



YOUTH FOR CHRIST
INTERNATIONAL

CELEBRATING

77 YEARS AND BEYOND – SINCE 1944

Contents

History of Youth Ministry	2
Pre-YFC Days	3
The Official Launch of Youth for Christ in 1944	9
Billy Graham Hired Full-Time	16
Soldier Field Rally and the First Winona Convention	21
Youth for Christ Expands Overseas	26
More Growth in the U.S.	33
Wildfire Expansion Worldwide Began Under President Bob Cook	36
Billy Graham's Crisis of Faith	39
Emphasis on World-Wide Revival in the Post World War 2 Era	41
New Ministry Methods and Expansion in the Early 1950s	43
YFC's 10th Anniversary in 1954	46
Consolidation and Innovation 1957-68	49
Sam Wolgemuth Becomes President	54
YFCI and YFC USA Split	57
YFC USA Continues Influencing the Worldwide Ministry	60
The Stabilization and Growth of YFC International	66
Leadership Crisis in YFCI	71
Growth of YFCI Following the Crisis	74
Geordon Rendle Becomes President in March, 2013	79
Dave Brereton as YFCI Director	82
The 2019 Annual Report: Serving the Kingdom	86
COVID-19 Strikes the World Hard in March, 2020	93
Some Very Innovative Nations With Ministry During Covid-19	95
GA 2020 Postponed Until September 2022	97
The Future of Youth Ministry	99
Great Memories, but Even Greater Dreams	101
Parade of Nations	103

Introduction

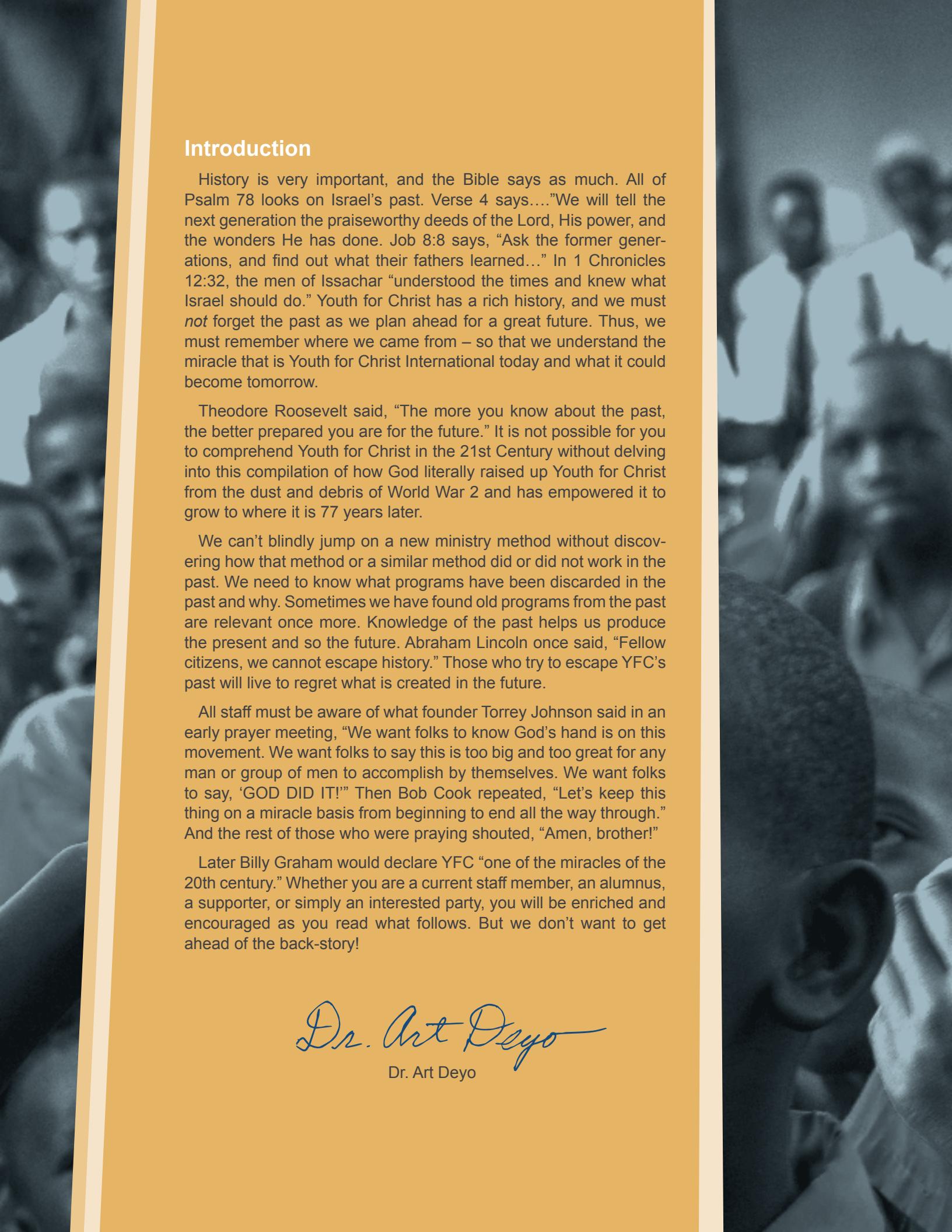
History is very important, and the Bible says as much. All of Psalm 78 looks on Israel's past. Verse 4 says...."We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power, and the wonders He has done. Job 8:8 says, "Ask the former generations, and find out what their fathers learned..." In 1 Chronicles 12:32, the men of Issachar "understood the times and knew what Israel should do." Youth for Christ has a rich history, and we must *not* forget the past as we plan ahead for a great future. Thus, we must remember where we came from – so that we understand the miracle that is Youth for Christ International today and what it could become tomorrow.

Theodore Roosevelt said, "The more you know about the past, the better prepared you are for the future." It is not possible for you to comprehend Youth for Christ in the 21st Century without delving into this compilation of how God literally raised up Youth for Christ from the dust and debris of World War 2 and has empowered it to grow to where it is 77 years later.

We can't blindly jump on a new ministry method without discovering how that method or a similar method did or did not work in the past. We need to know what programs have been discarded in the past and why. Sometimes we have found old programs from the past are relevant once more. Knowledge of the past helps us produce the present and so the future. Abraham Lincoln once said, "Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history." Those who try to escape YFC's past will live to regret what is created in the future.

All staff must be aware of what founder Torrey Johnson said in an early prayer meeting, "We want folks to know God's hand is on this movement. We want folks to say this is too big and too great for any man or group of men to accomplish by themselves. We want folks to say, 'GOD DID IT!'" Then Bob Cook repeated, "Let's keep this thing on a miracle basis from beginning to end all the way through." And the rest of those who were praying shouted, "Amen, brother!"

Later Billy Graham would declare YFC "one of the miracles of the 20th century." Whether you are a current staff member, an alumnus, a supporter, or simply an interested party, you will be enriched and encouraged as you read what follows. But we don't want to get ahead of the back-story!



Dr. Art Deyo

Dr. Art Deyo



History of Youth Ministry

The beginnings of Protestant youth ministry in the United States occurred in the middle of the 19th century in the wake of the industrial revolution. Churches took note of all the young men who moved into central urban areas to work in factories. Laypersons who noticed these young adults working six days a week and gallivanting about town on Sundays, aspired to educate them. Thus, churches brought older children and teenagers into classrooms called Sunday Schools to teach them how to read the Bible. Many of these were unchurched, so a secondary effect was that the students would realize through biblical passages that they were sinners in need of forgiveness.

Eventually churches opened up Sunday School to church members, unchurched children, and teens alike. Teachers encouraged their students to bring their friends along, and the movement gained momentum. Laypersons would often work independently, neither subjecting themselves to congregational scrutiny nor receiving church funding. This fostered the development of interdenominational teaching programs and, eventually, faith-based organizations devoted to youth such as the YMCA, founded by George Williams in 1844 in London, and YWCA, founded in Boston and New York in the 1950s by women such as Mrs. Marshall Roberts and Lucretia Boyd.

Later **Francis Edward Clark** began the Christian Endeavor Society in Portland, Maine, at the Williston Congregational Church in 1881. Clark wanted to change the view of young people in churches from “pitchers waiting to be filled” to “young adults responsible for larger service in the church of Christ.” This revolutionized youth ministry and became extremely popular in its first years of operation. By 1887 there were 700 societies with over 50,000 members spread over 33 states. The structure of Christian Endeavor established a much imitated pattern: weekly meetings for prayer, devotions, education, and recreation in local churches, mainly in the so-called Protestant mainline churches such as the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational.

This caused some church denominations to become fearful that they would lose all their young people to these societies. So mainstream denominations began their own youth organizations. Some examples are the Methodist Church’s Epworth League or the Lutheran’s Luther League. These new church-based organizations, as well as the interdenominational ones already in existence, flourished, increasing in attendance and in international outreach.

After World War One, the focus of many youth ministries began to shift from outreach and conversion to education and understanding of faith. It was during this time that teenagers began to think theologically as well as gain a social awareness of the world around them. From the 1930s to the 1960s the churches emphasized fellowship and theological understanding.

Before 1940 it was the pastor’s job to do everything in the church, including youth fellowships. During the late 1940s there was some introduction of church youth committees. Youth were returning from the war with great life-experience, and they could not be kept out of leadership in the church just because they were in their twenties.

Youth for Christ was one of the earliest non-denominational youth ministries in the country, but it was quickly followed by others such as Campus Crusade for Christ, Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Youth Specialties, Group Publishing, and many others.



Francis Edward Clark

Pre-YFC Days

Back in 1904 two young Irishmen, Frederick and Arthur Wood, heard and answered the call of God to step out in faith as evangelists. For seven years God used them mightily in Great Britain in churches and campaigns. Since they noticed most of their converts were young people, they felt a growing burden for youth. They sensed that they should specialize in working with young life. Traveling one day on a train, one of them traced on the misty window the letters Y.L.C. as they discussed the possibility of a Young Life Campaign. A group of pastors encouraged them to form an advisory council and to launch a series of young life campaigns all over Great Britain. This led to The National Young Life Campaign being organized.

In 1937 Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Wood came to the United States and toured the country in a series of meetings sponsored by the Christian Youth Campaign of America, directed by Lloyd Bryant. On their tour they met young, handsome, fiery **Jim Rayburn** in Dallas, Texas. In 1939 Jim started the Gainesville, Texas chapter of the Miracle Book Club for high school students. The book club became Young Life on October 16, 1941. Rayburn moved the Young Life headquarters to Colorado Springs in 1946. Young Life differed from Youth for Christ in that they did not have Saturday or evening night rallies. They got the students together in groups and reached them for Christ in that way.

The Great Depression was the worst economic downturn in the history of the industrialized world. It began after the U. S. stock market crash of October, 1929, and sent Wall Street into a panic, wiping out millions of investors. Its timing varied across the world. In most countries it started in 1929 and lasted until the late 1930s.

During the Great Depression, God began stirring the world of youth even more than before. One of the first youth rally directors in America was that same fiery Lloyd Bryant, who helped Young Life get started. Bryant had been born and reared in the slums of Boston and had a vision of reaching the youth of America who had no religious connections. The result was the Christian Youth Campaign of America. He conducted his first Christian youth broadcast in 1929, but there was no definite weekly program until he went into Times Square in the heart of Manhattan using the Christian Missionary Alliance Tabernacle. From 1932 to 1939 he conducted approximately 500 rallies, meeting not on Saturday, but on Monday and Tuesday nights. He had many well-known speakers, and in 1936 their meetings drew as many as 35,000, with 1,600 as the largest crowd. Later he toured America extensively, traveling 14,000 miles. He formed a national organization in 1935 called "The Association of Christian Youth in America."

Lloyd Bryant's organization did not grow to the extent that Youth for Christ later did, but it can be said that the Youth for Christ movement had many of its roots in his plans. Word of Life leader, Jack Wyrtzen, was once a member of one of Bryant's Gospel teams.

One of the men who was used to reach young people in America was **Percy Crawford**. One writer



Jim Rayburn



Percy Crawford and his children



described him as "the man who has in a great way been responsible for Youth for Christ in America." In 1931 Crawford started the Young People's Church of the Air radio program, which originated in Philadelphia every Sunday afternoon. After a Sunday broadcast, he would receive as many as three-hundred letters telling of people making decisions for Christ as a result of hearing him over the air. Crawford also headed-up the Pinebrook Bible Camp, Kings College, and the Pinebrook Book Club. He was known as one of the top youth speakers in the land. He was the main speaker for the huge Soldier Field YFC rally in 1945, and he also gave the message at the YFC Hollywood Bowl meeting in 1946 with 20,000 people.



Wyeth Willard

Others also jumped on-board early on and organized parachurch youth ministries. In April 1930 a group of eight or ten young people met at the Metropolitan Memorial Church in Washington, D.C., but the number grew rapidly. Such men as Jack Wyrtzen, Glenn Wagner, Clifford Lewis, James E. Bennett, and Phil Saint spoke at the Tuesday night meetings. The aim of the "Christian Youth Fellowship" was to lead unsaved young people to Christ and to help those who were saved to live lives of deeper devotion. It continued for twelve years until 1942, under the direction of Eugene Scheele.

In the 1930s a group in the Evangelical Free Church in Brooklyn, New York, was holding Saturday night meetings. The Plymouth Brethren also held Saturday night meetings to win the unsaved. In Jamestown, New York, a home Bible study group called itself "Youth for Christ." **Wyeth Willard**, founder and director of the Good News and Good Cheer boys and girls camp, printed and used millions of attractive stamps in 1936 with the banner "Youth for Christ" across the top.

In 1934 a group of young people meeting in Brantford, Ontario, called themselves Brantford Youth for Christ. A young Australian, Paul Guinness, came to Canada with a burning desire to start a Christian youth movement in the high schools and colleges. After speaking in Brantford, his vision was imparted to the hearts of Brantford young people. Their group grew to the point that they rented a theater with crowds reaching up to 500. Souls were converted regularly. When a Christian lady in Brantford decided to finance a radio program, they did 207 consecutive radio broadcasts. By 1937 **Evon Hedley** and John Stewart became involved, engaging in the effort to reach Canadian Youth for Christ.

Theodore Elsner began the Philadelphia Youth Center in 1933. Helped by **Walter Smyth**, the group started with only fourteen but the number soon reached 1000. In addition to the work at the center, a regular meeting was held at which young people from all over the city gathered for inspiration, singspiration, and a message. Smyth later directed Youth for Christ in Philadelphia.

In 1934 Oscar Gillan in southern California felt a burden for young people in that area. His broadcasts on the radio were called the Voice of Christian Youth. Later Gospel teams were formed which conducted meetings in various places. Once a month a great rally was held



Evon Headley



Walter Smyth

with such men as Irwin Moon, Charles E. Fuller, and Clifford E. Lewis speaking. In 1938 Gillan moved east to Detroit and initiated the "Voice of Christian Youth," which was carried on by young men and women occupied during the day with school and secular employment, yet God marvelously blessed them over the years. Their motto was "Youth for Christ."

Soon after Gillan organized Voice of Christian Youth (V.C.Y.), he felt led to accept a pastorate in Vancouver, British Columbia. Milton Strong took over, and the Christian Business Men's Committee also helped out in Detroit. In 1943 V.C.Y. needed a larger venue and went to the beautiful Art Institute Building. They soon outgrew that, so the new director, Ed Darling, a converted night club entertainer, helped them remodel the old Wilson Theater for \$85,000. They had the distinction of being one of the oldest YFC groups in the world. And Oscar Gillan went on to organize the Voice of Christian Youth in Vancouver.

God was doing something very profound. From 1939 on, the grueling years of World War 2 took their toll. The world was dark and ready for a change. God was causing pastors all over the world to see the need to reach unchurched youth, not just adults, with the Gospel.

One such unchurched youth was **Jack Wyrtzen**, a converted dance band trombonist. In 1940 Jack launched a radio broadcast in Manhattan called the "Word of Life Hour." He linked it with Bryant's rallies on Times Square. Jack was born in Brooklyn, and his parents were Universalists. Before he was old enough to shave, he learned how to smoke, cuss, and drink. He could run the hundred-yard dash in ten seconds.

When his dad lost his job in a glass factory during the depression, Jack quit high school and took a job as an insurance salesman. He supplemented his income by playing in a dance band for sororities and fraternities. After his bosom friend, George Shilling, was converted in the Calvary Baptist Church in New York City, Shilling then gave Wyrtzen a Gospel of John, which he promptly tore up. So Shilling gave him another one and asked him to play his trombone at a Gospel service. After hearing the testimonies and the message, he went home and quietly knelt by his bed and accepted Christ as his Savior. From that night on Jack Wyrtzen was a new man.



Jack Wyrtzen



"Three rallies in Madison Square Garden drew 67,000 people with 3,800 signing cards indicating they accepted Christ or wanted to dedicate their lives to his service."

Jack soon met Percy Crawford who advised him to go into youth evangelism with the radio as his pulpit. His first rally was broadcast on October 25, 1941. George Beverly Shea teamed up with Jack, and by 1944 they had to move to Carnegie Hall. On April 1, 1944 they packed Madison Square Garden in New York City with more than 20,000 people while 10,000 more were turned away. Three rallies in **Madison Square Garden** drew 67,000 people with 3800 signing cards indicating they accepted Christ or wanted to dedicate their lives to his service. It was the middle of the war, and many people were in desperate need of hope.

In May 1943 **Roger Malsbary**, a young pastor of the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church, organized a rally in Danville, Indiana that he called "Youth for Christ." Willard Munson was his organist. Later he moved the rallies to the English Theater in downtown Indianapolis. **Torrey Johnson** spoke at one of Malsbary's June rallies with about 700 present. Afterward Torrey thought that Roger, with a budget of \$600, would never make it in the heat of July and August. But he said, "God rebuked our unbelief and during those summer months YFC went forward increasingly and has flourished ever since."

A former All-American football star and President of the Washington Bible Institute, Glenn Wagner felt a burden for thousands of servicemen and other youth who thronged the streets of Washington, D.C. He organized "The Christian Youth and Servicemen's Campaign," in which Saturday night youth rallies were the backbone of the ministry. He had a radio broadcast, a free canteen for servicemen and women, and a program that would gain and hold the interest of young people.

Dick Harvey spoke in Roger Malsbary's rally right after Torrey did, and the following February 1944 Dick began Saturday night Youth for Christ rallies in the Municipal Auditorium in St. Louis, Missouri, with over 1000 people attending. It is not an overstatement to say that God started the youth evangelism movement that became Youth for Christ.

After that February rally Dick Harvey was in Chicago for the Moody Founders Week Conference. Torrey met with him and Dick shared that he was sinking "everything I have into it. If Greater St. Louis Youth for Christ fails, people will lose confidence in me, and I will have to start somewhere else, but I can't get away from this thing. God wants this youth movement for St. Louis. I have laid the whole matter out before Mrs. Harvey; she is with me, and we are putting every cent that we have into the venture. We have rented Kiel Auditorium, the civic auditorium of St. Louis. It has three halls, one seating 700, one 4000, and one seating 15,000, and we will not be satisfied until the largest one is filled." Dick's budget was \$600 per week, and two months



Roger Malsbary



Torrey Johnson



George M. Wilson

later he reported that, "The crowds are running well over 2000, souls are being saved, and every need is being met."

On April 27, 1944, **George Wilson**, who had attended the rally in St. Louis, worked with Mervin Rosell and other youth leaders to organize a city-wide Minneapolis Youth for Christ Singspiration. The church was so packed that pastor Torrey Johnson, who came to observe, had to stand for the entire service. Later in October a rally with R. G. LeTourneau speaking, drew 7500 people, and Minneapolis YFC was off and running. In June 1946 Billy Graham spoke at a rally at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds to 30,000 people and Minneapolis YFC became the largest regular Saturday night rally in the world, averaging 10,000 each week.

