question is, what does all this mean for Moody? Where does Moody need to go, and what does Moody need to become in a world like this? Or to phrase that question in another way, what would God want Moody to do to have maximum Kingdom impact in this globalized, urbanized, secularized and pluralized world that is emerging?

In order to answer that question, for the first few months I was here, I just listened. I asked for input from employees, alumni, financial supporters, students and other key stakeholders. We collected mountains of data and then we analyzed it. And when I say "we," I mean this was a team effort by my entire President's Cabinet. I have the privilege of working with an immensely gifted and imminently wise leadership team. Only a fool would ignore their insight.

But we grappled with that pivotal question: Where does Moody need to go? What is its preferred future? Of all the possible future paths this historic institution could take, which one is most desirable?

Well, after much prayer and rumination, this is what we decided. We captured the future direction in two short phrases: Biblical mission. Global vision. Let me unpack both of those phrases for you so that you can know more specifically that they mean for the future of Moody.

The first phrase, Biblical Mission, captures the one hundred twenty-three year legacy of Moody Bible Institute that is rooted deeply in the Word of God. We are a Bible college. While we applaud the efforts of other schools whose missions are broader than ours, we believe God raised us up to have one focus. And we endeavor to maintain that focus. And that is, to teach, proclaim, and equip people with the truth of God's Word.

This means this is not going to change! In fact, with America becoming more post-Christian with each passing day, and with the world's non-Christian population constantly increasing, Moody needs to be Moody now more than ever. With the unfortunate closing of some Bible colleges across the country, there are now fewer options for Bible training.

Therefore, instead of pulling back, we have been expanding and want to grow even more. We want to accommodate more students in our undergraduate program—perhaps even in a system of campuses across the country. We want to train more servants in our seminary and graduate school. Moody wants to stand firmly in the gap against the growing tide of biblical illiteracy in our country and equip people with both the knowledge of God's Word and the skills to powerfully proclaim it.

But this Biblical Mission does not end with our College and Seminary. This also provides the marching orders for our radio and publishing ministries.

Though some are predicting the demise of terrestrial radio, the influence of Moody Radio continues to grow. In addition to our thirty-nine owned and operated stations, we now have nearly eleven hundred affiliate stations taking some or part of Moody signal, which we offer to them free of charge. Our internet audience is growing dramatically. What do we want to broadcast over this signal? The Bible...clear, compelling, biblical teaching. We can't compete in the entertainment market. We don't want to. We are about the Bible.

A reminder of the impact of Moody Radio was evident recently when one of our Florida stations received a \$25 money order to help support the ministry of the station. That may not seem that unusual, but there is more to this story. The money order came from a homeless migrant worker who lives in his car. In that car, he listens to Moody Radio. He was so blessed by it, he chose to give of what little he had to help support the station. And on the back of the receipt, he had written these words, "Thank you for your faithful service."

The same laser-sharp focus will permeate our publishing arm. Moody Publishers has been the name you can trust. When you pick up a Moody book, you can be sure it will be biblically sound, reflecting the theology that has marked this organization from the very beginning.

God has blessed that commitment. While many other good publishers are struggling, our team has finished in the black nine out of ten years, and they are ahead of budget again this year. In fact, one of Moody's Books, *The Five Love Languages* by Gary Chapman, is now #1 on the New York Times Bestseller list—and that is the first time a Moody book has ever achieved that status.

Technology may change, as ebooks and Kindle become more mainstream. But our purpose won't. Moody Publishers, like Moody Radio and Moody Bible Institute, will always be about the Bible. This is our Biblical Mission. And let me assure you, during my watch, this isn't going to change!

But the second phrase in our vision statement reveals how Moody must change. An organization cannot remain totally stagnant in a world that is rapidly changing without becoming irrelevant. Thus the second phrase: Biblical Mission. Global Vision.

No one can discount the impact Moody graduates have had around this world. Ten percent of the missionaries from North America today received their training right here. Ten percent! Line up any ten North American missionaries and ask them where they went to school. One out of that ten will claim Moody. As one who has a deep passion for global evangelization, I am thrilled with that statistic.

