

**Address of Colonel Roosevelt made at the laying of corner  
stone of school building, Kijabe, B.E.Africa.  
August 4, 1909.**

**Mr. Hurlburt, I think I need hardly say that it is a real and great pleasure to me to be here today, and to take part at the laying of the corner stone of the building, which I believe will be associated with an amount of good which we cannot at present foretell.**

**Of course, in my judgment there must ultimately be a general diffused rudimentary education among these tribes, but there must always be the industrial training that you give, for these natives who show an aptness for it. And as I was saying to one of your number coming up the hill, I am so pleased that your effort should be so largely to teach the teachers and train the trainers among their own fellow-tribesmen and raise them, not to become make-believe or imitation whites, but by going back to their own people and helping to train them along lines which will prevent the reproach, that after all this is only a white man's affair; that the native himself is not having any part in it. The men whom you teach can thus teach others whom you cannot reach, and much more be accomplished by (sic) teaching those teachers than you could accomplish by a general diffused effort. You turn out the leaders who are to take the lead in the uplifting of their own race. I believe that you have accomplished and will accomplish much. Of course, every one must recognize that there cannot be any sudden transformation; and the people at home who back up these missions must understand that the work cannot be done in years, but that it is the work of generations; that infinite patience is necessary; that the progress is necessarily slow, and that they must not be too impatient for immediate results.**

**As I was saying to another of your number the other day (or rather as he was saying to me), the very fact that the progress is step by step, puts it on a much firmer foundation than if it were a purely emotional movement which pointed to results for a few weeks and then faded out. I think that those at home who demand too quick and immediate results are mistaken in their idea of mission work. I think the permanence of your work will be in large part due to the very fact that you have been going step by step, with infinite patience in the face of infinite difficulties. But fortunately, to this audience I need not say, that broad, cool-headed sanity and acceptance of facts are as important factors in achieving success as the most disinterested enthusiasm.**

**Mr. Hurlburt, as you were saying when I was here last, the men who can do best here are the men who can work with their hands; who, when they preach to these people how they ought to work, can themselves show them by example, what can be done. And I very earnestly hope, that in sending out missionaries, our people at home will refuse to accept those who are lacking in this all-sufficient requisite; otherwise you will be in danger of having assistants who will cause you more trouble than they will give you help.**

**It is our plain duty, Mr Hurlburt, I mean that it is the duty of all white men who occupy positions in the tropics, whether it is in the Phillipines (sic) or British East Africa or any place else, to try to help the backward race; we are not fit to be leaders if we do not do that; and the part the missionaries play in the movement, is of the very highest importance. I want to see the settler, the government official and the missionary work hand in hand, each recognising the difficulties in the other's position. It is a mighty easy thing for us to recognise the difficulties in our position, but we must also recognize those in the positions of others.**

**I know that your work among the natives is your primary object, but I am particularly pleased, Miss Hope, to be here today because the erection of this building symbolizes, not only that you are working for the natives but for the settler's children and the children of your own missionaries.**

**When I was traveling thru the country, I was interested in coming to two or three houses where they spoke of this school an (sic) the only possible place for having their children trained; and it is a fine thing to have the ocular demonstration of his appreciation of a duty toward the white settler, no less than his duty toward the natives round about him. The missionary should, of course, strive constantly for justice and fair treatment for the natives, but he should no less make it his constant endeavor to be of use to the settler. Much can be done thru the school and I am happy to say it is evident, much can be done thru the medical work also.**

**Now, this may be carrying coals to New Castle, but whenever you get a chance, I do hope you will establish a little church building where there is a group of settlers. I was struck on more than one occasion by having some settler's wife say to me, how much it would mean if they could have a little church building and have an occasional visit by some missionary who could come for possibly only one Sunday, or for a couple of Sundays each month. I know that where the settlers are so scattered this represents a matter very difficult at the monent (sic) but I hope you will keep it in mind: it would mean so much in the lives of the men and especially in the lives of the women on the farms round about. Settlers sometimes have a hard time and I feel pretty sympathetic.**

**I earnestly wish you well in your work; all missionaries who do honest, practical work, whatever their creed, are entitled to the heartiest sympathy and support and it will be a particular pleasure to me when I go back to my own country, to report what is being accomplished by this Interdenominational Mission.**

**SOURCE**

<http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/exhibits/ohistory/oral18a.htm>