Torrey Johnson, pastor of Chicago's Midwest Bible Church, had attended the youth rallies in Indianapolis, St. Louis, and Minneapolis and determined to start a similar program in Chicago. God seemed to be saying to him, "If I can bless a young insurance clerk in New York, a former athlete in Washington D.C., a group of young people not especially trained for Christian work in Detroit, and bring a young pastor from a nearby village into Indianapolis, don't you think I am sufficient for Chicago?" Lacy Hall and George Beverly Shea had been urging him to do something for the hundreds of thousands of soldiers stationed in the Chicago area and spending their weekends aimlessly wandering its downtown streets. They and a few friends urged Torrey to take the leadership of a Chicago YFC rally. The apostle Paul had said, "Not many mighty – but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise."



The Official Launch of Youth for Christ in 1944

Right after that prayer meeting alluded to in the introduction, on April 17, 1944, Torrey Johnson made a midnight call to **Doug Fisher** in Columbus, Ohio, and hired him as the rally organist. Doug hung up the phone and shouted gleefully to his wife, Betty, "Youth for Christ is going ahead, and I'm to begin two weeks from tomorrow!"

Four weeks before the opening day of Chicagoland Youth for Christ on April 29, the prospects of finding a good auditorium in downtown Chicago looked very grim. Torrey turned to Einar Christianson and said, "Einar, there is the telephone. Call up anywhere you can and see what you can find out about an auditorium. We seem to be getting nowhere." After several hours, he returned to the office, and Doug Fisher, **Bob Cook**, and Einar all chimed in together, saying, "We've got the place! It's Orchestra Hall – 21 weeks for \$5000." Torrey replied, "You fellows are crazy. Orchestra Hall seats 3000, and we want a place seating about 1000. And \$5000 – who's going to pay for it? We haven't a dime between us!"



At the same time they heard a still small voice of the Holy Spirit saying, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" They replied, "No, nothing is too hard for Him." That evening they had dinner with "Pop" Cook, Bob Cook's father. He stated, "If you had a millionaire behind you, you would be happy, but you have more than a millionaire, you have God! I think you fellows need to determine first whether God wants this

job done, and then whether He wants you to do it. If you feel that God wants the job done and that He wants you to do it, you have nothing to worry about. He will see you through and meet your every need." The following Monday morning they signed the contract for 21 weeks in **Orchestra Hall**. Torrey said, "It was the place where Chicagoland Youth for Christ began, as a miracle of God's grace and power, far beyond the faith or plan of any one man or group of men."



Doug Fisher at Organ

The last thing that was done before the first rally on May 27, 1944, ten days before D-Day (when the Germans were attacked on the beaches of Normandy, France), was to hold a prayer huddle in the basement of Orchestra Hall. Those most interested attended, including most of those on the committee of recommendation. Finally the time came to march onto the platform and, with trepidation, find out how many people were in the hall. They had hoped the main floor would be filled with 1000, but God provided more than two thousand!

Billy Graham was the speaker that night. Billy, a pastor at the 100-member Village Church in Western Springs, Illinois, had begun speaking at YFC rallies the month before, but the Orchestra Hall rally had the largest audience Billy had every spoken to. He later said he was very nervous with the worst case of stage fright in his life. He paced back and forth backstage before the service, biting his nails and fearing that no one would show up to hear him or that he would fail in front of a large crowd. But when he began to speak, fear departed and fire roared. When he gave the invitation, 42 responded to the Gospel.



YFC Rally, Orchestra Hall 1944



Bob Cook Preaching Intensely

They packed that hall out every Saturday night for 21 weeks, averaging 2500 people, until the Chicago Symphony reclaimed the hall for its fall season. Preachers that summer included Harry Ironside, Jim Rayburn, Walter Wilson, Wendell Loveless, V. R. Edman, and R. G. LeTourneau. On numerous occasions the hall was full and hundreds had to be turned away. In all of the meetings scores of young people came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and hundreds were encouraged and inspired to go out and serve Christ as never before.

On one particular Saturday two Navajo Indian boys came into the meeting and surrendered completely to Christ. A Japanese girl, who supposed that when she was baptized she had become a Christian, saw her need of Christ and accepted Him as her Savior. A young sailor and his wife, who had been backsliders, were restored to Jesus Christ, and a large company of civilian young fellows and girls, as well as servicemen, gave their hearts to Jesus Christ.

A Sunday School teacher had a class of ten boys who lived in a home for delinquents. Four of them had been professing Christians, but six were unsaved. On two successive Saturday nights all ten came all out for the Lord Jesus Christ, four to be restored and six others to accept Him as their personal Savior. After a Christian nurse stepped out and yielded herself completely to Jesus, she organized a class for instruction in soul-winning among her friends at the hospital.

Torrey Johnson reported that one day he got a call in his office. "I have to see Torrey Johnson. I am not saved. I have been under conviction since last Saturday, and I can't sleep. I'll go crazy if I am not saved soon." An appointment was made for her to see Torrey, but he was unable to keep the appointment. Without telling those in the office what was on her heart, she went sorrowfully on her way. She called again the next day. "This thing is getting worse and worse. I am so under conviction! I have thought I was a Christian, but after last Saturday, I know I am not. I have to be saved!" That day she was willing to talk with anyone who could help her, so she talked with Bob Cook over the phone, and he led that 15-year-old girl to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.



YOUTH FOR CHRIST INTERNATIONAL



Torrey Johnson, in his mid-30's, leads the greatest youth revival the world has ever seen

They had called it quits! Married during the war, two young people, whom we'll call Dick and Jane, decided that their marriage had been a mistake. They separated. Jane stayed in Chicago, and Dick became a United States Navy soldier. Life for Jane went from bad to worse, and it wasn't long before she was picking up servicemen on Chicago's Michigan Avenue. One night she was resting on a park bench directly across from Orchestra Hall. She heard 3000 young people singing lustily. The music delighted her and touched her heart. She found her way into the Hall and sat in the only vacant seat in the balcony. God used every part of that service to impress her sin-sick heart with the need of a Savior. When the invitation was given, she went forward and became a new creature in Christ Jesus!



Moody Bible Institute

But on that very same night Dick had gone to the Saturday night Jubilee at the Church of the Open Door. He was far from happy, as he thought constantly of Jane and felt that he was deeply in love with her. The speaker's message that night was direct and to the point. At the invitation someone tapped him on the shoulder and asked if he was interested in becoming a Christian. He walked down that aisle with a new friend who had the privilege of leading him to Christ. As a result, two young people, two-thousand miles apart, sat down and wrote each other, and were joyfully amazed when each received the other's letter. Needless to say, there was a permanent, happy reunion.

In the book *Reaching Youth for Christ* by Torrey Johnson and Bob Cook, Chapter 8 consists of five messages given at Orchestra Hall that summer "that were representative of the kind that 'got results.' The first one was called "Four Looks at Christ" by Wendell P. Loveless, Director of the Radio Department at **Moody Bible Institute**. He said Christ, absolutely necessary; Christ, instantly accessible; Christ, exclusively sufficient; and Christ, perennially satisfying.

Another of the messages was "Ye Must Be Born Again" by Dr. Archer Anderson, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Duluth, Minnesota. Another was Bob Cook's "Three Things That Need to be Settled." Those three were the authority of God's Word, the reality of the message of the cross, and the Lordship and leadership of the Holy Spirit. Another message was by Dr. Harry Rimmer, an author and lecturer from Los Angeles. They were: creation, generation, adoption, regeneration, and consummation.



Since they had to leave Orchestra Hall that fall to make way for the Chicago Symphony, they considered having a climactic rally in the 30,000-seat Chicago Stadium. But when trying to book the stadium, Torrey Johnson faced his "doubters." The officials at the stadium thought Torrey "a bit crazy" for wanting every available seat put into the stadium for the rally. They told him that 12,000 to 15,000 people was his limit. Even the city streetcar and bus systems officials believed Torrey and tribe were talking too big when they asked the transit officials to plan for 30,000 people.

On October 21, 1944, the Victory Rally was held in the **Chicago Stadium**, the largest indoor stadium in America. Twenty minutes before the program started, the stadium was filled. Between five and ten thousand people were turned away. The Salvation Army provided a band, and T. J. Bittikofer was asked to direct the 2500-voice Youth Choir. World champion indoor miler, Gil Dodds testified, Bev Shea and Rose Arzomanian sang, Merv Rosell preached, and hundreds received Christ. The meeting drew the attention of people the world around. It brought a definite challenge to "go thou and do likewise" to many who attended. The deluge of mail received became too much for the locals to handle. The head usher, Andy Frain, commented, "I was really astonished at seeing the huge crowd that night. In my seventeen years of handling crowds I have yet to find a more orderly and courteous crowd than attended this affair. Because of these courtesies a job which ordinarily would have been a headache developed into a most pleasant experience. This gathering constituted the largest attendance the stadium has ever had – approximately thirty-thousand people. It would please me greatly if all public gatherings were as easy to handle as this one and the people attending such affairs were of the same caliber."



Chicago Stadium Rally

Johnson who was now being called the "Bobby-Sox Evangelist" and "The Second Moody," spent much of his time on the telephone trying to help ministers across the country get still more programs under way. God seemed to be challenging and speaking to leaders in the same way at the same time, giving them the same pattern to follow.

That summer of 1944 inquiries came to Chicagoland YFC about starting YFC in Tampa, Miami, Atlanta, Augusta, Columbus, Toledo, LaCrosse, Milwaukee, Kenosha, Racine, Rockford, Belvidere, Chicago Heights, Gary, Sunnyside, WA, Los Angeles and Bermuda. What started as a spark was rapidly becoming a wildfire! By January, 1945, Hubie Mitchell had started rallies in Los Angeles, and the fire had spread to Kansas City, Grand Rapids, St. Petersburg, Charlotte, Shanghai, Paris, Norfolk,

Following the Chicago Stadium rally, Youth for Christ in Chicago came to the rescue to help handle the correspondence. Prior to this, however, Chicagoland YFC was the hub of a great deal of the expansion work, and Torrey Johnson was the spark plug behind the movement. He and his co-laborers weren't afraid to do what others thought impossible. Thus, the city of Chicago, the entire Middle West, the North American continent, and the world came to know of a spiritual movement among young people that was truly phenomenal.

After that they moved into the 3,740-seat Moody Church where crowds grew so large that Johnson often scheduled two identical programs back to back. By now the YFC bonfire was completely out of control! Similar meetings were occurring in over 200 other cities. Torrey

Minneapolis, Oklahoma City, Rio de Janeiro, Manila, Tokyo, Frankfurt, London, Seoul, Caracas, and many others.

On September 9, 1944, "Youth for Christ" started in **Boston with an estimated 5,000 on the esplanade** in front of Hatch Memorial Shell to launch New England Youth for Christ. Moving later into Dr. Harold Ockenga's Park Street Church, the rallies filled the auditorium to capacity. John Huffman, director of the movement, announced that hundreds who had come out to hear Carlton Booth and Dr. Howard Ferrin were turned away. A month or two later Huffman went to Havana, Cuba, to help American servicemen with Havana Youth for Christ.

Also, in the fall of 1944 Youth for Christ started in Winnipeg, Canada under the direction of Watson Argue. It was backed by thirty churches and the Christian Businessmen's Committee. On June 9, 1945, 6,500 young people filled the Amphitheater Rink to celebrate the first anniversary of the launch. Torrey Johnson spoke, the Holy Spirit worked, and many young people came to Christ.

In Los Angeles, we find Hubert Mitchell, a young missionary, recently returned from Sumatra, in charge of a "Saturday Nite Jubilee." Later Hollywood Bowl was obtained, and 18,000 were on hand. After Mitchell left again for the mission field, **David Morken** organized another Hollywood Bowl rally with 20,000 gathered to hear Percy Crawford. Thousands found Christ at those two meetings.

Servicemen in Honolulu, Hawaii, provided the spark to launch Youth for Christ in the McKinley High School Gymnasium, drawing crowds of 2,200. Cornelius Keur, a chaplain's assistant who had worked for WMBI in Chicago, was the director.

Interestingly, that fall of 1944 Torrey Johnson wrote, "It is the passion for souls that is uniting America today. One doubts that there ever will be a highly complex, nationally organized 'Youth for Christ.' Who knows? One thing we do know, however, when we look at what the Holy Spirit is doing in scores of cities today, that Christian young people are already united in a fresh realization that 'now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.'"

Although there were many "Youth for Christ" rallies and activities before Orchestra Hall, that date of May 27, 1944, is the date YFC usually uses as our starting date. Thus, the title of this tome. In May 2021 we will celebrate 77 years of Youth for Christ ministry. God has been so good!

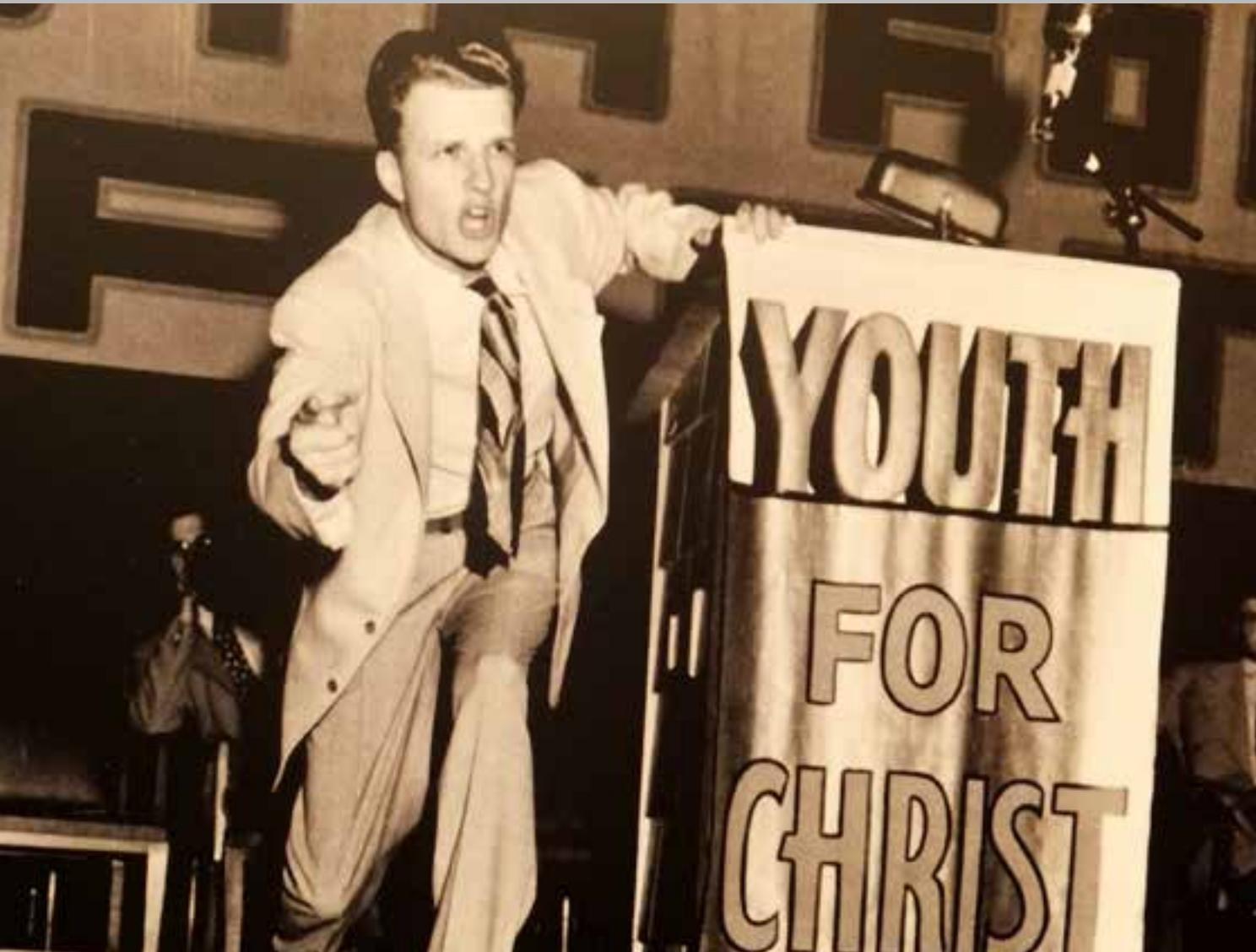
The world has dramatically changed over these past 77 years. The U.S. population in 1944 was 138 million; in 2020 it was 331 million. The youth (10-19) population has nearly doubled since 1944. Average wages in 1944 were \$2,400 per year, and the average house cost \$3,450. The cost of a gallon of gas was 15 cents, a loaf of bread 10 cents, and house rent averaged \$50 per month. What hasn't changed is our passion to see youth receive Christ as their Savior.



5,000 Gather for Boston's Initial YFC Rally, 1944



David Morken



Billy Graham Hired Full-Time

Billy Graham was born on November 7, 1918, four days before the armistice that ended World War 1. He grew up on a dairy farm near Charlotte, North Carolina. He rose at 2:30 every morning and joined his father's workers milking cows. He had twenty cows to milk every morning and night. He learned well and was able to milk a single cow in five minutes. He learned to enjoy his tasks, and the value of hard work remained a priority throughout his life. He was a good student in elementary school, receiving mostly A grades. He loved reading the stories of Robin Hood, Tarzan and The Hardy Boys. He loved baseball and played the game throughout his youth.

By the time **Billy was in high school** he loved speed and adventure, driving his father's Model T. He had several girlfriends and enjoyed holding hands and kissing a lot. In his autobiography, Just As I Am, Billy speaks of a time during his senior year of high school where one of the girls coaxed him into a dark classroom and begged him to make love to her. He attributes a prayer to God for help to enable him to say no, and then he ran away from the encounter. His upbringing and values had already forged the commitment that he would not have sex until marriage, and he didn't.

In high school Billy admitted he went to church weekly but grudgingly because he was forced to do so by his parents. He thought prayer meetings on his Dad's farm were conducted by fanatics that had talked his Dad into using the place. These prayer meetings led to inviting an evangelist, **Mordecai Ham**, to preach a revival in town. He came in the fall of 1934 for twelve weeks of meetings. At the time Billy said he would never go to hear the man. He wanted nothing to do with anyone called an evangelist!

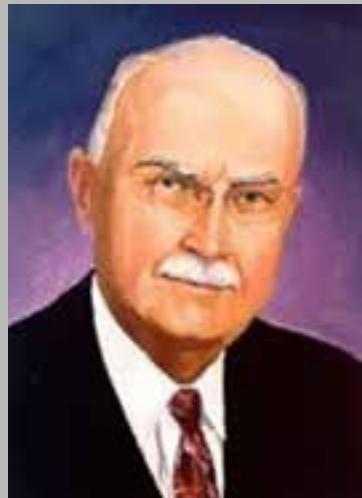
Ham would start verbal fights with powerful business leaders, government officials, educators, and especially the media regarding issues and actions he regarded as against God's desires. When word got back to Billy that Ham was a "fighter," he told a friend he liked "fighters" and went to the revival just to hear the controversial things Ham said. Billy was spellbound by the preacher on the very first night. Those five thousand people were more people than he had ever seen in one place. After that, Billy returned nearly every night for the final two months of the revival.

Billy began feeling increasingly guilty about his own sin while also wanting to know God personally. On November 1, 1934, around Billy's 16th birthday, after evangelist Ham finished his "rampage on sin," he began to speak about God's love, using the text Romans 5:8, "But God demonstrates His love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." This was Billy's "tipping point." He said, "I walked down front as if I had lead weights attached to my feet and stood in front of the platform....I believe that was the moment I made my real commitment to Jesus Christ."

Later that evening Billy remembered how he knelt at his bed of his own volition and thanked God that something had happened to him that night. In the days and weeks that followed he knew he had been truly converted because he suddenly found church meetings and activities to be very interesting. He wanted to read and learn the Bible, and he found himself singing hymns to his cows. With a voice like his, it was probably a miracle the cows kept producing milk!

