



Global Ministries
Celebrating 200 Years in Mission



Photo: General Commission on Archives and History

JOHN R. MOTT

Statesman for Mission and Ecumenism

John Mott was born in Livingston Manor, New York. As an undergraduate at Cornell, he experienced an evangelical conversion. Later, at a summer youth conference, Mott was among the first hundred to sign the Student Volunteer Movement declaration, "It is my purpose, if God permit, to become a foreign missionary."

At Cornell, Mott built the Cornell University Christian Association into the largest YMCA chapter. A one-year assignment after graduation stretched into 44 years of service, including as YMCA general secretary (1915–1931). His travels on behalf of the YMCA, the Student Volunteer Movement, as well as the World's Student Christian Federation, which he helped found in 1895, stimulated the formation of national cooperating bodies and the first links between Orthodox and Protestant Christians and reconciliation among Christians of nations at war.

Mott led planning for the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910. From 1912–1913, he circled the globe encouraging the formation

of national associations of students, youth, and churches and to conduct evangelistic crusades in China and India. Mott formed the International Missionary Council with J.H. Oldham in 1921, promoting global mission cooperation and representative leadership from East and West, and North and South, now a norm for the ecumenical movement. Mott was also a leader in the movements that led to the formation of the World Council of Churches. He was named WCC honorary president at the inaugural assembly in 1948.

Mott lauded the value of international Christian witness for peace and justice. Under his leadership, the American YMCA's National War Work Council enlisted 20,000 women and men for relief work and service to soldiers and prisoners in 1915. He received the American Distinguished Service award for serving on U.S. peace commissions to Mexico and Russia in 1916 and 1917. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1946.

Source: Norman E. Thomas, in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, with modifications.