

**The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries,
Union Theological Seminary, New York**

Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 12

Finding Aid for

Laymen's Missionary Movement Records, 1906 – 1956



Laymen's Convention, 1916. Credit to MRL 12: Laymen's Missionary Movement Records, box 2, folder 10, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Finding Aid prepared by: Brigette C. Kamsler, April 2013
With financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation

Summary Information

Creator: Laymen's Missionary Movement
Title: Laymen's Missionary Movement Records
Inclusive dates: 1906-1956
Bulk dates: 1906-1916
Abstract: Laymen's Missionary Movement (LMM) originated in 1906, focused on helping churches with foreign missions. Collection includes conference records, correspondence, minutes, campaign material, and pamphlets.
Size: 4 boxes, 1.75 linear feet
Storage: Onsite storage
Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Email: burkearchives@library.columbia.edu

Administrative Information

- Provenance:** Originally part of the independent Missionary Research Library, these records were moved with the MRL to the Brown Memorial Tower of Union Theological Seminary in 1929. In 1976 the records were accessioned to the Burke Library archives with the closure of the MRL.
- Access:** Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to burkearchives@library.columbia.edu, or by postal mail to The Burke Library address on page 1, as far in advance as possible. Burke Library staff is available for inquiries or to request a consultation on archival or special collections research.
- Access Restrictions:** The collection is unrestricted to readers. Certain materials, however, are in a fragile condition, and this may necessitate restriction in handling and copying.
- Preferred Citation:** Item description, MRL 12: Laymen's Missionary Movement Records, box # and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

History

The Laymen's Missionary Movement (LMM) originated in 1906 at a New York Haystack Prayer Meeting. John B. Sleman and a group of seventy-five laymen proposed "a campaign of education among laymen to interest them more largely in the cause of missions." The focus of LMM was not to send out missionaries or fund missions specifically, but to help churches with their foreign missions. Working through existing staff, the LMM assisted seventeen Christian denominations.

The organization was specifically for men. Bartlotti writes:

By publishing charts, books, tracts, and monthly magazines, and encouraging laymen to visit the foreign field, the LMM confronted the lethargy and missiological illiteracy of the churches. Challenging Christians with the discrepancy between money spent by the churches at home and the comparatively small amount given to missions, the LMM set forth, with sanctified business sense, financial policy guidelines to increase the mission giving of their churches...

Soon after inception, member Jay Schieffelin was sent to Great Britain to establish a sister movement. Other members of note include J. Campbell White and Samuel Capen. John R. Mott, Robert E. Speer and other religious leaders comprised the Executive Committee, which sought broader geographical and social representation in the General Committee. The Executive Committee established regional offices in seven major cities in 1911.

The LMM was active in sponsoring hundreds of congresses, campaigns and conventions. Rabe states that the "first coordinated drive was the National Missionary Campaign in which seventy-five separate conventions were held..." An official pamphlet states:

A single meeting has the great disadvantage that there is insufficient time for detailed consideration and discussion of even a part of such a vast subject as the

CONFERENCES. world-wide missionary enterprise. It is to give such further time that Conferences are of special value. They may be classified broadly in three types:—

- (a) The National Conference for laymen from the whole country.
- (b) The Sectional Conference for laymen of one class or profession to study that aspect of missions which is closely connected with their section of national life.
- (c) The Local Conference for laymen of one district, irrespective of denominations or class.

A Group In Being: National Laymen's Missionary Movement, page 6.

The LMM, along with the Foreign Missions Conference of North America (FMCNA) and the Home Missions Council of the United States, organized and directed United Missionary Campaigns from 1913-1915. LMM also organized National Missionary Campaigns, which held Conventions throughout the United States.

The movement quickly ran its course during wartime, and by 1919 the national campaign was absorbed into the Interchurch World Movement. During the Second World War, descendants of those originally in the LMM founded a new Laymen's Movement for a Christian World.

Sources:

From the records themselves and the following:

Bartlotti, Len. "A Call for a Mission Renewal Movement." *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1984), 37-53.

National Laymen's Missionary Movement. *A Group in Being*. London: John Corah and Son, [19??].

