



Dr. Frank C. Laubach

Dr. Frank Charles Laubach was the leading pioneer of the contemporary adult literacy movement. Through his efforts as an educator, communicator, and organizer, millions of poor and disenfranchised people around the world were empowered to improve their lives through literacy.

From 1915–1970 Dr. Laubach visited 106 countries in an effort to bring literacy to the “silent billion.” He was convinced that the ability to read and write was essential for people to begin to change their lives. Using a basic instructional approach, Dr. Laubach found that even the most impoverished people could gain control of the written and spoken word. His teams of local literacy workers field-tested teaching materials and techniques in the search for effective methods of reducing illiteracy. When he began using newly literate people to teach others through a one-to-one instruction program, that process became known as “Each One Teach One.”

A prolific writer and accomplished speaker, Dr. Laubach wrote 40 books on prayer, literacy, justice, and world peace, and inspired congregations and community groups across the United States with his vision of a better world.

In 1955, Dr. Laubach founded Laubach Literacy International—one of the founding organizations of ProLiteracy Worldwide. His mission to help adults and their families improve their lives by learning reading, writing, math, and problem solving skills is still alive in our organization today. When asked what people could do to help, Dr. Laubach said, “...hunt out the deepest need you can find.” His work left an indelible mark on the twentieth century, and offers a message of hope to future generations as they carry on the work of building a literate, just, and peaceful world.

Education

Princeton University – B.A.
Columbia University – M.A.
Union Theological Seminary
Columbia University – Ph.D.

Literacy Chronology

1909 Awarded McLean Prize by college president Woodrow Wilson for speech on international peace.

1915 Commissioned by Union Congregational Church as a missionary in the Philippines.

1929 Relocated to Lanao to work among troubled Muslim Maranao tribe. “Signal Hill experience” encouraged him to serve them in new ways.

1930 – 1936 Devised literacy program in Maranao language using charts, primers, and a community newspaper. Discovered new readers can teach and that literacy can help impoverished people improve their lives.

1935 – 1954 Carried “Each One Teach One” literacy program to other communities in the Philippines and Southeast Asia, India, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. At Mahatma Gandhi’s request, started Indian national literacy campaign. He was instrumental in the founding of the World Literacy Committee, Committee on World Literacy and Christian Literature, and World Literacy, Inc. (now called World Education).

1955 Founded Laubach Literacy International and Mission Fund, now called ProLiteracy Worldwide. For the next 15 years, continued to make world literacy tours, and to speak out on poverty and illiteracy as impediments to justice and peace.

1967 With son Robert S. Laubach, founded New Readers Press (NRP) to publish instructional materials for growing U.S. literacy movement. NRP now offers over 500 titles in key adult literacy training areas.

1968 The National Association for Literacy Advance (now called ProLiteracy America) was formalized to bring U.S. volunteer literacy efforts together.

Founders
PROLITERACY
Worldwide