After high school, he enrolled in Bob Jones College in Cleveland, Tennessee. It was there that

he wondered if God was calling him to be an evangelist. But the downside to the college was that the rules of the school were debilitating and discouraging. The climate of controlled learning wasn't conducive to his nature. There were rules about everything, including a command to snitch on others who were not following the rigid requirements. Billy got sick that first semester, and he was also disciplined for leaving campus without permission in order to preach at a local church. In a meeting with Dr. Jones he confessed his discontent and his thoughts of leaving school. Billy said, "Dr. Jones pronounced me a failure and predicted only more failure ahead. I left his office disillusioned and dejected." When he went home for Christmas break, he knew he didn't want to return to Bob Jones College.



Mordecai Ham



GROWING TALL
At left, Graham, the eldest of four children, with his youngest sister, Jean. At right, Graham at 17 around the time of his high school graduation in 1934 and about a year before

Billy's mother had read about Florida Bible College, and after visiting there during the break, he withdrew from Bob Jones and began at Florida Bible Institute in January, 1937. Billy enjoyed his



new-found freedom to explore and learn, as well as the Florida sunshine. It suited him perfectly. On one occasion, the dean of the institute, **Dr. John Minder**, invited Billy to join him for a Sunday night service at a local Baptist church. Minder had been asked to preach, but after consulting with the pastor, Minder turned the tables on Billy and said he would be the one preaching that day. Billy responded, "I've never preached a formal sermon in front of a church audience." He had four sermons prepared, and he chose one that he hoped would take him 20-30 minutes to deliver. He practiced all day on Sunday, and when that evening came, he preached all four sermons in a total of eight minutes! In spite of such a shaky beginning, before he graduated he was guest preacher at many leading churches. Soon Billy began to wonder if his life calling was to be a preacher. One night he went to a golf course and spread prostrate on the edge of one of the greens. He prayed, "Oh God, if you want me to serve you, I will."

Very early on Billy met a fellow student who was a singer and hoped to be a missionary after graduation. Billy was smitten with Emily Cavanaugh. She liked him too, not only for his good looks but his charisma, energy, and passion for people. Billy actually proposed to Emily by letter during the summer after his first semester at the institute. Emily liked him but felt uncomfortable with the speed of the relationship. She needed more time. A year later she told him it would be better if they didn't date for a while. Billy was heartbroken. That night he poured out his sadness to Dr. Minder, who stayed up with the nineteen-year-old almost the whole night. Later he told his friend, Wendell Phillips, "All the stars have fallen out of my sky. There is nothing to live for. We have broken up."

Later Billy took nighttime walks on the golf course to talk with the Lord. Finally, he said, "Lord, I'll go wherever you want me to go, and I'll preach wherever you want me to preach." Emily Cavanaugh ended up marrying another boy from the Bible Institute name Charles Massey, who became a very successful pastor himself. Billy continued on without her and graduated from Florida Bible on May 13, 1940.

February 1957 YFC Magazine Article



Billy with John Minder, left, and Pastor Cecil Underwood, right, who baptized Billy

Some friends encouraged Billy to round out his education with a liberal arts degree from a Christian liberal arts college. They argued that **Wheaton College** near Chicago was excellent and up to the task. Billy had spent all his life in the south, so Wheaton was a new experience. The college had a strong reputation for scholarly excellence but with a powerful commitment to evangelism of the lost as well as social improvement. Billy worked hard and averaged B+ grades in all his courses the first year. He got involved in a Gospel Team taking music and preaching to various churches. After one year President Edman asked him to take over his duties as pastor of the Gospel Tabernacle in downtown Wheaton.

When I interviewed **Sam Faircloth**, who eventually went to Portugal to start YFC, he told a story about Billy Graham that I found rather humorous. At Wheaton he was taking Greek in the same class as Billy. Sam said every weekend Billy would go out speaking, as he was in great demand, and then would come to class on Monday morning and ask Sam for his notes so he could quickly be ready for the quiz. Billy's heart was in the right place though. He said he and Billy were involved in a prayer group that was praying for revival on campus. They were in one of the guy's dorm rooms with quite a number of students. He said, "Billy wanted to lie flat on the floor to pray, and he prayed 'Lord, all I want to do is win souls to Christ.'" And we know that God certainly answered that prayer in a big way.

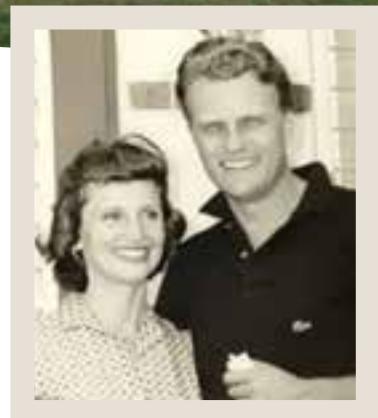
During his first year at Wheaton Billy had another life-altering experience when he met a young woman, **Ruth Bell**, whose family had been missionaries in China. After a month Billy mustered up the courage to ask Ruth out, and they instantly felt God leading them together. After their first date, Ruth returned to her room and prayed, "Lord if you'd let me serve with that man, I'd consider it the greatest privilege of my life." Billy was equally smitten. "I just could not believe that anyone could be so beautiful and so spiritual at one and the same time." They dated and became engaged in 1941. After they both graduated (Billy with a Bachelor's Degree in Anthropology), they were married on August 13, 1943, on the Presbyterian Conference Grounds in Montreat, North Carolina.

Billy recounts this amusing story from their honeymoon, quoted from his autobiography: "The first night of our honeymoon we went to the Battery Park Hotel in Asheville; that cost us \$5 for the night. I couldn't sleep in the bed, so after Ruth fell asleep, I got up quietly, lay down on the floor, and dropped right off. (I had suffered from insomnia all through school, and Chief Whitefeather, who had come through town once and given his Christian testimony, had suggested that I sleep on the floor. He promised that though it would take a couple of weeks to get used to, it would help my problem, and he was right.) The next morning, when Ruth woke up, I was gone....or at least appeared to be gone. It took a few minutes for her to find me on the floor, sleeping like a baby."

After the honeymoon, they moved to Hinsdale, Illinois, where he had been pastoring the 100-member Village Church in Western Springs since January 1943. God had provided the perfect partner for Billy Graham. Ruth's missionary upbringing, strength of character, sense of humor, fervent compassion, and



Sam Faircloth and Billy Graham



Billy and Ruth while Dating



George Beverly Shea

steadfast devotion to God's Word all combined to produce the one of whom Billy said, "Whenever I was asked to name the finest Christian I ever met, I always replied, 'My wife, Ruth.'" When Ruth died in 2007, Billy said, "The song is gone from our home." Until his death in 2018 he resided in the Montreat, North Carolina home they had made together for so many decades – a life that started at Wheaton College.

In December 1943 Billy and **George Beverly Shea** took over Torrey Johnson's radio show called "Songs in the Night" on Moody radio. In March 1944 Billy began broadcasting his regular Sunday morning services on WMBI radio. Billy began speaking at YFC rallies and took the first plane ride of his life to speak at Detroit YFC. Also in March he did a week of preaching services in Columbus, Ohio, and Village Church began complaining about him being gone so much.

In the fall of 1944 Billy was accepted by the army for the chaplaincy and given a commission as a second lieutenant. But as he was preparing to leave for his training, he contracted a severe

case of the mumps (at age 27). He was laid up in bed for six painful weeks. His temperature reached 105 degrees, and he suffered from bouts of delirium, wondering at times if he would even survive. Even after the crisis passed, doctors told him he might never have children. As a result of his extended illness, the army released Billy.

In December 1944 Torrey Johnson invited Billy to go fishing off the coast of Florida. It was there that he asked Billy to join Youth for Christ full-time. He wanted Billy to be YFC's national organizer and one of its lead preachers. With compelling conviction and persuasiveness, Johnson convinced Billy that if they could sweep young people into a great tide of revival, they could place Evangelical Christianity at the heart of a movement to revitalize American culture. Torrey told him, "We'll pay you seventy-five dollars a week." Billy found the offer appealing, because he wanted to win as many people to Christ as possible. He also relished the chance to see different parts of the country, and he and Ruth sorely needed an increase in salary.

Thus, in January 1945 Billy was hired as the first full-time YFC staff member. When Billy came to the one-room Chicago office on Wells Street, there was only one desk. Billy asked, "Where's my desk?" Torrey answered him, "You sit on one side of the desk, and I'll sit on the other side!"

From the beginning, Billy was "on demand" to speak at rallies all over the country. In 1945-46 he traveled by car, train and plane and preached in 47 of the 48 states. That first year United Airlines cited Billy as their top civilian passenger after he traveled 135,000 miles with them.

As many souls were being saved, it was obvious that this movement was of God. That's when Torrey Johnson proclaimed, "O God, we want this kept on a miracle basis. We want everyone to know that God's hand is on this movement. We want folks to see that this is too big and too great for any man or group of men to accomplish by themselves. We want folks to say, 'GOD DID IT!'"

At a YFC rally in Minneapolis in February 1945 a man who heard Billy preach was about to change his life radically. Billy later admitted that this meeting led him into “a great confusion about a great many things.” The man’s name was **Dr. W. B. Riley**, President of Northwestern Schools in Minneapolis. Riley was known as “The Grand Old Man of Fundamentalism.” He was a Baptist pastor for most of his life, was editor of The Christian Fundamentalist and in 1919 he founded the World Christian Fundamentals Association.

In January 1946 Billy Graham was asked by Dr. W. B. Riley to speak at a fundamentalist conference sponsored by his Northwestern Schools in Minneapolis. Enroute from Seattle to Minneapolis, the small Lockheed Lodestar containing Billy and 13 other passengers was flying over Alberta in a snow storm when they ran low on fuel and didn’t have time to find an airport. So with the wheels up they landed (sliding) in a snowy field. They stayed in the plane all that night and were rescued the next morning by a farmer with a wagon and horses.

Billy did speak at the conference in Minneapolis, and later Dr. Riley asked him to take over as President of Northwestern when he retired. In light of all his responsibilities with YFC, Billy hesitated at first, but accepted the position in 1948, thinking it would only be a short time. But he ended up staying on as President until 1952 while he did his Youth for Christ ministry and later his crusade ministry.

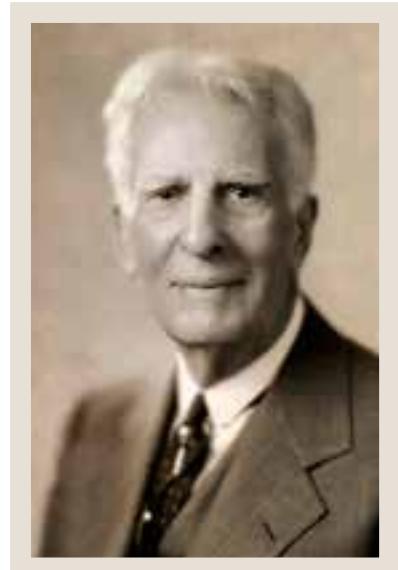
Billy continued to speak at YFC rallies even as he served as the President of Northwestern Schools in Minneapolis. When he began his evangelistic Crusades in the fall of 1949, many were under the impression that he had completely stepped out of Youth for Christ. But that is not the case. He spoke at many YFC rallies and conferences over the years, and remained as First Vice-President of YFC through 1955 and on the Board of Directors until the early 60s.

Soldier Field Rally and the First Winona Convention

The early rallies that popped up brought huge crowds, mostly young people: 18,000 in Detroit; 20,000 in Los Angeles; 6,500 in Winnipeg; 12,000 in Minneapolis. Thousands came to the front of an auditorium, a chapel, a stadium, or a hall to give their lives to Christ. But even while critics were predicting, “It won’t last,” the fire leaped across oceans. Programmed by missionaries, pastors, and Christian GIs, YFC-American style rallies sprang up in over a hundred foreign cities from Peking to Brussels. In some ways the question of where, when and by whom it all began is elusive. Although some would say that the origin and originators of YFC can never be packed into an unassailable statement, most would give credit to the pastor, Torrey Johnson.

The spring of 1945 was very eventful, and the country was high on a wave of emotion. Adolph Hitler had committed suicide, President Roosevelt had died in April, several weeks later Russian and American troops embraced on the Elbe, and two weeks after that the Germans surrendered. For Memorial Day Torrey Johnson planned the “biggest youth rally yet.” So he rented mammoth Soldier Field, but when advanced pledges didn’t meet the need, he mortgaged his

**"We want
folks to say,
'GOD DID
IT!"'**



Dr. W. B. Riley



70,000 gathered for patriotic and religious observance of Memorial Day in Chicago's Soldier Field

home. On May 30, 1945, just three weeks after V-E Day in Europe, a huge Memorial Day rally with at least **70,000 people was held in Soldier Field**. A torrent of rain fell the evening prior, but at rally time they sat under a star-studded sky.

The war-dead were honored in a solemn ceremony. **Five hundred uniformed nurses** marched past a large lighthouse erected for the occasion and formed a living white cross. Then a 5,000 voice (white-robed) choir sang, accompanied by a 300 piece band and eight grand pianos. Gil Dodds ran two spotlighted laps and gave a testimony. Soldier Bob Evans also testified. Representatives of China, India, Africa, and Russia in native dress joined in a missionary pageant. Percy Crawford preached, and hundreds came forward to accept Christ. The choir sang "Shine on Me" while a circular spotlight revolved upon the great crowd.

Percy Crawford's speaking schedule was heavy, and very often on Saturday nights he could be found speaking at a Youth for Christ rally. With his wife, Ruth, they organized two very successful nationwide tours. The highlight of both trips was in San Diego, California, where 1,200 men at the San Diego Naval Base stepped forward as one man to accept Christ. Unconsciously, many Youth for Christ speakers patterned their messages after Crawford's preaching. He spoke frankly, but he also didn't waver from the old-fashioned Gospel.

One month after the Soldier Field rally every one of the twenty-two Hearst Newspapers carried a full-page story and pictures of the new youth movement that was reaching half a million young lives worldwide every Saturday night. Hearst would also heavily promote Billy's first crusade later in Los Angeles in 1949.

A year before, Arthur W. McKee, Executive Director of the Winona Lake, Indiana, Bible Conference, pledged



Soldier Field 1945: 500 Nurses Marching in the Form of a Cross

to host all who could attend an organizing convention, which was first suggested by Roger Malsbary. In August 1944 eight men met at Winona for a lengthy prayer meeting and a conference. Roger Malsbary, Torrey Johnson, Bob Cook, Dick Harvey from St. Louis, Ed Darling from Detroit, Ray Schulenberg from Moline, Illinois, Palmer Muntz (the Bible Conference's program director), and Arthur W. McKee all agreed to pray every single day until they met again in November. In November a larger group of 35 men from 21 cities convened in Detroit and elected Torrey Johnson chairman of a "Temporary Youth for Christ International Committee" that included Wheaton College President V. Raymond Edman, Harvey, Malsbary and Schulenberg. Between then and the following summer the requests for help became a deluge. The "Temporary Committee" set up a "temporary" office in Chicago to handle the inquiries to service the rallies wanting assistance.

It was only seven weeks after that Soldier Field rally that more than six hundred youth leaders from all over North America met at the famed Fundamentalist Conference Center at **Winona Lake**, Indiana. Forty-two select delegates gathered and voted to form Youth for Christ International. They decided to establish a central office, hammered out a constitution, and elected Torrey Johnson President. Torrey declined to accept, but they begged him to reconsider and not make a final refusal until after private prayer. That night after midnight Torrey prayed alone on the lakeshore, and the next morning he made his final acceptance. With his fiery personality, Torrey became the flag-bearer for the movement.

The organization was given the name "Youth for Christ International," and a budget of \$200,000 was adopted. They chose the seven-point Statement of Faith of the National Association of Evangelicals, that all staff were required to agree to. The NAE Statement of Faith, which proclaimed the essentials of evangelical Christianity, was YFC's answer to the liberal "modernistic" denial of historical doctrines within the ecumenically-minded Protestant denominations. Torrey's brother-in-law, Bob Cook, came up with the slogan "Geared to the Times, but Anchored to the Rock," which still stands as the YFC slogan today.

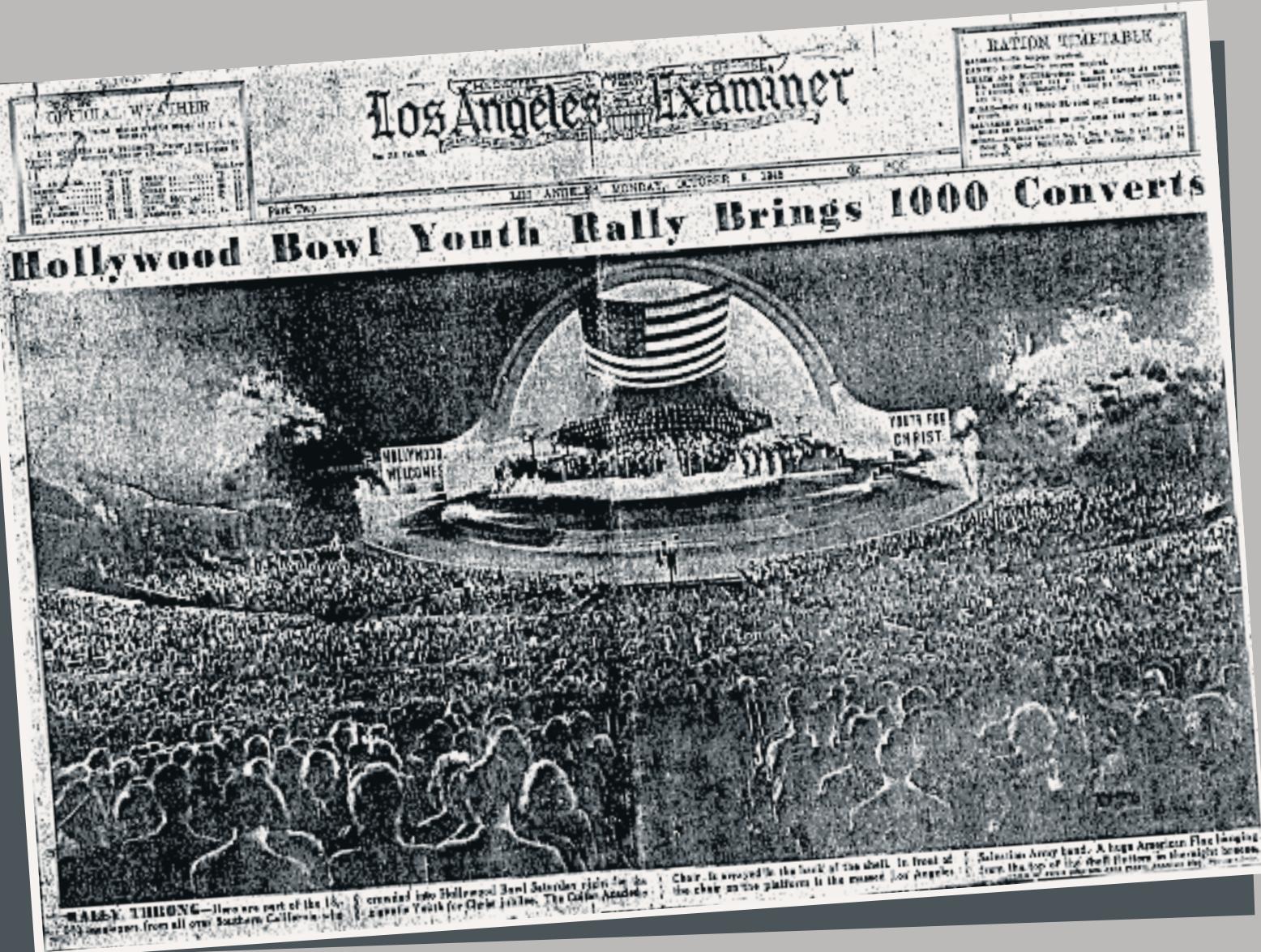
Charles Neville, writing for the Saturday Home Magazine on August 18, 1945, said, "A million and more teenage girls and boys have decided that "boogie-woogie" is old stuff and definitely on the way out...Youth for Christ is drawing the bobbysoxers and their boyfriends away from the jukeboxes and dark-boothed hideaways to a streamlined revival of that indestructible thing – the human soul...Youth for Christ talks turkey to its young audiences, and they love it!"



