

David Livingstone

~Other Speakers A-F: Short Biographies:

Livingstone was born in 1813 in Blantyre, Scotland, trained as a physician, and ordained as a missionary in 1840. His original plan was to work in China, but he was prevented from doing so by the Opium Wars. He therefore went instead to South Africa and travelled northward into the interior. To his countrymen, he was known chiefly as an explorer, a surveyor, and a scientist; and his expeditions, including the discovery of Victoria Falls in 1855, made him a national hero. In 1866 he began an expedition seeking the headwaters of the Nile. No news of him came back for several years, and it was thought that perhaps he was dead. A publisher sent a correspondent, Henry M Stanley, to find him. Stanley did find him, in 1871, and accompanied his expedition for a while before returning to report. (Stanley's greeting, "Doctor Livingstone, I presume," is the one thing about Livingstone that is remembered by persons who know absolutely nothing else about him.)

Livingstone died 1 May 1873 in Zambia. His body was embalmed and brought to the coast by his African friends, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. However, his heart was removed from the body and buried where he died. His friends said, "His heart was always with the people of Africa. It must remain here."