National Laymen's Missionary Movement. *The National Laymen's Missionary Movement: What It Is and What It Aims At*. London: National Laymen's Missionary Movement, 1923.

Rabe, Valentin H. *The Home Base of American China Missions, 1880-1920*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978.

Collection Scope and Content Note

The collection is organized in four sections: Minutes; Congresses, Conventions, Conferences, Campaigns; Laymen's Movement for World Christianity, and General. The bulk of material dates to the original inception of the organization on the national scale.

The minutes date to the earliest meetings of the Movement. Documents lay out the basis for membership, what membership involves, and elected executive committee members. Some of the material in this section includes full minutes, others only extracts. Select folders include more records than minutes, including but not limited to reports, agendas, and histories. These are noted on the folder. The LMM was active in sponsoring hundreds of congresses, campaigns

and conventions. National and United Missionary Campaigns are included in the collection, as well as other conventions that were attended by LMM members.

During the Second World War, descendants of those originally in the LMM founded a new Laymen's Movement for a Christian World, also called the Laymen's Movement for World Christianity. Represented in this and the general series are records from regional offices which continued to thrive. Legal documents such as an Articles of Amendment, a certificate, and a commendation are offered.

Processing

Metal clips and staples were removed from select materials and folded items were flattened. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Acidic items were separated from one another by interleaving with acid-free paper as needed.

Further Sources

Burke Library offers other collections which relate to the topics and people depicted in this collection. John R. Mott, John Franklin Goucher, the Foreign Missions Conference of North America and the Laymen's Foreign Mission Inquiry are just some of the people and topics. These and more records are located in the MRL12: Ecumenical/World series of the Missionary Research Library Record Group. More information on available collections can be found online: <http://library.columbia.edu/indiv/burke/archives.html>.

The Burke Library offers several volumes of periodicals published by the Laymen's Movement for a Christian World, and other pamphlets and published material regarding the LMM. These can be identified online by searching the Columbia Library Catalog, [CLIO](#)

Yale University Divinity School Library has a number of Laymen's related materials, including small collections of Records of the Laymen's Movement for a Christian World, 1948; the British counterpart to the US Laymen's Missionary Movement; and the Presbyterian and Methodist Laymen's Missionary Movements. More information can be found on their website: <http://www.library.yale.edu/div/>.

Contents list

Box	Folder	Contents
		Minutes
1	1-2	Executive Committee, Nov. 1906-Dec. 1907
1	3	Executive and General Committees, 1908
1	4-5	Executive Committee, 1909-1910
1	6-9	Executive and General Committees, 1911-1914
1	10	Secretaries and Executive Officers, May 1910-Dec. 1914
1	11	Executive and General Committees, 1915
1	12	Various Committees, 1911
1	13	Secretarial Council, 1911; 1913
1	14	General, Reports and Agendas [19??]
		Congresses, Conventions, Conferences, Campaigns
2	1	Conference, Report of Commission on Inspection of the Mission Field, Williams Bay, Wisconsin, August 2-6, 1911
2	2	Conference, Proceedings, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, August 2-6, 1911
2	3	National Missionary Congress, Chicago, May 3-6, 1910
2	4	National Missionary Congress, Washington, April 1916
2	5-7	United Missionary Campaign, 1913-1915
2	8	United Missionary Campaign Correspondence, 1913-1914
2	9	National Missionary Campaign, 1915-1916
2	10	Photograph, Laymen's Convention, Houston, Texas, March 1916
2	11	Southern Baptist Convention, 1907; 1924
		Laymen's Movement for World Christianity/Christian World
3	1	Correspondence, 1946-1950
3	2	Bulletin, <i>Christian Laymen</i> , 1948
3	3	Statements and Reports, 1933-1941
		General
4	1	By-Laws, 1951
4	2-3	Correspondence, 1907-1956
4	4	Eastern Area of LMM, 1938-1945
4	5	Legal Documents, 1944-1950
4	6-12	Movement Publications, 1906-1954
4	13	Newspaper Articles, 1907
4	14	Project Ideas, [19??]
4	15	Reports, 1952