Rally at Winona Lake Convention



On October 7, 1945, a gigantic **Youth for Christ Jubilee Rally with 18,000 teenagers** was held in the Hollywood Bowl. The Culler Academy Choir was accompanied by the massive Salvation Army Band. A huge American flag fluttered in the night breeze as it hung from the shell. There were 1,000 converts that night.



With the end of World War 2 it appeared that young people were hungry for something or Someone solid to grab onto in their lives. They found Youth for Christ activities inviting and exciting. Many realized that their friends and peers needed to put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ for salvation, and they weren't afraid to speak out to share their faith.

The summer of 1946, at a convention of 700 delegates in **Medicine Lake, Minnesota**, Billy Graham reported on his travels from the past year. "I believe we are on the verge of a nationwide revival, he claimed, but noted a "rising tide of opposition from fundamental groups." Why? "Because YFC at the moment is doing a job for the Lord Jesus Christ...and I am more sold on YFC than ever before."

There are so many stories from the first days of Youth for Christ. In his book, *Youth for Christ, Twentieth Century Wonder*, Mel Larson tells about a young lad who called a YFC Director and said, "I got saved tonight, but I didn't sign a card. Is it all right?" Another son of a preacher broke the silence in his daddy's car as they drove home from the Soldier Field rally by saying, "Daddy, I saw **Gil Dodds** run tonight....and I accepted Jesus as my Savior." There have been thousands of incidents just like those which have been cited.

The Holy Spirit's power has been felt in rallies all over the world. A pastor told Larson, "I preached just about the same sermon in my own church as I did at a Youth for Christ rally hundreds of miles away. Nothing happened in my own church, so far as visible results were concerned. But in the Youth for Christ rally there was tremendous power of the Holy Spirit, and many young people came to Christ. It seems you can almost feel the power of the Holy Spirit each time you walk into a Youth for Christ meeting place."

The movement has made soul-winners of many young people. At the Soldier Field rally in 1946 a teen-age girl fairly bubbled over with joy as she told Bob Cook, "I led my first soul to Christ tonight." One pastor started teaching his young people on "Soul-winning," and he asked "How many of you will say, 'I'll do my best, God willing, to talk to someone this week about salvation?'" One girl raised her hand, and on Thursday of that week a girl friend called and asked her to come over that very night to show her how to be saved!



Torrey Johnson, Mel Larson, and Ted Engstrom at YFC's second annual convention at Medicine Lake, Minnesota



Gil Dodds faces stiff competition with George Wilson, Robert Evans, and William Erny at the Soldier Field Rally



Europe or Bust, L to R, Charles Templeton, Billy Graham, Stratton Shufelt, Torrey Johnson

Youth for Christ Expands Overseas

Where would you expect a crowd to go – to Youth for Christ or to a dance? Youth leaders in Wetaskiwin, Alberta, Canada, started their Youth for Christ meeting on the same night that a town organization sponsored a dance. God honored their faith, and the dance operators closed their doors when only three or four couples came. The rest of the young people were at the Youth for Christ meeting!

La Jeunesse Pour Christ began in Montreal, Canada on October 5, 1945, organized by a young Frenchman named LaGemere. He had a great burden for lost French-speaking Canadians. He had done so well in his planning that at the first rally, he was able to announce the speakers for the next eight meetings.

In March 1946 **Billy Graham, Torrey Johnson, John Shufelt and Charles Templeton left on a 46-day world tour of England and other parts of Europe.** Just before they left, Torrey spoke at a crowded Moody Memorial Church in Chicago using the text, "Saul also went to his home in Gibeath, accompanied by valiant men whose hearts God had touched." (1 Samuel 10:26) He referred to his fellow co-workers in Youth for Christ as "men whose hearts God had touched."

These men whom God had touched conducted rallies and met with church leaders with the hope of establishing new YFC ministries. The brash young Americans left a mixed impression among their more reserved European counterparts. It was Graham's first trip abroad, and he was moved by the desolation and deprivation the just-concluded war had left in its wake. He also came away with a vivid new awareness of the Communist threat, which he would incorporate into his messages back home. Graham remarked on returning that he had never felt it "so easy to preach." No doubt, this was

"The revival was on! God moved in and was doing a mighty thing in our midst."

because thousands of young people on the North American continent daily prayed for the group. Some thirty cities were reached. They reported that they had 101 meetings in 46 days and that 1,500 souls were won to Christ.

In October 1946 Billy returned to England for six months. He took **Cliff and Billie Barrows**, who provided music for the meetings. The weather in Europe was very cold that winter, and they could hardly keep warm in the hotels in which they were staying. But the response was overwhelming all over the British Isles. Many nights they had to have back-to-back duplicate services in order to accommodate all the people. In Belfast, Northern Ireland, meetings were held in a hall holding 2,300 with an additional overflow hall seating 600. Night after night the building was packed and hundreds were turned away at the door. "Many souls professed faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

Billy reported, "On Saturday night the great and unexpected happened. Forty-five minutes before the service was to begin there were three to four thousand people standing in a queue five deep and three blocks long. The revival was on! God moved in and was doing a mighty thing in our midst. Many responded to accept Christ."

A three-day conference attended by 250 delegates was held in Birmingham at the end of March 1947, and this led to the founding of Youth for Christ in Great Britain with over 200 rallies nationwide. Billy was hospitalized in May 1947 because of stress and overwork when he returned home. Even after he was released, the doctor told him he couldn't book any speaking engagements for an entire month.



Billy Graham and Billie and Cliff Barrows at a YFC rally



Chicago man and three Americans who helped start Holland YFC

Holland YFC began in 1946 when a Dutch immigrant who owned three bakeries in Chicago was so grateful when his son returned from the war that he paid to have **three Americans travel to Holland**. He did not want Holland to turn Communist. The Dutch team of De Jong, De Vos, and Doug Fisher, left the Chicago airport at 1:00 a.m., and even though people thought they were crazy, 2000 people showed up to send them off singing a song in Dutch. When they arrived, the “dikes of blessing opened up.” In spite of opposition, the power of the Holy Spirit overruled in a wonderful way. One veteran Dutch-Reformed pastor was led to say, “This is the greatest thing that has happened in Holland in this generation.” A national Holland Youth for Christ group had been established when they left after their well-planned campaign. By May 1947 there were no less than fifty Youth for Christ rallies throughout the land.

At YFC’s first Winona Lake Conference Torrey Johnson had firmly stated, “I’m not interested in establishing Youth for Christ everywhere in America – I’m interested in reaching young people for Jesus everywhere!” During the campaign in great Britain, Torrey Johnson took his burden for souls to other parts of Europe. He toured Greece, Italy, Germany, Holland, Great Britain and other European nations where he addressed numerous youth rallies and organized youth movements. He even dined with Queen Wilhelmina and other royalty.

Torrey Johnson was especially burdened for Germany, which had been devastated by the war and by Hitler’s anti-God philosophy. He held rallies in Frankfurt, Berlin and other cities. Johnson attributed Germany’s wayward path to its rejection of evangelical Protestantism and the embrace of “heathendom.” He felt the horrors of Dachau and Buchenwald grew out of theological liberalism that had rejected the infallible Word of God. He said, “This is America’s hour of opportunity! This is Germany’s hour of destiny!

Another YFC leader, Oswald Smith, also reflected on the vulnerability of German youth, noting that they “had never known any world except Hitler’s world.” As Johnson wrote, “The God of Martin Luther

still lives and HE will yet give a great mass movement of spiritual revival to this land of the Reformation." As he put it, "As goes Germany, so goes Western Europe. If Germany goes communistic, then you can write off France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal in the same category."

To help establish Youth for Christ in Germany, Johnson turned to American military chaplains, in particular Chaplain Paul Maddox, "a great man of God," who served as chief chaplain of the European Command. Johnson called on faithful American military members to start up YFC clubs on military bases and local communities. Initially, up to one hundred spontaneous rallies were organized on American military bases, but soon the infantrymen moved to evangelizing their local communities.

In one month alone the servicemen handed out an estimated 230,000 tracts throughout Frankfurt. Streaming across Main Street in Frankfurt was a large banner, "Youth for Christ on Saturday Night." They also invited German guests to attend the rallies, casting the seeds for a German-American partnership in evangelical ministry. Most of these rallies were held in tents, as most of the buildings with auditoriums had been bombed during the war. Regular rallies and an organized board for Germany YFC really didn't start until 1956. Alfons Hildebrand was involved, as was **Werner Burklin**, who grew up in China but left there in 1949 when all the missionaries were kicked out.

Germany Youth for Christ officially started in 1948. We were recently contacted by a 90-year-old man, Joseph Curtiss, who told us when he was in the U.S. Air Force in 1952, he got saved in a YFC rally in Wiesbaden. He thought he was going to a party when he heard the meeting advertised, and he was too embarrassed to leave. He says, "Almost immediately, as a new Christian, I began to shine for Christ in sharing my faith with others. I began to witness to U.S. military personnel, German nationals, and everyone that I met. Wherever we are, Christ calls us to let our lives shine for Christ." He and his wife, Evelyn, of 61 years, went on to serve as missionaries with the American Mis-

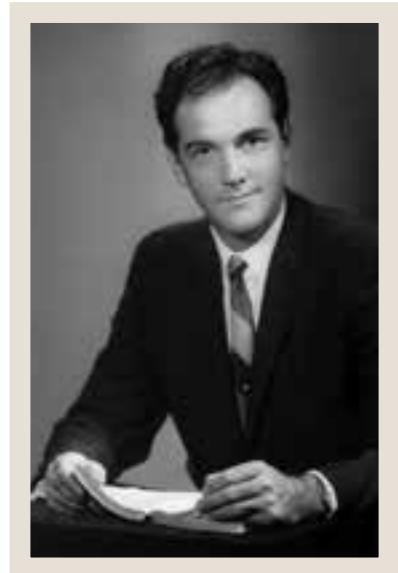
sionary Fellowship for 27 years, and later they started a Christian non-profit agency in the inner city of Los Angeles.

It was in 1946 that missionary Dave Morken began YFC in and around Shanghai, China. German-born Werner Burklin, who lived in China with his parents at the time, attended many of the rallies throughout 1947-48. Dave and his team preached all over South China, with as many as 30,000 attending rallies every Saturday night in Xian. In the dramatic days of 1947 alone at least 30,000 people were won to Christ.

It was in 1949 that Mao Zedong and the Communist takeover in China forced most of the missionaries and other foreigners out of China. YFC held rallies as long as possible to encourage the local people in the crisis. Morken was the last man out of China after being held by the Communists for several weeks. Then he and Dick Hillis and others won an estimated 1,000 converts a week in Formosa (Taiwan) over several months.

At one time at least 30,000 Taiwanese were enrolled in follow-up Bible studies.

Cpl. William Deese and Sgt. George Overlander were the first men to have the idea of starting Youth for Christ in Manila, Philippines. They held two meetings each week. The first was held on Saturday nights and was known as the G.I. Gospel Hour – a Youth for Christ meeting dressed up in military garb to attract servicemen. The meetings were held in a funeral parlor with an army generator providing the light for the meetings. Seats were at a premium, and some G.I.'s found themselves sitting on empty coffins – and some which were NOT empty! The generator made lots of noise, but that didn't seem to



Werner Burklin



Hubert Mitchell

“It was like receiving a shot of plasma in my arm.”

bother much. Chaplains were the main speakers, and meetings were patterned after YFC in the states. As one chaplain said, “It was like receiving a shot of plasma in my arm.”

On Sunday nights the regular Youth for Christ service was held at a Presbyterian Church on the south side of Manila. When Deese and Overlander left for duties elsewhere, other G.I.’s assumed the responsibility for the service. Manila Youth for Christ owes no small debt to Rev. and Mrs. Edwin Bomm and their family. After being released from the Japanese, they obtained a place to live in Manila and promptly opened it to all G.I.’s as a “home away from home.” Later a lot was obtained, and two fabricated buildings were erected with volunteer help. The result was a Christian service center. A radio program was conducted every Sunday afternoon over the Office of War Information Station KZFM. The program was heard all through the islands and even reached China and Japan. Besides Manila, there were eight other places in the Islands that Youth for Christ organizations operated efficiently and effectively.

The first YFC meeting in China was held in Tsingtao on January 1, 1946, in Christ Church. American Marines were partially in charge, with Dr. Frank Connelly, an American missionary, as the speaker. Testimony time was filled by a nurse, a Chinese layman, and two G.I.’s, who told what Christ had done for them. At least sixteen Chinese cities and towns soon followed suit, including Peiping (Beijing) and Shanghai. Of course, Youth for Christ had to go underground and all but disappeared from China when Mao Zedong came to power on October 1, 1949, and kicked all the foreign missionaries out of the country.

On April 7, 1947, missionaries Cyril Thompson and Walter Corlett held a rally in the Tiger Theater in Calcutta, India. They decided to call it “Youth for Christ” without knowing about YFC in America. They invited **Hubert Mitchell** to be the speaker. Hubert had contacts with YFC in Chicago and suggested that they join Youth for Christ International. They did so, and on that day India Youth for Christ was born. On that Easter Monday Winnie Bonner, a believer, was bothered by the fact that a Christian meeting was being held in a cinema auditorium. Curiosity caused her to attend, and she was hooked. In a later rally, Hubert Mitchell shocked Bonnie when he asked her to come forward and share what Christ had done for her. Three months passed, and Mitchell asked her to join with them in YFC.

Mitchell was invited to the World Congress in Beatenburg, Switzerland in 1948, and after returning to India, he realized that he needed more helping hands. He invited Joe Weatherly who had been involved in Portland YFC, to come to India and establish an office and work in Bombay. Joe later became YFC India’s first National Director. When Cyril Thompson returned from furlough, he directed YFC in Allahabad. Dick Reilly had taken over Calcutta when Mitchell returned to the states to become YFC’s Secretary for World Evangelism. By 1953 the ministry had spread to Ceylon (Sri Lanka). Today, YFC India exists in 50 cities and towns and often has 25,000 yearly converts under the leadership of Sham Mohan.

After the liberation of France, many American G.I.’s visited Paris. Not all

of them came for “wine, women, and song.” Some came with a burden for souls, and Al Sedgwick organized a Fisherman’s Club. There were 35 at that first meeting, but it grew to where they filled a large Methodist Church for a rally on September 22, 1945. The message was first given in English and then in French, with many souls saved. Boris Besmerny actually founded France YFC in 1946 and registered it in 1947. In August, 1948 a Super Rally of 22,000 was held in Nimes. Gene McGee was the next National Director. **Jean Jacques Weiler** entered YFC in 1963 and immediately took Gene’s place.

Aberdeen Youth for Christ began on October 24, 1945 at Aberdeen University in Glasgow, Scotland. Quite a few American divinity students were attending the university under the exchange system. One of them, Cpl. Maurice Schultz, had become burdened enough to reach young people for Christ that he wrote to YFC in Chicago to get the necessary information on how to start YFC. Prayer meetings followed, and finally the first rally was held.

In August 1948 a YFC campaign in Manchester, England, packed 7,500 into their closing giant rally. Billy Graham and T. W. Wilson spoke and the Couriers for Christ quartet sang. At that time it was reported that 50 YFC rallies existed throughout Great Britain.

Young Bob Savage and his co-workers at the radio station HCJB, the Voice of the Andes, were burdened about the young people of Ecuador. Try as they would, they could not draw a crowd for a Gospel meeting. Fearful of retribution in that largely Catholic country, the people would not attend the services. But they prayed and decided to set a weekend of Youth for Christ meetings in the seaport town of Guayaquil. From the beginning the rallies on November 16, 17, and 18, 1945, were saturated in prayer, and the rally on the final day was attended by 850 people, an unheard-of number to attend a Gospel meeting in South America. Twenty-seven found Christ as Savior, and twenty others dedicated their lives to His service.

Mr. B. S. Bryson was the head of an organizing committee that began Youth for Christ in Adelaide, Australia in October 1947. After 28 rallies, average attendance was 1,400 with the largest being 2,500. It spread to Newcastle, Queensland, and Geelong by godly men such as Allan Cunningham and Rev. E. Watson. Australia YFC was registered with the international body in February 1949.

YFC faded in Australia until 1954 when Clive Stebbins began rallies in Melbourne. **Bob Armstrong** was a long-standing staff member assisting Clive. Six hundred young people attended, and 40 gave their lives to Christ. In 1957-58 Clive attended the YFC Training School in Kansas City and visited various rallies in the states for a year. Billy Graham held a crusade in 1959 and spoke about YFC to 140,000 people packed into the Melbourne Cricket Ground. The next day Billy gave Clive a letter of endorsement for YFC, and their next rally had 2,500 people in the Town Hall and another 500 down the street. From that point YFC spread all over Australia, and by 1977 was flourishing in 29 different centers.



Jean Jacques Weiler



Bob Armstrong and his wife



Leonard Rodgers grew up in Windham, Kansas and after attending two YFC rallies, he talked to a pastor and gave his life to Christ. Leonard said, "My life was instantly changed." He attended a four-year Bible College in Kansas City and later worked for Kansas City Youth for Christ. After four years he met Wendy Collins, who had just returned with a Teen Team from Lebanon where they spoke to 32,000 youth and 430 of them came to Christ. Pastors in Lebanon had asked for someone to come and start youth ministry there, and Leonard and his wife, Pauline, felt God calling them to go as missionaries to Lebanon. Six months later in 1963 they were on a ship to Beirut to pioneer Youth for Christ.

After eleven years the Rodgers turned the ministry over to the son of an Armenian pastor, **John Sagherian**, who had been saved through the YFC ministry. John and his wife, Nancy, grew the ministry greatly over many years. Today YFC Lebanon is thriving under the leadership of **Maher El Hajj**, who had been saved in YFC around 1995 and went on staff full-time in 2003. They have successfully reached out to refugees and other nations in the Middle East.

One day Youth for Christ International received a letter from a man in Massachusetts asking for information on starting Youth for Christ meetings in Greece. A few months later another man returning from a mission trip to Greece reported that 400 young people who had been challenged by Youth for Christ in



This great photo shows all three generations of YFC Lebanon National Directors, John Sagherian, Maher El Hajj and Leonard Rodgers

Countries in Which YFC Exists

ALASKA	ETHIOPIA	NEW ZEALAND
ALGERIA	Fiji ISLANDS	NIGERIA
AUSTRALIA	FINLAND	NORWAY
AUSTRIA	FORMOSA	OKINAWA
BAHAMAS	FRANCE	PARAGUAY
BELGIUM	GERMANY	PERU
BOLIVIA	GREAT BRITAIN	PHILIPPINES
BRAZIL	GREECE	POLAND
BURMA	GUATEMALA	PORTUGAL
CANADA	HAITI	PUERTO RICO
CANAL ZONE	HAWAII	REP. OF SAN MARINO
CEYLON	HOLLAND	SAAR
CHILE	HONDURAS	SINGAPORE
CHINA	HONG KONG	SCOTLAND
COLOMBIA	INDIA	TRIESTE
CORSICA	IRELAND	SOUTH AFRICA
COSTA RICA	ISLE OF MAN	SOUTHERN RHODESIA
CUBA	ISRAEL	SPAIN
CYPRUS	ITALY	SWEDEN
CZECHOSLOVAKIA	JAMAICA	SWITZERLAND
DENMARK	JAPAN	TRINIDAD
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	KOREA	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
ECUADOR	LEBANON	VENUEZUELA
EGYPT	MACAU	WALES
EL SALVADOR	MEXICO	YUGOSLAVIA

Katerini, Macedonia, had already evangelized eight nearby villages; that a Youth for Christ group had been formed in Canea, on the island of Crete; and that informal groups were meeting in Thessalonica, Alexandroupolis, and Athens!

It was in 1947 that Jimmy Ferguson and Des Riley began Youth for Christ in Johannesburg, South Africa. And it wasn't long before they were pioneering YFC in North Africa with the help of Denis Clark. Rallies appeared around the globe in such places as Okinawa, Guam, Korea, Peru, Portugal, Sweden, Ireland, and Norway (where 22,000 gathered for a YFC rally in the fall of 1946).