But as I mentioned earlier, the forces of globalization, urbanization, secularization, and pluralization are progressively morphing this world into something new. And so we have to train our students to minister effectively in the world that is coming, not the world that has been. Therefore, our vision for the future contains two new commitments.

First, Moody will seek to intentionally train students to minister effectively in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, urban-oriented world. Our students come from all fifty states and dozens of countries. Some of them have been raised in an urban, multi-cultural context, but most have not. But despite their background, this is the environment in which they are going to minister, no matter whether they are located stateside or overseas.

God has given us an ideal location in downtown Chicago to provide this training. From our launching pad at 820 North LaSalle, within minutes our students can be in a rich variety of ethnic settings. While learning the Bible on campus, they will be learning multi-cultural ministry in the city.

And I believe a key piece of their education will be an upgraded language program, so that students from Moody will not only be equipped with solid Bible training and skills in multi-cultural ministry, but also fluent in at least one other language. If we produce students like that, not only here but on all our branch campuses, there will be no lack of Kingdom opportunity for our graduates.

Secondly, Moody will seek to firmly engage the global church in a reciprocating relationship so that we can help each other become more effective at fulfilling the Great Commission. As you probably know, over the past fifty years, the demographics of the Body of Christ have changed. The church has moved from north to south and from west to east. Whereas at the turn of the twentieth century, only one in five believers were not of white, Anglo-Saxon descent, today that number is four out of five. The church today is truly global, very gifted, and fast maturing.

Therefore, while Moody wants to continue to provide resources to the global church, we also want to learn from the global church. We can help them. But they also can inform us as we seek to train our students to minister the Gospel effectively in a global context. So, we want a reciprocating relationship.

Now, in order for all of this to become reality and not just remain a dream—for Biblical Mission and Global Vision to actually happen—four stakes must be driven into the ground on the home front. These become not the substance of the vision, but are necessary means to fulfilling the vision.

The first stake we will drive in the ground is an intentional strategy towards greater ethnic, cultural, and gender diversity throughout Moody. By that, we mean greater diversity in the student body, greater diversity in the faculty, greater diversity in the staff, and greater diversity in the leadership. This doesn't come easily, but if we are going to train students for multi-ethnic, multi-cultural ministry, it needs to be properly represented at the school. I know this is going to require ownership at the highest levels. So, while I can't tell you today how this will all be structured, I can tell you this...my office is going to own this initiative. It's that important to me.

The second stake we will drive in the ground is properly resourcing our current operations. We have a committed, passionate staff here, and it is vital we run an efficient, lean organization. But every department needs enough tools and bodies to do their job well. So, we will make sure that happens as we go further into the strategic planning process. There may be changes organizationally, but the organization that moves forward will have the resources it needs.

The third stake we will drive in the ground is a selective but effective use of new technology to move us forward. This is a high-tech world. Students expect it. Efficiency demands it. Fulfilling our mission requires it. But some of the most expensive mistakes an organization can make are in wrong decisions on technology. Yet, we need to be among the leaders, leveraging technology effectively to help accomplish our mission.

Lastly, the fourth stake we will drive in the ground is developing agility as an organization. When the world around us is so fluid, Moody needs to be able to adapt quickly. Slow movers, like dinosaurs, will become extinct. Flexibility is the order of the day, not rigidity. We must become agile and nimble or risk losing prime opportunities to expand Christ's Kingdom.

Now, can all of this happen? Can it? Well, it can't if we expect to fulfill it through mere human efforts. Left to the flesh, this vision will become just a dusty document, quickly discarded. But Moody was not built on the strength of man. And it has not been sustained for over 120 years on the strength of man. It has been resourced by God.

And this is the advantage that Christ's followers have over every other human institution. We have the divine factor. It just doesn't level the playing field. It makes it an entirely new game. And our God, the Sovereign Lord, makes us an incredible promise in 2 Chronicles 16:9. He says to us, *"The eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His."*

God is constantly looking for those people, and by extension, those organizations that He may strongly support. And what He is looking for is a heart that is completely His. The promise is clear. If our heart is right, the strong support will appear. And friends, as God continues to blow into the sails of good ship Moody, our vision may be too small, not too big.

Thank you for blessing me with your presence this morning. And may God continue to bless the school that D.L. Moody founded.