At the YFC Convention at Winona Lake in 1948, Torrey Johnson reported that the International Office in Chicago was in touch with 800 rallies in North America. Billy Graham announced that YFC teams had gone to 46 countries the previous year. By 1951 Youth for Christ Magazine printed a list of **75 countries that YFC was in**. But according to Bob Cook, that figure meant that YFC was in countries where a team had visited at least once a year.

More Growth in the U.S.

Back in Olympia, Washington, the capital of that state, President Harry Truman happened to be vacationing in that area on his way to the San Francisco Peace Conference. This conference, involving 50 Allied nations, was held from April 25 to June 26, 1945, and resulted in the United Nations Charter. The Youth for Christ leaders in Olympia got permission from the Governor and the President to hold a youth rally "singspiration" in the capital building for an hour one evening. Truman listened intently and with interest to the choruses, hymns and testimonies. When he was asked to say a few words, he said, "I have been in this kind of a service for fifty-five years now, and this is the best one I've ever attended. This has been a fitting climax to my visit to the state of Washington, and it would have been well worth the trip all the way from Washington, D.C., just for this service tonight. That which we have been considering tonight is what our boys out there are fighting for."

In 1946 **Jack Hamilton** felt the need to minister to kids in the local Kansas City schools by organizing Bible Clubs. They needed more personal discipleship than the rallies could provide. By summer, 1948, Bob Cook, who succeeded Torrey Johnson as President, said, "The rally idea is sound, but in most places the rally is just the 'show-window.' Let's get something on the counters the rest of the week." What went on the "counter" were Bible Clubs. Most of these clubs were run by students themselves and most often were held in the schools. The idea spread quickly when Hamilton left Kansas City to promote clubs in other cities.

The official Youth for Christ songbook was compiled by Doug Fisher of Chicago, Gordon Johnson of Indianapolis, and Dick Harvey of St. Louis. It moved into its third edition in a hurry.

Unusual features kept young people coming to the meetings. Birmingham, Alabama YFC had 300 young people marching in a parade before one big rally, carrying the Christian and American flags and singing patriotic songs and hymns. At Winston-Salem, North Carolina, the mayor of the city was on hand for the first rally. Denver, Colorado YFC tried

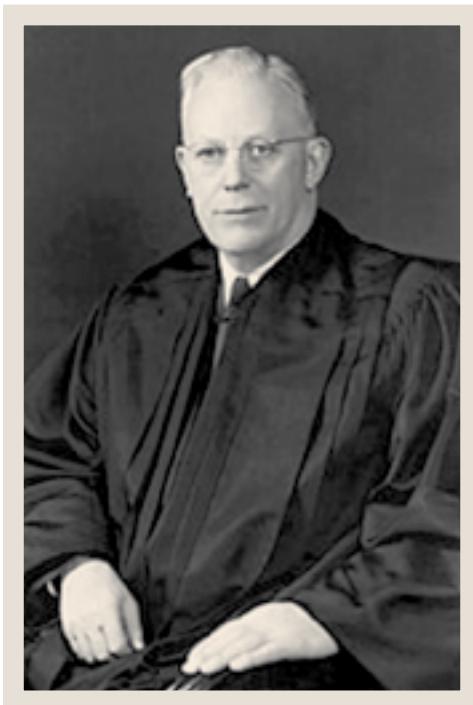


Jack Hamilton, founder of YFC clubs in 1946



a wonderfully successful weekend conference for its young people. **Governor Earle Warren** of California attended the Santa Monica rally and encouraged the young people with a word of greeting.

Cleveland, Ohio YFC sponsored a banquet and invited only those under 30 years of age. And they packed the place!



Governor Earle Warren of California

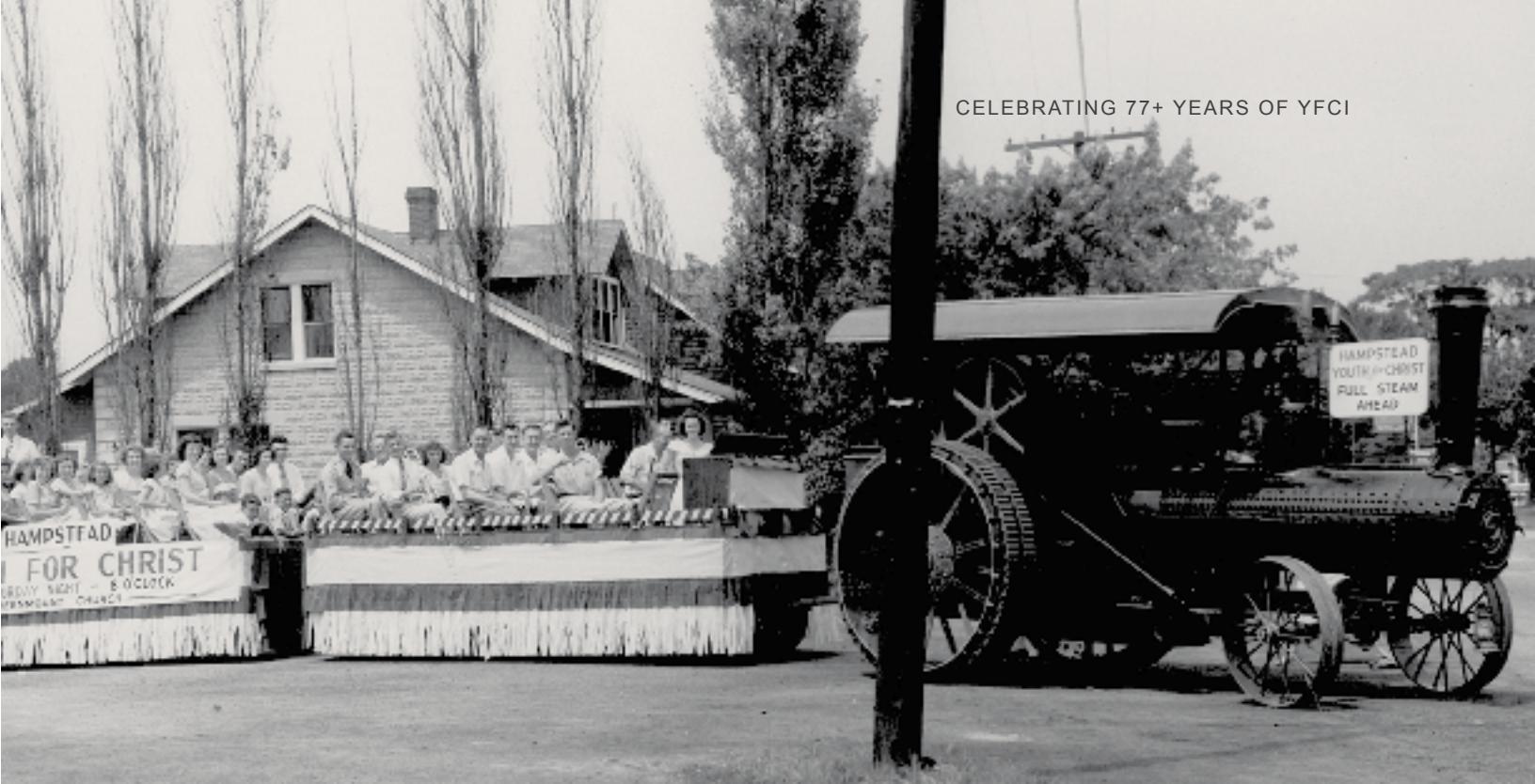
around 10,000 people on average at their rallies. They attracted people/teens with very innovative and “never-done-before” crowd-pleasers such as their **concert with 100 pianos**.

The third Winona Lake Convention was held July 14-20, 1947. YFC Magazine reported “It was a conclave that broke all previous records for YFC enthusiasm.” There were over 450 decisions for salvation and dedication, and a goal was set to have a Youth for Christ rally in every U. S. county within the next year – over 3,000 in all. Torrey Johnson was again elected President and said on opening night, “We’ve come to Winona Lake this week to do business for God!”

Billy Graham stated, “Every YFC Director is a minister of the Gospel...as such he is watched more closely than any other religious leader in town...Let’s not bicker among ourselves, let’s allow the work of the Holy Spirit to speak for itself. Instead of turning the guns on each other, let’s turn them on the



Piano rally in Minneapolis



Steam engine pulling YFC Hampstead float in 1949

devil...Don't rest on old laurels...and don't lose daring faith...There has never been a crowd of young people at Winona Lake facing a more crucial period than right now...,What kind of passion and love for the lost do you have?"

Some unique situations were instigated by some local YFC chapters. Cleveland Youth for Christ was alert when it entered a beautiful float in the city's V-J day parade. One hundred fifty young people walked behind it carrying Christian flags and singing the great hymns of the faith. We have a photo of **Earl Schultz's Hampstead YFC float** being pulled by a steam engine in 1949. Elgin, Illinois YFC originated the "Top o' the Town" as a recreational center for use during the week to conserve the results of the Saturday night rallies. Memphis, Tennessee YFC also opened a Youth for Christ Lounge for use during the week right across from the city auditorium. Lincoln, Nebraska Youth for Christ sponsored a city-wide campaign of tent meetings, in which the attendance each night averaged 1,100, with 220 converts. One business leader responded to the meetings by saying, "The most practical investment today is in young people and in Youth for Christ."

A questionnaire was sent to various YFC directors. Of the 152 that were returned, their average age was 33.37 years, and their average age at conversion was 15.6 years. This could explain to a large degree the burden for the lost souls of teenagers felt so keenly by the leaders. There were twenty denominations represented among the directors with 64 saying they were Baptist. Fifty-six of the leaders had college and seminary training. Thirty-six had high school plus either seminary or Bible Institute. Twenty-two had high school and college work, and seventeen had high school only.

Throughout the history of Youth for Christ, it has been said time and time again that a Youth for Christ group will succeed or fail even as the leader succeeds or fails. This has often been proven to be true although sometimes failure happens due to lack of finances or opposition in the locality of the ministry effort. Several things characterized the early YFC Directors. They usually had pleasing personalities and were happy about their Christian experience and lives. Their one chief aim was winning people to the Lord Jesus Christ. They had training and experience which qualified them to work with young people. The young people liked them, which was one reason they came back. They had a sense of humor and were not afraid to try the unique. They had vision and the faith to do what that vision told them to do. They were good organizers and men of prayer, realizing their utter dependence on God for everything.



Delegates at 1948 Beatenberg Congress

Wildfire Expansion Worldwide Began Under President Bob Cook

As Bob Cook, Torrey Johnson's brother-in-law, took the Presidency in 1948, the financial load from so many new obligations across the world became much heavier. In 1949 YFC Magazine reported, "The amazing thing is that Cook never talks in terms of dollars and cents without first emphasizing, 'Let's be sure we know God's will in this matter. If we do His will, He'll take care of the finances...If our leadership stays on its knees and emphasizes evangelism, I feel that God may have many years of glorious harvest in store for us.'"

July 4-18, 1948 YFC expanded the Winona Lake Convention to two weeks. The first week was the Upper Central Regions Conference designed especially to attract young people. The second week was the International Convention with spiritual emphasis for all youth leaders and directors. Speakers included Torrey Johnson, Billy Graham, Bob Cook, Cliff Barrows, T. W. Wilson, Bob Evans, Frank Phillips, Cedric Sears, Douglas Fisher, George Beverly Shea, Reinhold Barth, and many others. This was a very timely way to promote the Beatenburg Congress.

Youth for Christ organized its first of 12 World Congresses in August, 1948 in **Beatenberg, Switzerland**. The registration list of 230 delegates read like a World Evangelical Who's Who, with names like Torrey Johnson, Billy Graham, Bob Evans, Bob Pearce, Harold Ockenga, Bob Jones, Jr., Merv Rosell, Cliff Barrows, T.W. Wilson, Dawson Trotman, Hubert Mitchell, Roy McKeown, Frank Phillips, Evon Hedley, etc. Dr. Oswald J. Smith told the delegates, "Youth for Christ is founded not on a man, nor on a doctrine, nor on an organization, but on evangelism – the need of every country. God has raised it up for this hour." Dawson Trotman, founder of The Navigators, and already involved in YFC follow-up, challenged the delegates to "produce

"Youth for Christ is founded not on a man, nor on a doctrine, nor on an organization, but on evangelism..."

spiritual reproducers." Fresh from embattled China, **Bob Pierce** and Hubert Mitchell described the "rich harvest of souls being reaped in China," but warned that "doors were fast closing."

The congress brochure challenged men to "go from the Alpine heights of Beatenberg down to the world of men...to a new and greater insight into the task of world evangelization." And many did. Beatenberg marked the expansion not only of YFC into the world, but of other ministries as well. This was the place many Americans received an International vision, and from Beatenberg, YFC organized into national movements.

After Beatenberg, teams fanned out to many nations in Western Europe. This resulted in YFC beginning or being strengthened in Germany, Spain, England, Holland, Northern Ireland, Belgium, Portugal, Denmark, Sweden and Cyprus. Torrey preached in the arena in Nimes, France, where Christian martyrs had once been thrown to the lions. Fifty meetings were staged in Germany and Poland. Others journeyed to the Far East, Africa, Latin America, and back to the U.S. and Canada. Citywide rallies in Ethiopia attracted up to 1,500 people. Overflowing rallies were held in Yokohama, Japan and five nearby towns. The musical **Palermo Brothers** held meetings in a dozen cities in Italy. Paul Fried traveled to Spain and saw hundreds of conversions in Barcelona.

In Rome local organizers had obtained permission and paid taxes for thousands of rally invitations to be dropped by plane. They had secured the Collegio Ramano, the alma mater of Pope Pius, as the meeting place. When zealous Catholics learned of the true nature of YFC, a Protestant organization, they protested. The president of the Collegio stated that under no circumstances could they hold their rally there that night. They were stunned, and while they pondered the problem, rumors of possible violence came to them. So they prayed and called the American Embassy. In a

Bob Pierce



Palermo Brothers, Phil and Louie



the Lost prayer meeting

In all the thousands of words written about the 1949 Los Angeles Crusade, no one has ever mentioned this incident at Winona Lake; yet can anyone doubt that God used it?

Readings, Miss. Land

A Rare Photo of those at The Lost Prayer Meeting in 1949



Rev. Peter Deyneka

and 50 YFC leaders were present. Around 3 a.m. they gathered around Billy Graham and laid hands on him, asking God to touch him for this work. Cliff Barrows was there stating, "We were all on our faces before the Lord, and some were under the piano praying. The Spirit of God moved in our hearts." Afterwards, Billy was convicted to read Joel 3:13 – "Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe." Curiously, none of the published accounts of the many prayer meetings that supported that 1949 Graham Crusade made mention of the preparation that took place at Winona Lake. **Peter Deyneka** of the Slavic Gospel Association stated, "We had prayer every morning from 7 to 8 o'clock at those conventions, and from 4 to 5 o'clock every afternoon." Roy McKeown said, "I remember that Peter Deyneka used to say in those days, 'Roy, much prayer, much power.' God just spoke to all of us. We fell on our faces before Him."

short time the way was cleared for the meeting. In spite of militant mobs of priests and students, the meeting went on, and before the evening was over, some 250 people had professed Christ as Savior.

Over a period of 13 days in January 1949 John Huffman and ten other New England YFC leaders invaded Cuba. They held more than 30 indoor and open-air rallies, distributed more than 28,000 Gospel Tracts, and conducted many radio broadcasts.

Everywhere YFC people went, they filled halls, churches, tents, and saw decisions for Jesus Christ – 50, 100, 150 – night after night. It was true in the Far East as well as Europe. People who had lost confidence in man's ability to chart his own course, both physically and spiritually hungry, responded to the Gospel. World Congresses were held in successive years

in Cannes, France, Brussels, Winona Lake, Belfast, Tokyo, Sao Paulo, Caracas, Copenhagen, Madras, India, Mexico City, and finally Bristol, England, in 1960. These congresses spurred on the ministry in the country in which it was held, and caused many delegates to desire becoming missionaries.

YFC also strained to keep momentum in the movement. Critics on the left and the right nibbled at the edges and cautiously watched the new president to see which way he would move. In Chicago Bob Cook surprised some people by showing that he was his own man. He shrewdly realized that the movement couldn't keep running on a high head of steam generated by a thousand or so evangelical entrepreneurs, many of whom skated on the thin ice of panic financing and high-powered promotion. So he began laying down guidelines and needling rally directors who weren't measuring up.

At an all-night prayer meeting at the Winona Lake Convention on July 13, 1949, called "**The Lost Prayer Meeting**," by Decision Magazine in 1973, between 40

Billy Graham's Crisis of Faith

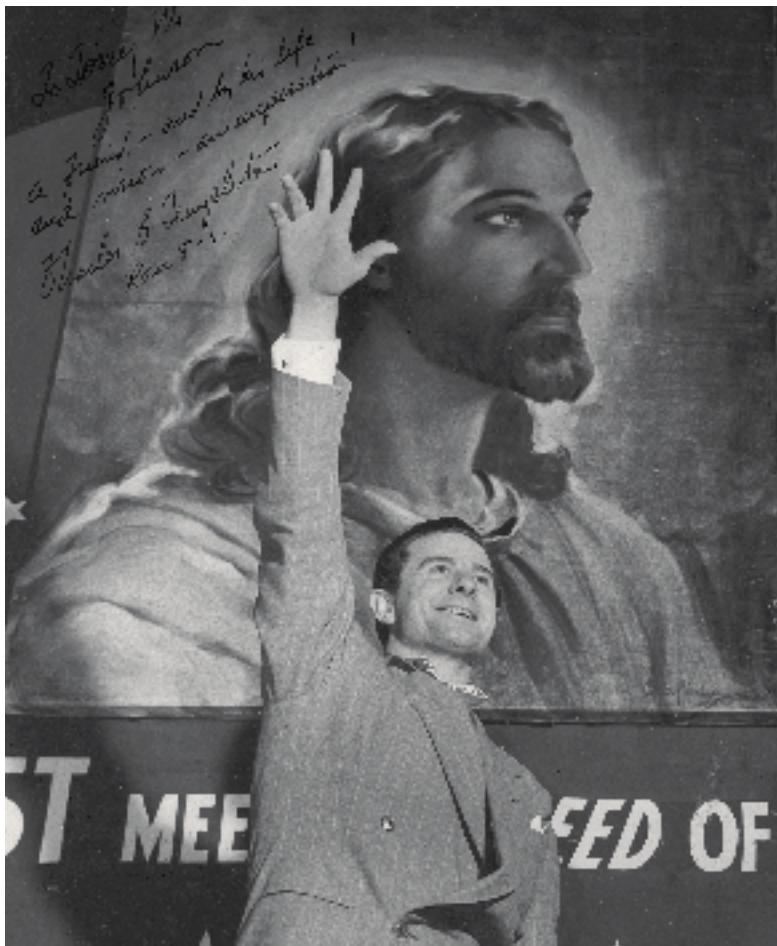
That summer of 1949 Billy Graham experienced a “crisis of faith” over the issue of the reliability of the Bible. **Charles Templeton** had serious questions about the Bible and eventually left YFC and his faith. He had said, “Billy, you are fifty years out of date. People no longer accept the Bible the way you do. Your faith is too simple. Your language is out of date. You’re going to have to learn the new jargon if you’re going to be successful in your ministry.” This tore Billy to the quick, and he wondered if he could really trust the Bible. He knew if he could not trust the Bible, he could not go on.

In August Billy was at Forest Home in Southern California when he went out into the forest, laid his Bible on a stump, dropped to his knees and asked the Lord to show him the truth of the Bible. After much prayer, Billy said, “At last the Holy Spirit freed me to say it – ‘Father, I am going to accept this as thy Word – by faith. I’m going to allow faith to go beyond my intellectual questions and doubts, and I will believe this to be your inspired Word.’” After that time of prayer, Billy became known as the preacher who proclaims, “The Bible says...” and “God says...,” because he believed its words. He found that preaching the Word got results.

For Graham the move to a wider and independent ministry had come to seem inevitable. He had emerged from the pack as the most successful YFC evangelist. His meetings had garnered more space in evangelical publications than any other young preacher. Even in his role as college president, he had become aware of his strengths and weaknesses as a leader. At age thirty, Billy Graham was ready for higher ground.

When Graham was approached by a group of businessmen who called themselves “Christ for Greater Los Angeles” about doing a Crusade there, he was all in to preach to the “city of wickedness and sin.” They began in late September, 1949 in a tent near downtown LA, but the weather was bad, and by the end of the scheduled three weeks, attendance was flagging and Billy was out of sermons. Some felt they should conclude the “revival,” but one man suggested they continue if the weather warmed up. And that day it did, so they continued on a week-to-week basis.

When William Randolph Hearst told his 22 newspapers to “Puff Graham,” attendance began to increase and within days the Associated Press, the United Press, and the International News Service picked up the story. Time, Newsweek, and Life followed soon after.



Charles Templeton



As the revival stretched from three to eight weeks, Graham had to call on friends to help him with sermon ideas and outlines. The conversion of Olympic miler, **Louis Zamperini**, stimulated further publicity. Zamperini was a veteran who spent 47 days floating on a raft in the middle of the Pacific and then was captured by the Japanese. He was released at the end of the war, married, and became an alcoholic. But after his conversion he was able to kick the alcohol habit "cold turkey." He spoke in many YFC rallies over the next few years.

Even such notables as Gene Autry and Jane Russell began to attend. And gangland wiretapper, Jim Vaus, was converted. Time declared, "No one since Billy Sunday has wielded the 'revival sickle' with such success as this thirty-one-year-old blond trumpet-lunged North Carolinian."

By the time the **Los Angeles crusade** ended on November 20, attendance for the eight weeks approached 350,000, with inquirers numbering around 3,000. Nearly 700 churches, almost three times more than at the beginning, were lending at least some measure of support. A number of preachers who had been cool toward the campaign at the beginning came around "to ask forgiveness for a few things they had said about evangelism, Youth for Christ, and 'some of the hot-rodders in wide ties'". LA YFC Director, Roy McKeown, was on the crusade committee, and he began to see how YFC and Billy Graham could work together and help each other, even though Billy was no longer an active YFC staff member. Even before the crusade in July, the Los Angeles City Council had gone on record as unanimously approving by formal resolution the work being done by Los Angeles YFC and Pacific Southwest YFC. Amazing!



ABOVE: Billy Preaching in His Los Angeles tent crusade in 1949

RIGHT: Louis Zamperini and Billy Graham



Torrey in front of Million Souls Crusade sign in 1951

Emphasis on World-Wide Revival in the Post World War 2 Era

Fears of Communist encroachment had subsided in 1945 when Eisenhower returned saying the Russians sincerely wanted U.S. friendship. But he quickly changed his mind when Soviet troops began stripping eastern Europe of physical goods and freedoms. As Churchill described it, an “iron curtain” descended on Europe. When in September 1949 Truman’s press secretary announced to startled reporters that the Russians had the A-bomb, security became the concern of millions of Americans.

In the face of the Cold War, evangelistic fires continued to blanket the globe. 1950 was a significant milestone, and scores of Mid-Century Evangelistic Campaigns erupted across the world. YFC was calling for revival, and revival happened as tens of thousands gave their lives to Christ that year. 12,500 made commitments to Christ in a 22-day Graham crusade in Columbia, South Carolina. A four-week Graham crusade in Boston with a total attendance of 162,000 resulted in 6,000 converts. A Boston Post reporter compared this event to the Great Awakening Revival with George Whitfield, held on the same Boston Common October 12, 1740. Youth for Christ benefitted greatly from Graham’s crusades, and some of Graham’s best crusades were in cities with strong YFC chapters.

In 1950 Youth for Christ sent 100 teams to Europe, and in December, 1950 Bob Cook announced the **“Million Souls Crusade.”** In 1951 170 teams went overseas as part of the crusade. They had one million people in total attendance with over 10,000 decisions for Christ. Bob Cook called these teams the



spiritual equivalent of the Marshall Plan. By February 1951 Youth for Christ Magazine reported that there were 19 cities across the United States that felt a definite moving of the Holy Spirit toward revival.

Billy Graham, Bob Pierce, and Grady Wilson left the USA on December 6, 1952, enroute to Korea carrying this spirit of revival where they spoke to American servicemen, South Koreans, and prisoners of war during the Christmas season. Youth for Christ leaders in the Orient, Dave Morken in Japan, and Richard Hillis in Formosa, assisted in plans in those countries. Graham said, "I came to the Orient a boy. I'm going home a man!" On December 11 in Tokyo, he spoke to "probably the greatest host of missionaries ever to assemble under one roof in a foreign land." Some 750 missionaries and chaplains gathered as Youth for Christ's Far East Director, David Morken, coordinated much of Billy's activities. Morken was emcee for the historic occasion and Pierce and Wilson brought words of greeting. Billy's time there laid the foundation for YFC in several Asian countries as people responded to the call to evangelize youth in those nations.

Revival was going to affect everyone, including delinquent youth in the US. Bob Cook noticed YFC was reaching "comparatively few from the so-called 'seamy side of town.'" One reason, he said, "is that so much of our advertising and programs are slanted to happy Christian youngsters. Let's do something to reach the teens outside." Oakland, California YFC picked up on his concern and held a summer camp for teens in trouble. Two teenage murderers were later won to Christ at the Oakalla Prison Farm. The testimonies of the boys made front-page stories in local newspapers.



Bruce Love with a boy in detention

Los Angeles YFC Director, Roy McKeown, followed with six summer camps for troubled boys under the direction of Louis Zamperini, the nationally known track star and World War 2 veteran captured by the Japanese who was converted in the 1949 Billy Graham crusade in Los Angeles. Zamperini spoke in many YFC rallies over the next few years.

Impetus for a Youth Guidance Department came in 1952 when a Gary, Indiana gang member, Ralph Cavanaugh, was converted under the ministry of **Bruce Love**, Gary YFC Director. Bruce had explained the Gospel in the counseling room after a YFC rally. Ralph later described his feelings: "As I walked that aisle, all of my hardness and disgust and rebellion just melted away, and in the counseling room I received Jesus Christ into my heart as my Lord and Savior."

A high school principal who knew Cavanaugh said, "If religion can do that much for a teenager, I'm all for it." His conversion won the heart of the Governor of

Indiana, who then provided and renovated Camp Muskatatuck for 100 troubled boys to attend camp every week for ten weeks each summer. **Wendy Collins** became the first national Youth Guidance Director. He changed the name to "Lifeline" and set up a sponsorship program for people to sponsor a boy for \$5 per month.

Lifeline ministries sprung up in YFC programs around the country, and this led to Bruce Love of Gary YFC and others beginning a ministry in juvenile institutions. YFC staff went into these institutions to share the Gospel and/or build relationships with youth. After they were released, the staff would take them to camp or get them involved in Lifeline or Youth Guidance clubs.

New Ministry Methods and Expansion in the Early 1950s

Clubs, quizzing, talent contests, leadership training schools and Lifeline were only a few of the many sub-ministries that were begun under Bob Cook's presidency. A man by the name of Bill Price in the Southwest Pacific Region began a car club. Maurice Brockington rented an old garage, found some wrecked cars and organized "Boltin' Bishops" as a means of winning hot-rodgers to Christ. This idea soon spread to other cities.

Bob Cook proposed a "Christian Letterman's Club" to organize Christian young men on high school and college campuses who had an interest in athletics. This led to the first "Christian Olympics" at Winona '54. But interest in those clubs waned after a few years.

Film and literature ministries had more permanent foundations and support. Under **Ken Anderson's** leadership, YFCI in the fifties produced, through Gospel Films, a steady run of pictures utilizing talent selected through screen tests at Winona. The first films, Counterattack, and Mr. Texas, brought criticism from conservatives who okayed documentaries but called playing the roles of other characters hypocritical. After story films gained acceptance, the same crowd objected to YFC showing films in commercial theaters – even after hundreds of non-churched youth were converted to Christ. Youth for Christ Magazine gained prominence as a house organ but slowly evolved into a genuine youth magazine with articles slanted toward teenagers.

By March 1952 YFC Clubs had passed the 1,000 mark, and by 1955 Jack Hamilton reported 1956 clubs in 41 U.S. states and seven other countries. For the first 15-20 years these meetings consisted of singing Gospel songs, perhaps a skit or crowdbreaker, and a speaker who would share the Gospel. Clearly, YFC Bible Clubs had become for the 50s what rallies had been for the 40s.

There was criticism of YFC from both liberal theologians and fundamentalists. But Frank Mead, a strong denominational man, rebuffed the critics in a strongly worded article in the Christian Herald: "We in the church have offered youth everything from the Golden Gate Bridge to a 15c box of candy at Christmas...we've made it ridiculously easy to join the church...we've made a lot of our churches 90% Country Club and 10% Gospel Hall – and along come Youth for Christ leaders, offering nothing but the unvarnished Gospel we thought they didn't want, asking them only that they change their whole way of thinking and their whole way of living. And youth goes for it, not by twos and threes, but by thousands. Something goes on here that cannot be laughed off."



Wendy Collins in the 1970s



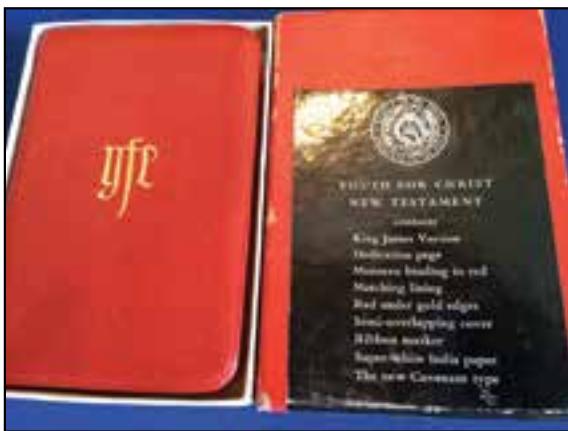
Ken Anderson



Meanwhile, the annual summer Winona Lake Conventions continued for two weeks every July. High-powered speakers were booked to speak every night. Billy Graham spoke at nearly all the conventions for the first ten years. Talent Contests were held for group and solo singers, group and solo instrumentalists, and song leading. There was even a "Preacher Boy" contest.



Quizzing at Winona Lake YFC Convention



Red YFC Bible and box cover

By 1951, however, Bob Cook was convinced that the one-shot rally approach was in serious trouble in many cities. Many felt that even the Bible Clubs by themselves were inadequate. So Jack Hamilton and Al Metsker in Kansas City began "Bible Quizzing" in all of their clubs. Within two years they had taken almost every club-member through the New Testament in a series of quizzes. **At Winona '49 they sold quizzing to the nation**, and Bible quizzing cropped up in local chapters around the country. Then there would be regional playoffs and finally the cream of the crop would compete at Winona Lake. Some teens had entire books of the Bible memorized so they could be the first to jump up, finish a question and provide the answer. Many students memorized up to seven or eight books of the New Testament.

Chicagoland YFC's Ron Hutchcraft, whose team won the national championship, said 50 years later that he still remembers most of what he learned during those quizzing years. Before long 20,000 teens a year were involved in quizzing. Many churches realized that what YFC was doing with quizzing and talent contests would be a great asset to their ministries. In more recent years, thousands of churches have incorporated quizzing into their programming.

Everybody in YFC liked the clubs. They boosted attendance in sagging Saturday night rallies. They defused pastors' complaints that YFC was imitating church services. The mark of a consecrated clubber became the **red King James Bible** on top of his books, with the latest YFC Magazine directly underneath. This – supported by silent target prayers at every bell-ringing – opened opportunities for witnessing. When one clubber dropped her Bible, a classmate asked, "What course is that?" "Life," she replied, and then began to quote Bible verses about life in the spiritual dimension.

Don Lonie came up with the phrase, "Every Bible ought to be read." So a profit-minded Bible publisher began turning out red-covered YFC-stamped Bibles by the thousands. Rally directors and visiting evangelists preached from the red YFC Bibles. Every member of Billy Graham's team carried one. Evangelical laymen and pastors even carried the Bibles, and for a while it looked like black Bibles might be relegated to funeral homes. Every clubber liked to fill the flyleaf of their red Bibles with autographs and favorite Scripture verses of YFC evangelists and musicians. Girls especially liked to show their autographs when classmates displayed the scribbling of "worldly" show-business celebrities.

Most clubs met at first on school property in empty classrooms, gyms or lunchrooms before or after school. But in '52 and '53 skittish superintendents, fearful of bucking the complicated and sometimes misunderstood rulings of the Supreme Court, began cracking down. Some school administrators did permit the clubs to continue meeting on school property, usually because they understood the interdenominational sponsorship and purpose of the clubs. The principal, Benjamin Weiss, of the 6,000-student Metropolitan High School in Los Angeles, himself a YFC Board Member, persuaded his city school board that the clubs were not in violation of the Supreme Court's dictum. There was lots of competition to see who could have the **largest club in the world**.



Largest Middle-School Bible Club in the World: Bell Junior High, California, 1956

Gay Almond Overstreet tells how she started a YFC Bible Club in Downey High School in Southern California when she was in high school. They started with 25 kids, but with tutoring from her brother, Ken Overstreet, they were averaging 700 each week in the high school gym by the time she was a senior in 1958. She was sure they had the largest club until Billy Zeoli in Indianapolis heard about it. So they ran a contest with Zeoli's Central High School Club in, and Downey High School won with over 1,000 students in a school of only 1,800. Gay reiterated that many were helped in their faith by her club and launched into a lifetime of ministry.

Kansas City, however, didn't fare as well. When they were no longer allowed in the schools, Metsker met the crisis by buying the first in a fleet of **"Youth on the Beam" buses**. A club director drove the bus from school to school, parking just long enough for meetings, and on Saturday night the bus carried kids to and from the rallies.

YFC Club bus to keep meetings near school and overcome ACLU ban on Bible Clubs





YFC's 10th Anniversary in 1954

On the 10th anniversary of YFC in 1954 Torrey Johnson wrote in the YFC Magazine, "Now ten years old, humanly speaking, I never thought it'd get as big as it is. Yet I realize there is no limiting God at work. Youth for Christ was used of God to bring together many groups that were mutually exclusive and even critical of one another for one common objective – that of winning people to Christ. The great Billy Graham campaigns in Seattle, Portland, Grand Rapids, and Detroit were sparked by Youth for Christ leadership; his great campaigns in Los Angeles, Jackson, Mississippi, and London, England, owe a large debt to Youth for Christ's contribution."

In that same magazine, Billy Graham wrote, "Youth for Christ International had to come. Inquiries had come to directors in large cities by the hundreds - how could Youth for Christ be launched in smaller cities and communities throughout America? We never dreamed what God had in store. We never dreamed that this movement within ten years was to reach into 79 countries of the world, and into every state and nearly every community in America. We never dreamed that literally hundreds

of thousands would be swept into the Kingdom of God, and that the mission fields of the world would feel the repercussions of this moving of the Spirit of God in America. The story of Youth for Christ will go down in history, should Christ tarry, as one of the miracles of the 20th Century – not only as a miracle in its origin, but as a miracle in its development."



Paul Overholt with Brazil National Director, Marcello de Silva, right



January 1979 Youth Congress held in Sao Paulo, Brazil

In 1952 Don Philips went to Brazil to start YFC. Two years later **Paul and Jane Overholt** arrived there. Paul thought he went to be an airplane mechanic, but Don told him he thought God sent him there to do youth ministry. And Paul said, "If that's what God wants, that's what I want." In 1964 they started a camp which is now complete and holds over 300 campers. Paul and Jane were so grateful that all five of their children got involved in Brazil YFC. They were World Outreach missionaries there for over 40 years. World Outreach was a YFC USA program started by Earl Schultz to send missionaries overseas to help our other national programs. **Marcello de Silva** has directed Brazil YFC for many years and with the help of long-term World Outreach missionaries, Frank and Judy Valenza, were instrumental in starting YFC in several other Portuguese-speaking countries. They held **Youth Congresses with thousands of young people in 1979** and 1990. They started Operation Deborah, which got 150,000 mothers and some fathers praying for Brazil YFC at least 15 minutes every day. They also began a School of Life ministry in the schools where more than 150,000 students heard the gospel and 20,000 gave their lives to Christ.



School in Kansas City with Al Metzker, front row, left, and Kelly Bihl, front row, right

Carl “Kelly” Bihl conducted the first YFCI Leadership Training School in September, 1954 in Kansas City. Kelly had been the Executive Director in Toledo and was now a YFCI Staff Evangelist. For the 30 students this school covered fifty-one topics in two weeks, ranging from how to get along with pastors to how to counsel with juvenile delinquents. From this “Director’s School” onward, anyone who wanted to become an Executive Director or other paid staff had to attend this training. The first Midwinter Convention was held in the Graemere Hotel in Chicago in January 1956.

By YFC’s 10th Anniversary, most of the key people who helped start Youth for Christ had moved on. Many of the men who had jumped on the YFC band-wagon in the 40s were young men who never thought of making a career out of YFC. It was what God told them to do at the moment, and they obeyed. Later they began to ask themselves, “What does God have planned for me. What is to be my life’s work?” And, understandably, many spun off to start ministries closely related to what they had been doing in YFC.



Ruth Graham adjusting YFC hat on husband, Billy, as YFC teenagers, Hope Miner and Larry Ballenger, look on at Winona Lake Convention in July, 1956

Billy Graham was the most obvious example, though he remained connected to YFC as First Vice President through the fifties. **He liked speaking at the Winona Lake Conventions.** For his crusade team he got business manager George Wilson from Minneapolis YFC. Crusade organizer Walter Smyth came from Philadelphia. Associate Evangelists T. W. Wilson and music director Cliff Barrows came from the YFCI field staff. T. W.'s brother, Grady, was a regular YFC speaker. Associate Evangelist Leighton Ford (Billy's new brother-in-law) and pianist Tedd Smith came from Canada YFC. And Soloist George Beverly Shea, though never a YFC staff member, had sung at many rallies. The Graham team also got from YFC much of the expertise needed to hold successful evangelistic crusades. But, as mentioned earlier, Billy Graham never really left YFC. He continued speaking at YFC events and serving on the **Board of Directors** for many, many years.

Bob Pierce left YFC to go to the Orient to start World Vision. Bob Evans started Greater Europe Mission. Paul Freed, YFC Director in Greensboro, North Carolina, caught a missionary vision while serving overseas with YFC and by 1954

had started TransWorld Radio in Algiers. Similarly, Dick Hillis started Overseas Crusades. Bob Finley began International Students. Ken Anderson left YFC to start his own film production company, Ken Anderson Films. Ralph Carmichael, music director for Los Angeles YFC and several Winona conventions went into sacred and secular music production and recording. Russ Reid joined Word Records as Vice-President and later set up his own advertising and publishing firm. Earl Schultz later created a list of well over 100 Christian non-profit organizations that had been spin-offs from YFC.

By 1955 Bob Cook cried, "Everyone's bailing out except me!" However, he displayed confidence at Winona '56 that "the best is yet to come. We have more maturity, more humility, not so much grabbing for position and power." He said, "We are no longer a group of evangelical gadgeeteers. The money situation is better. The statistics are thrilling – 33,000 decisions in rallies and 20,000 more in clubs last year." Later, at an afternoon business session, visiting speaker Bob Pierce dampened Bob Cook's enthusiasm. "You guys are trying to do too much," he said. "You aren't God's answer to every problem in the world. Do as we do in World Vision. Specialize in what you can do best – high school evangelism. God has other people to do the rest." Pierce's blunt talk challenged the staff to begin pruning the tree. Seven months later, in February, 1957, Bob Cook resigned as YFCI President.

Ted Engstrom had been an Executive Director of YFCI since 1951 and, according to Bob, knew more about YFC than anyone else. In an emergency session the directors chose Ted as the interim President until the full convention of delegates met in July. At that time Ted was installed officially as YFCI's third President. Although Bob Cook consented to step up to become the Chairman of the Board, many felt he had deserted the ship.



Billy Graham attended the International YFC Board of Directors meeting in 1955

Consolidation and Innovation 1957-68

Immediately upon being elected President in April, 1957, **Ted Engstrom** pronounced YFC “at an all-time peak.” Although serious internal problems faced Ted, YFC continued on a miracle basis. Ted appointed Evon Hedley, the Canadian National Director, as his Executive Director. In September of that year **June Thompson** moved to Wheaton, Illinois to become Evon Hedley’s Assistant at the 109 N. Cross Street office. She had been working for Evon in Brantford, Ontario (where she grew up) and Toronto since March 1954. June went on to serve under six YFC USA Presidents and was the longest-serving YFC staff member when she retired in February 2020 after 66 years of ministry. Roger Cross named the Youth for Christ headquarters in Englewood, Colorado, “The June Thompson Building.”

In August, 1957 the 9th YFCI World Congress on Evangelism was held in Copenhagen, Denmark. Quizzers and talent contest winners attended. There were more teenagers from more countries than at any previous congress. Delegates left the congress to travel in evangelistic teams to 43 different cities in seven different countries.

The first World Congress was, of course, the one in Beatenburg, Switzerland in 1948. The second World Congress was in Cannes, France in 1949, the third was in Brussels, Belgium in 1950, the fourth at Winona Lake, Indiana in 1951, the fifth in Belfast, Ireland in 1952, the sixth in Tokyo, Japan in 1953, the seventh in Sao Paulo, Brazil in 1955, and the eighth in Caracas, Venezuela in 1956. The one in Caracas was called “The Pan American Congress of Youth Evangelism” with the theme, “Gateway to Freedom.” Thirty-four teens from America were among the 125 delegates from North America in addition to the 2000 delegates from all across Latin America.



TOP: Ted Engstrom speaking

*BOTTOM: June Thompson
(left) named Christian
Secretary of the Year in 1979*



In January 1959 the **10th World Congress on evangelism was held in Madras, India** to begin the "Miracle Year" in YFC India. There were 2,100 delegates. 8,000 attended a final public rally with 180 decisions for Christ. In August 1959 the 11th World Congress on Evangelism was held in Mexico City. The 12th and final World Congress was held in Bristol, England in 1960. For three weeks afterward teams spread out all over England.



YFCI leaders at World Congress in India in 1959

With this slogan they launched a **Capital Teen Convention** the week before New Year's Day 1960. Ten thousand teenagers rode the bus, flew, took the train, or drove into Washington, D. C., creating a staggering housing and feeding problem. Hotel managers, who were usually fearful of holiday teenage crowds, were amazed at their guests' orderly behavior. One boy brought a ripped pillow case to a manager and offered to pay for it. The hotel man shook his head in disbelief, remembering senior classes that had left curtains in shreds.

The themes for the three days were "You and Your Country," "You and Your World," and "You and Your Tomorrow." Senator Frank Carlson chaired the Convention, and the cost for two nights in "one of Washington's finest hotels" was only \$24.00 per person. That included "eight delicious meals planned for teenagers' tastes," an exclusive sightseeing tour, transportation and baggage service, and insurance coverage for the entire trip.

President Eisenhower commended the teenagers and YFC leaders as they took part in the lighting of the national Christmas tree on the White House lawn. Not all the delegates were committed Christian youth. Many came just to spend the holiday in the Capital, but hundreds walked to the front of the National Armory to accept Christ at the invitation of Billy Graham and other evangelists.

The fifties were quickly fading, and YFCI, now in its teen years, was anxious to stay "geared to the times." YFC was growing up. Now, fascinated with the future as most Americans were, and impressed by the sheer rapidity of change, YFC leaders dubbed the sixties "The Decade of Destiny," and they promoted it by saying, "This will be the most exciting decade since the first Century." And up to that time, it may have been!



YFC Capital Teen Convention

Paul Philips, a gang member on probation from Denver, charged with gang warfare using chains, lead pipes, and hammers, etc., attended the convention and went forward to accept Christ. He knew he was a new person when he walked out of the inquiry room. But the real test would be when he came back in Denver. He was failing every subject in school, and the semester would end in three weeks. Paul worked, crammed, prayed, made up all his homework and passed each course. By the end of the spring semester he had a B average, had dropped out of the gang, and had started attending church and YFC activities.

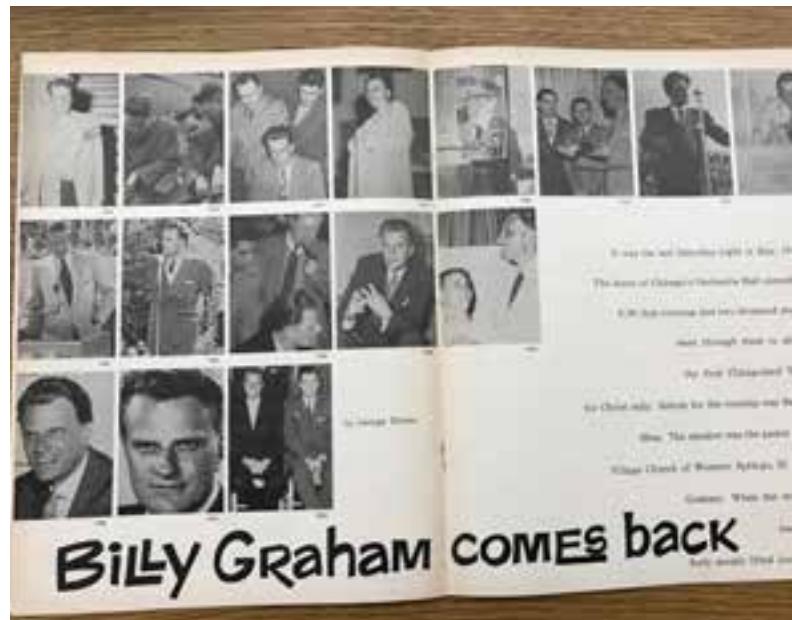
Overseas Director, Wendy Collins, began a Teen Team ministry in 1960 with the help of Paul Robbins. Wendy led the **first teen team in 1961 to the Middle East and Southern Europe**. Over the next 20 years YFC sent out more than 70 teams to the U.S. and Canada as well as five other continents. Most of these were music teams along with a few "Literature Teams." The teams consisted of young adults just out of high school – taking out a semester or a summer to use their talent. There were singers, instrumentalists, song leaders and preachers on the teams. Thousands of young people all over the world came to Christ through the Teen Team ministry.

In the early 60s National Club Director, Bill Eakin, and YFC Magazine editor, Warren Wiersbe, authored the "Balanced Life Philosophy," patterned after Jesus's life as a teenager from Luke 2:52, "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." The "balanced life" asked teenagers to seek a balance in their lives physically, mentally, socially and spiritually. Warren Wiersbe had been saved as a teenager under Billy Graham's ministry in the 50s at Winona Lake.

In May, 1962, Chicagoland Youth for Christ had a "**Billy Graham Comes Back**" Campaign in the McCormick Place Convention Center – nearly 18 years to the day that he preached for the first time in Orchestra Hall on May 30, 1944. The same soloist and the same speaker returned to a much larger crowd. It was one of the largest of his crusades up to that time. Youth for Christ Magazine stated in one issue, "Ten thousand teenagers are



*Wendy Collins with Middle East and Southern Europe
Teen Team, 1961*



Page of Billy Graham Photos in YFC Magazine of his YFC Involvement every year from 1944 to 1961 when he came back to Chicago



Kelly and Bettie Bihl

expected to make decisions during Graham's days in Chicago, and Christians all across Chicagoland, especially the young people of Youth for Christ, chorus together: "Welcome back, Billy Graham!"

That same year the International office moved to 360 S. Main Place in Carol Stream, Illinois. The International office would later break away from the U.S. Office in 1969 and move to Geneva, Switzerland. The U.S. office remained in Carol Stream until 1990 when it moved to Denver.

A second Capital Teen Convention in December 1962 drew 12,000 teens. Billy Graham and others spoke there also. Jack Daniel coordinated the entire event, which was even more successful than the first Capital Teen Convention.

Several weeks later, Ted Engstrom resigned at the YFC Mid-winter Convention. It wasn't unexpected. His old leg injury which he had incurred in a jeep accident in the service was even more painful after an unsuccessful operation. He had once told a YFC group, "You men are like a bunch of race horses. I can't stay up with you. I can only try and keep your noses pointed in the right direction." Engstrom became the President of World Vision and Evon Hedley followed him as Executive Director. They wanted June Thompson to go with them, but she decided to stay with YFC.

There was no logical choice for a successor to Ted, so factions gathered in hotel rooms to plot strategy for favorite personalities. One YFC leader recalled, "Too many acted like second-class ward politicians." Finally, after two days of wrangling, they elected a compromise candidate, **Kelly Bihl**, the field evangelist and Director of Leadership Development. Kelly had spoken at just about everyone's rally. He was known as a "good preacher" and "a man of prayer," but his administrative gifts were unproven.

For the next two years, Bihl, as the fourth President of YFCI, rode a stormy sea of dissatisfaction. The sixties was the age of technology, the electronic age, the TV age, and the space age. Great population shifts marked the sixties, and Americans were on the move. Bihl presided over an exodus of older directors and arbitrated a struggle for credentialing staff and raising rally standards. The conflicts tore deep into the organization and into the heart of a man whose main gift and experience up to that time had been preaching and teaching the Word of God. He began a radio program in 1963 called "This is Youth for Christ," with Moody Radio's Ted Seelye as producer. A few months later Gary Dausey became the producer and announcer.

Kelly had been used to seeing "prayer" as the solution to most problems, but now he saw that more than prayer was needed to pilot the ship of YFC through the stormy waters of opinion. With problems pressing and solutions slow in coming, Kelly resigned in March, 1965, to join the radio staff of John Brown University. In his two years as President, Kelly served as a respected spiritual leader, but he bore bruises as a "buffer" during one of the most tumultuous periods in YFC's history – a time when YFC was narrowing its ministry and lost men whose talents and interests were not solely on high school evangelism.

The Balanced Life philosophy originated from Bill Eakin and Warren Wiersbe in 1962. It stated that based on the model of Jesus in Luke 2:52, a young person should keep a balance physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually in their lives. This was implemented in the YFC Clubs and then carried over to the Campus Life Clubs soon after.

Campus Life radically changed the YFC club ministry, which had been run mostly by students or volunteer staff. Campus Life Clubs had been started around 1964 by San Diego YFC and North Area (Chicago) YFC. They instigated a huge shift in ministry philosophy and approach. Soon many of the chapters were doing Campus Life which was geared to non-Christian students. The meeting consisted of a couple of crowd breakers (such as fun with the “**electric chair**” or the “hot seat”), a discussion on a topic relevant to teenagers, followed by a short wrap-up by one of the staff.

The Campus Life staff, who most of the time were full or part-time, would emphasize getting together one-on-one with a student to talk personally about where he was in his relationship to Jesus. The staff would spend much of their time at the schools doing contacting, attending sports events, and following up on club meetings. These meetings were supplemented with camps, conferences, retreats and “high-adventure” activities. “Insight” meetings were geared to Christians and/or seekers, and “Impact” meetings were geared to non-Christians. The Christian students were asked to attend the “Impact” meetings and to bring an unbelieving friend with them. The first “Insight/Impact” manuals were published in 1967, and these gave great impetus to the Campus Life movement.



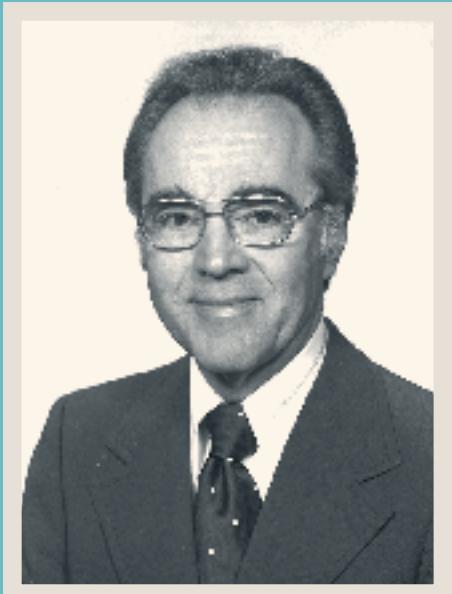
Trent Bushnell leading a Campus Life Club in Lansing, Michigan



Campus Life Hot Seat (Electric Chair) at County Fair Booth



Sam Wolgemuth Becomes President



Sam Wolgemuth

At the Midwinter Convention in Pittsburgh in January 1965, there was again more wrangling. But finally, the delegates unanimously elected a Pennsylvania farmer's son as the fifth President of YFCI. **Sam Wolgemuth**, a bishop in his small Brethren in Christ denomination, had been Director of Overseas Ministries for nine years. As a quiet, self-assured minister of the Gospel as well as a successful businessman in the auto-parts business, he took up the task of leading an organization that had shaken the emotional and physical fortitude of several fine men before him.

Sam had attended a summer refresher course at Grace Seminary in Winona Lake, Indiana in the summer of 1949. While Sam studied, his wife, Grace, wandered down the hill to the conference grounds and found a YFCI convention in progress. The spectacle was nothing like anything she had encountered before. She was awed and touched and sure that God was in the midst of the enthusiasm she witnessed. She hurried up the hill and with difficulty tore her diligent husband away from his books. That summer night, as Sam and Grace sat halfway back in the Billy Sunday Tabernacle, God spoke to them about something they sensed in the lives of the men around them and something they longed to have in their own lives.

Sam returned to his church, however, "to give them everything he had" for one more year. When they returned to Winona the following summer, God spoke to them again – clearly about leaving the church for a ministry in YFC. A few months later, Bob Pierce urged Sam to move his family to **Japan to set up YFC's sixth World Congress** there the following year in 1953. Bob even called Bob Cook in Chicago and announced before a startled Grace, "I have your man for Japan!" But now Grace balked because she resented Pierce's high-handed way and told him, "It will be a miracle if I ever get peace about going to Japan." Days later Grace heard in a sermon that "God never takes anything out of our lives without giving us something better in return. That gave her peace about leaving their Waynesboro congregation, and months after that, they were on the boat heading for Japan.



The first chartered plane arrives at the decorated Tokyo airport.

THE COVER

Highlight of the YFC World Congress in Tokyo, Japan and the subsequent two weeks of intensive evangelism was the mass rally on Monday night, August 31, in Korakuen stadium. The crowd

portion of the hundreds who responded to the Gospel invitation following message by Dr. Robert A. Cook, president of YFC International, shown at left. Inset is a typical family which

Delegates being welcomed to the Japan World Congress at Tokyo Airport

Harold Myra in early 70s at desk in Wheaton



First-ever issue of Campus Life Magazine, October, 1965

In the years before his presidency, Sam's auto-parts business had grown into a successful four-store chain. As President, he was more like Ted Engstrom – an organization man, a careful planner who invited confidences by the way he listened. He had an ability to feel deeply, then act wisely after hearing out his colleagues on an important issue. Above all, he was flexible and open to change. Ten years of overseas travel had given Wolgemuth a world awareness far beyond that of his pastoral days. He moved easily in a changing world, while standing firmly on the fundamentals YFC had always proclaimed. “The Bishop” quickly assumed leadership of the five division heads in the headquarters office: Bill Eakin, Campus Life; Wendy Collins, Overseas Ministries; Bruce Love, Lifeline (Youth Guidance); **Harold Myra**, Literature (also the magazine editor); and Jay Kesler, Leadership Development. He also added layman, Paul Van Oss, to be Executive Director. June Thompson became Paul’s assistant. In 1968 June began working for Sam Wolgemuth as well as Paul Van Oss.

In 1965 YFC made a major change. They ceased publishing the Youth for Christ Magazine and began publishing **Campus Life Magazine**. The original magazine had been a house-organ telling what all was happening



USA National Campus Life Committee looking up

in the world of Youth for Christ. Initiated by editor, Harold Myra, Campus Life began having provocative articles with splashy colors that spoke more to non-Christians teens. Its circulation went from 30,000 to 160,000 within a short while. Christian Colleges began advertising in the magazine, and many Campus Life students began to enroll in those colleges. At some of them up to half of their students stated that they first heard of the college through Campus Life Magazine.

In 1966 YFC began the Y2 program in which American missionaries who were college graduates were sent overseas to assist indigenous YFC leaders around the world for two years. Bill and Ellen Spade were the first couple to participate in the Y2 program from the U.S.

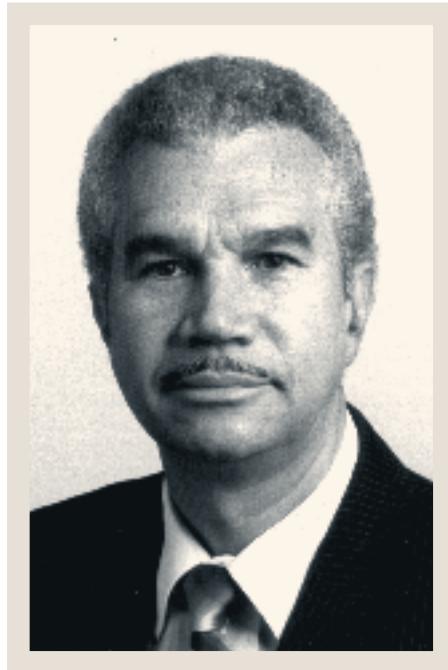
In 1967 the **first national field staff (Campus Life Committee)** began meeting semi-annually to develop Campus Life Impact and Insight Manuals. Ken Overstreet, Jim Green, Mike Yaconelli, Ron Hutchcraft, Clayton Bauman, and Larry Ballenger wrote and published Manual #1. Over the next two years Larry Ballenger led this group to write and publish Insight/Impact Manuals 2, 3, and 4. These gave great ideas to all club staff for crowd breakers and meeting content on a whole host of subjects. A Youth Guidance manual also appeared at that time. Art Deyo wrote and published a much needed manual for YFC volunteers called "The Whole Person Survival Kit" in 1976. It was edited by Bruce Barton.

YFCI and YFC USA Split

Although Youth for Christ began in the United States, it soon became a worldwide movement. But the headquarters still remained in the U.S., and the leadership spent a majority of their time building and servicing the American program. National programs across the world were growing stronger, and they wanted an equal voice in the decision-making. Programs such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, The Netherlands, France, India, Singapore, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, Lebanon, Kenya, South Africa, and some island nations in the Caribbean were becoming more and more influential in the affairs of YFCI.

In February 1968, 21 leaders met at the First Triennial YFC International Convention in Kingston, Jamaica, directed by Werner Burklin. These leaders included Jim and Dottie Groen, Sam Wolgemuth, Jim Wilson, Ray Harrison, Keith Rowe, and the Prime Minister of Jamaica, Norman Manley. There they formed an International Council and elected Sam Wolgemuth as President of YFCI. Ray Harrison became the General Director. The management and coordination of YFCI's cross-national affairs were now entrusted to a truly international body. The new constitution proposed to have such an International Conference somewhere in the world every three years, with the National Director and Board Chairman of each chartered nation becoming voting delegates. Thus, YFC USA would become one of many with the same decision-making power as all the other nations. Certain requirements had to be met in order for a nation to be chartered. **Gerry Gallimore** was discovered at this conference, and he began directing Jamaica YFC in 1969.

Up until that time the offices of YFCI and YFC USA were one and the same in Carol Stream (near Wheaton), Illinois. However, at this convention it was decided to split off YFC USA from YFCI and make the U.S. program on an equal footing to all the other YFC nations. The offices of both were one and the same in Wheaton, Illinois, but in 1969 a YFCI office was created in Geneva, Switzerland. Ray Harrison worked out of the Geneva office, but Sam Wolgemuth continued as President of both YFCI and YFC USA until 1973 when **Jay Kesler** became President of YFC USA. At that time (1968) the national leadership realized that everyone involved in the YFC movement and in church youth ministry needed more and better training. Gary Dausey began teaching Teen Dynamics Seminars (sometimes called "Symposium on Youth") for YFC staff and church youth pastors in 1968. He also developed curriculum called YLTS (Youth Leaders Training School) for International Staff.



Gerry Gallimore 1975



YFC USA President Jay Kesler



YFCI leadership, Cyprus in 1971, L to R, Groen, Rowe, Teibe, Burklin, Wilson, Wolgemuth, Manogaram, Rodgers, Harrison

International Convocations continued every three years: Jamaica in 1968; **Cyprus in 1971**; Les Diablerets, Switzerland in 1974; Rio de Janeiro in 1977; Birmingham, England in 1980; Hong Kong in 1984; Manila in 1987; Nairobi, Kenya in 1990; Chicago in 1993; Taiwan in 1996; Denver in 2000; Belo Horizonte, Brazil in 2003; Colorado Springs in 2005; Magaliesburg, South Africa in 2008; Denver in 2011; Thailand in 2014; and Miami in 2017. It will be in the Netherlands in September, 2021. Starting in 2000 the convocation name was changed to General Assembly (GA). GA 2020 was supposed to be in the Netherlands in September, 2020, but because of Covid-19, it has been moved to September 2022 (see page 97). That will be the 18th International Conference..

1974 saw the **Third Triennial Convocation in Diableret, Switzerland** (following the Lausanne Conference on Evangelism). It was held back to back with the famous Lausanne Conference. Since Billy Graham attended the Lausanne Conference, he stayed over to greet the YFC staff who attended the YFCI Convocation. There **Jim Groen**, Director of Denver Area Youth for Christ, took on a number of responsibilities for YFCI, including International Training Director. He turned that directorship over to Art Deyo in 1978. Jim recruited Paul Lewis, President of Smart Families of San Diego, to design a new YFC logo which became very popular and is still used today.

Les Diableret 1974 in Switzerland - L to R - Leonard Rodgers, Keith Rowe, Victor Monogram, Jay Kesler, Sam Wolgemuth, Billy Graham, Jim Wilson, Jim Groen, Werner Burklin, John Tabe





1974 *Les Diableret Convocation Delegates*



*The YFC International Training Committee
in Birmingham 1980*

Bob Pierce spoke at that **Triennial Convocation in Diableret** and raved about the huge influence Torrey Johnson had on getting the initial movement started. Torrey had quoted from 1 Sam. 10:26: "There went with him a band of men whose hearts God had touched." He said Torrey challenged everyone, including Billy Graham, Cliff Barrows, Bev Shea,, Merv Rosell, Jack Schuller, Chuck Templeton, Grady Wilson, and T. W. Wilson. "He was challenging them to let God touch their hearts and set them on fire, and he encouraged us all to spread that fire. When we gave God what we had, like the little boy who gave Jesus his loaves and fishes, we said, 'Jesus, eat us up! Break us, spend us, use us, eat us up!' It's astounding what God has done and what He did!"

Pierce went on in his message, "In the early days we were considered too young and a little eccentric. When I went to the Philippines for YFC in 1947, the Christian Century, an organ of the National Council of Churches, reported that Bob Pierce was ruining the churches because I was too Biblicalistic! So that was because we loved the Bible and preached it! Every one of us wanted to put somebody first into the hands of Jesus where they knew for sure who they were and that Jesus loved them and that they were saved. Then, second, we wanted them in the church. Today there are thousands of pastors and missionaries who were won to Christ because of our zeal."

The 1980 Convocation was held in Birmingham, England. As the International Training Director at the time, Art Deyo brought his **training committee to Birmingham** for meetings prior to the Convocation. There was some anti-American sentiment among the delegates at the Convocation, and they voted



that anyone on the YFCI Staff would need to live outside the United States from that point on. Staff numbered seven at the time and Werner Burklin was the only non-American. Art Deyo explored the possibility of moving his family of four to either Singapore or Nairobi, but in the end decided not to move due to their two children being in junior high and high school. Yet at the Birmingham Convocation American Jim Groen was elected President and Canadian Jim Wilson was elected General Director. The following year Art moved his family to Columbus, Ohio to pioneer Youth for Christ there.

YFC USA Continues Influencing the Worldwide Ministry



Earl Schultz mid-80s

YFC USA remained innovative and influential toward the entire world-wide program. Through **Earl Schultz** and others, missionaries were sent overseas to assist national programs. Training Conferences were also set up in many places around the world. Bruce Barton, Art Deyo, and Bill Eakin ran the three-week Summer Institute for new staff beginning in 1968. The Institute started at Winona Lake and soon moved to Wheaton College, then Rockford College in Rockford, Illinois for several years. After that it went to Bethel College in Mishawaka, Indiana and Huntington College in Indiana, and finally to Regis University in Denver. In 2008 the Summer Institute was changed to just "Institute," and was held at the Denver Inverness Hotel from 2008 to the present. Many staff from overseas have received their training at these Institutes.

In 1969 the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration of Youth for Christ was held at the Midwinter Convention in Chicago. President Wolgemuth told the delegates, "They say we're grown up now. I trust we have and that we have

learned some lessons. If we are not careful, we can lose sight of the end – our goal of evangelism worldwide. We can become stratified, and there will be no change. We can become pragmatists with a holier-than-thou phariseism, which is devoid of compassion and involvement. We can become so professional and sophisticated that we neglect the timeless affirmation of the Bible. Under God we must continue the YFC miracle by moving out into the great population centers. The blacks and other inner-city kids are saying, 'prove that you love us by moving where we are.' If we truly are an arm of Christ and His church, we need to reach that arm into the area of greatest need. If the church is a willing servant of Jesus, it will seek to change its ways in this changing world."

At the end of that convention 2000 guests gathered at Chicago's Conrad Hilton Hotel for the 25th anniversary banquet. Most of the old hands were there, **the four past presidents and Billy Graham** included. In his few words Torrey Johnson said, "YFC began in a miracle of personnel, emotion, and confidence, and the power of the Word of God. And the miracle of those early days has continued throughout the years." Bob Cook added what many wanted to hear: "YFC



YFCI Presidents with Billy Graham in 1969: Left to right, Bob Cook, Ted Engstrom, Torrey Johnson, Graham, Kelly Bihl, and Sam Wolgemuth

has never become what some people feared – old men for God.” After Ted Engstrom and Kelly Bihl added a word, Billy Graham addressed the crowd with his voice rising and falling in a cadence cultivated in hundreds of YFC rallies, “During the past twenty-five years we’ve had a moral....and technological revolution....Youth are now saying ‘We want something more than to learn how to make a living’....They are an untapped resource spiritually and they are ready to march with leadership. I believe that YFC is being used by God....in reaching these young people.”

Even President Nixon sent a telegram of congratulations: “I am happy to send warm greetings to the members and friends of Youth for Christ International on the occasion of your 25th anniversary. The spiritual guidance and imaginative leadership you provide for American youth is a source of sustaining strength to anyone who loves this land. And it is particularly satisfying for its president. It is good to know that my dear friend, Dr. Billy Graham, will be with you, for I can think of no one who has done more to stir the social conscience and moral responsibility of our young people. Please extend my best wishes to him and to all who attend your banquet.”

The 70s and early 80s were the pinnacle of success of the Summer Institute in Rockford, where as many as 250-300 new staff were trained each summer. A credentialing program was initiated with certain requirements to become a voting member of the YFC Council of Delegates. Other requirements were added as time went on. A voluntary one-week School of Theological Studies was inaugurated and directed by Art Deyo in 1976. It utilized various theologians and academicians to help staff deal with biblical questions that often come up in their work with youth. Many international staff attended this Institute, including the **Area Directors and some of the YFCI Staff in 1979**.

The last Winona Lake Conference occurred in 1973. YFC was changing, and after 24 years at Winona Lake and the Billy Sunday Tabernacle, it was time to leave. In the early 90s the tabernacle was torn down. After that there were no more international conventions in the summer.

In 1976 a program called “Project Serve” was initiated in the U.S. by Dick Wynn and Gary Fagan as they took three teams to help rebuild after the Guatemala earthquake. The idea of taking high school students from



YFCI Area Directors and Leadership Staff in Rockford in 1979

**“YFC
began in a
miracle...
And the
miracle of
those early
days has
continued
throughout
the years.”**



Larry Williams



Laurie and Dean Edwall



Long-term staffers David Schultz and his father, Earl Schultz, just two months before Earl went home to Heaven

churches or local YFC chapters on one, two, or three week mission trips caught on, and the program grew exponentially for many years. Most often these staff and students assisted in construction, Vacation Bible School, music or other forms of ministry. **Larry Williams, Dave Schultz**, and Guy LeCompte each took a turn leading the Project Serve Department as the years progressed. Project Serve took on different forms over the years but was stopped in 2016. YFC in other nations had also picked up on the idea. Also in 1976 a one-year missions program, Y1, was begun, replacing the earlier Y2 program, with many teams going to Africa over the next few years.

Dean Edwall grew up in Minneapolis and ran a Campus Life Club when he was in high school. While at Bethel College he felt God's call into missions. Later at Urbana he met Earl Schultz who told him YFC needed him in South Africa. He went there in 1976, and after two years he went home and met **Laurie** whom he dated and ended up marrying. They ended up ministering in Durbin, Pietermaritzburg, and Cape Town. In 1989 the Edwalls moved with the Kadalias across the south cape to George where kids went "crazy" over the new YFC ministry. They have served 32 years in that city growing a street ministry called Kidstop, a Schools ministry, and an Options ministry to Teen Parents. They have expanded to other cities in the area. The Options Crisis Pregnancy ministry run by Laurie helped dozens of young mothers and prevented many abortions. They were able to acquire an ideal 50,000 square foot building for Kidstop at an auction for the "ridiculous" price of \$10,000. Their ministry is one of the most thriving in South Africa to this day.

In 1979 Campus Life/J.V. was begun in the U.S. as part of a National Ministry to Middle School students. Also that year Art Deyo teamed up with Bill Muir, the National Campus Life Director, and wrote and produced two "LUG" (Living Unit Group) manuals for use in small groups of Christian students by staff and volunteers around the world.

In 1980 Earl Schultz became director of a new program for YFC USA called World Outreach. Potential missionaries were recruited and put through a Candidate Orientation. Then after the person or couple was approved, they would raise their support and go overseas to serve one of our national programs. Some went for just two or three years, but some actually went for a lifetime. For example, **Mark and Stephanie Dodrill**, first went to Barcelona, Spain, in 1982 and are still there today with a much-expanded ministry, including a very well-used Youth Center.



Mark and Stephanie Dodrill's first Christmas in Spain in 1982

Since that time as many as 100 short-term and long-term missionaries at a time have been stationed overseas helping our YFCI national ministries.

On May 5, 1980, YFC in the U.S. officially dropped the "I" from its name and became YFC USA, registering with the IRS on that date. In 1983 the International Office moved from Switzerland to Singapore, partly because it was cheaper but also because the majority of the world's young people live in Asia.

Also, in 1980 Earl Schultz, Bud Sparling, Bob Broyles, and Jim Meredith were instrumental in starting MCYM (Military Community Youth Ministry) in conjunction with Young Life. This enabled our World Outreach missionaries to go on dozens of U.S. military bases in Europe, Asia, and North America to work with military chaplains, set up club meetings (called Club Beyond), and minister to the kids (called military brats) of our U.S. soldiers. **Larry and Pat Russell** were the first missionaries to go to Germany to head up MCYM there. Until just recently the U.S. government provided up to half of a missionary's support. But recently, with the government wanting to separate themselves more and more from anything religious, YFC curtailed much of its military ministry.



Larry and Pat Russell



Life Application Bible Team at the inaugural launch of the LASB 3rd Edition, October, 2019

LEFT to RIGHT: Ron Beers, Linda Taylor, Dave Veerman, Bruce Barton, Neil Wilson



Crowd of youth at mall rally at Youth Congress, 1985

In 1982 Bruce Barton, Dave Veerman, Ron Beers, and Jim Galvin opened the Publishing Division at the National Office. They published a number of books including Parents and Children, Parents and Teenagers and Practical Christianity, with input from various YFC staff. Their crowning achievement was the Life Application Bible. Groups of staff went to a retreat center and wrote applications for the entire Bible over a period of about a year. These were edited, fine-tuned, and eventually published by Tyndale House. Jay Kesler had approached Tyndale and Ken Taylor for an advance to publish this as a Bible commentary for teenagers, but Tyndale balked because it would have such a limited audience. They finally agreed to publish The Life Application Bible if it would be geared to both youth and adults. Tyndale House later purchased the rights to that Bible for \$100,000 in 1991 when the National Office was in a financial slump. The LAB has sold over 40 million copies in 44 languages. It is now in its third edition. Looking back, many in YFC have regretted that sale, but we are still proud to have been the originator of the first of many Bibles with applications for various audiences.

YFC USA launched a series of large meetings every three years starting in 1985 with **Youth Congress '85**, partnering with Campus Crusade For Christ. Sherri Howard from Wichita, Kansas, attended and believed that God wanted her to make an impact for Jesus Christ in her school, her city, her state, and her country. She directed an organization in Wichita called Choice Lifestyle to challenge and mobilize young Christian students to do three things: (1) read their Bibles daily; (2) carry a Bible to school; and (3) organize prayer and Bible study groups in schools. Sherri recruited more than 4000 students committed to carry out these responsibilities.



12,000 Worth the Wait Cards on Washington, D.C. Mall at DC94

Additional large group conferences with as many as 20,000 students were held in Washington, D.C. in 1988 (with President Ronald Reagan speaking), 1991, and 1994. They were expanded to having back to back conferences in both Washington D.C. and Los Angeles in 1997, 2000, and 2003. In 2006 it was outsourced to Youth Specialties, and in 2009 it was sold to them outright. The DC '94 Conference encouraged students to sign "**Worth The Wait**" cards saying they would wait till marriage to have sex. 12,000 students signed those cards, and they were placed on the DC Mall. **Staff from other nations** were invited to these conferences so they could be trained in separate sessions on how to develop such mass programs in their countries.



International Staff who came to DC 97 for training



We see that sometimes ministry methods go in cycles. The rallies of the 40s and 50s gradually gave way to an emphasis on smaller group (Campus Life, Youth Guidance and even one on one). But in the 80s the time had come to help students in their small groups see that they weren't alone as believers on this planet. So the large mass evangelism/training conferences of DC/LA sprang up and lasted for about 20 years, but then returned to smaller venues once again.

The Stabilization and Growth of YFC International

Sam Wolgemuth remained President of YFCI until 1980. He had been President of YFC USA for eight years and President of YFCI for 12 years. At the August 1980 Convocation in Birmingham, England, Jim Groen was elected President and Jim Wilson was elected General Director.

Jim Wilson served as Training Director from 1974 to 1977, at which time he was elected as YFCI General Director. As the new President Jim Groen traveled all over the world during the 80s to visit and encourage national programs. He came up with a new design of the Youth for Christ logo, which is still used by YFCI today. In 1977 Jim Groen asked Art Deyo to serve as International Training Director. Art organized an International Training Committee and led Leadership Conferences in Asia, Africa, and Latin America until he resigned from the International staff in 1981.

In October 1983 **South Africa YFC held a nationwide staff conference**. A large group of staff attended, including a number of black Africans. Apartheid was still in effect, but Youth for Christ still

South Africa YFC Training Conference with Art Deyo, Larry Kreider and Buddy Burge speaking, October 1983



involved mixed races in their activities. They even allowed blacks and whites to sleep in the same room together (a definite "no-no" in South Africa during Apartheid.) and to use the same restrooms.

At the sixth Triennial YFCI Convocation in Hong Kong the summer of 1984, the theme was "Touching One Young Billion," the estimated number of youth in the world. At that time for better effectiveness and efficiency the number of world areas was reduced from ten to five. A program of "strategic shifts" was adopted, and organizational chartering of each country was begun. **Photos of sixty-one National Directors were published in 1984 along with those of Area and International leaders.**

In August 1987 the seventh Triennial YFCI Convocation was held in Manila with the same "Touching One Young Billion....by All Means Possible" theme. The approach there was on "Sharpening our Focus" on a broader range of youth "target groups," "Mobilizing the Church" as God's chosen instrument for accomplishing the Great Commission, and "Developing Ministry Models" to stay on the "cutting edge" of innovative evangelism.

The theme of the eighth Triennial Convocation in Nairobi, Kenya, in August 1990 was "One Family – One Message – One Lord." Speakers were Jay Kesler, Ravi Zacharias, Ajith Fernando, Torrey Johnson, Sam Atiemo, David Nthiwa, and others. Torrey Johnson told us that in YFC's 46-year history, as many as 10 million youth and other family members may have come to Christ through YFC. On the night of the Middle East Crisis (the Gulf War with Iraq), Dr. Zacharias changed his message from the assigned topic to "the biblical view of violence, injustice and evil." He said, "Violence, injustice and evil are not just 'out there,' they're in your heart and mine."



YFCI leaders and Area and National Directors in 1984



Candlelight Communion, Manila Convocation 1987



There were many ministry reports from the 50+ countries that attended:

- **Philippines:** Plan to work with 6000 teens, reach 3000, and disciple 300.
- **South Africa:** 1.25 million kids have had a face-to-face encounter with YFC staff.
- **Zimbabwe:** Started an agriculture training program for street kids who can't find jobs.
- **Argentina:** Started a youth hotline on which a kid can get counseling for suicide, etc.
- **Holland:** Organized "Project Serve" in 15 countries with 250 participants.
- **Tanzania:** Started YFC the previous year and by August 1990 have programs in five high schools and six colleges in Mwanza.
- **Taiwan:** YFC had held rallies with over 4000 people attending and hundreds making decisions for Christ.
- **Colombia:** Hundreds were making decisions for Christ through a music team with ministry in schools throughout Bogota.
- **India:** Over 1000 youth were expected to attend the East India Youth Convention in Calcutta in January 1991.



Outdoor rally in Nairobi at Convo 1990

The conference ended with a large **outdoor rally in Nairobi**. Gerry Gallimore, Jamaican Area Director of the Americas, was unanimously elected President (the first from a developing country), and in an unprecedented move, Jim Groen agreed to leave his ten-year presidency to become the Chairman of the Board, answerable to Gerry Gallimore. But in 1991 Jim resigned to start his own organization, the Worldwide Leadership Council. The next year "YFCI Ministries" was formed in Denver, Colorado, with Ernie Taylor directing. The YFCI offices were still located in Singapore, but YFCI Ministries provided a convenient office in Denver from which to raise money and provide other services for the global movement.

In 1992 Larry Russell, World Outreach Director for YFC USA, began a program utilizing International Liaison Directors. He

recruited one person for each of the five areas of the world. They were to focus on assisting the national programs in their designated area by providing mission personnel (short-term or long-term), Project Serve teams, training, and finances. The five ILDs were Erik Burklin for Europe, Bill Housley for the Middle East and North Africa, Phil Kruger for Africa, Dave Bidwell for the Americas, and Art Deyo for Asia-Pacific. Just two examples of the kind of help that was provided: Dave Bidwell raised the money to set up the "Taraja Boys Home" for homeless street boys in Kenya, and Art Deyo raised the money to build a "**Ragpicker Home**" for boys in India who wander the streets and pick up trash to earn a few pennies a day to subsist on. These "Ragpickers" were taken off the streets, given schooling, taught

the Bible, and learned a job skill such as carpentry. Some of the ILDs even laid the foundation for new national programs.

The 1993 YFCI Convocation was held in Chicago, with Gerry Gallimore being re-elected as President for a second three-year term. More than 70 countries were represented by the 800 delegates. There were 54 chartered nations when the week began, but eleven more were added for a total of 65. Each day of the Convocation showcased a different area of the world. Four white papers were given to challenge the staff to begin reaching the kinds of youth being touched very little by YFCI: young people of different cultures, those in displaced communities, those in poor communities, and those of a younger age (10-13). Currently YFCI is doing a much better job of reaching these four categories of youth.

In 1994 the Genocide happened in Rwanda where over a million people were slaughtered in just three months. John Baptiste Mugarura had just tried to start YFC there when it happened. His house and family were attacked twice but not killed. After four days they managed to escape the country. Meanwhile, John Baptiste heard that his well-known mentor/pastor was killed and he thought maybe he was the only preacher left in the country. During the Genocide **John Baptiste lost his fiancé and several other family members**. Since he had lived through the Genocide, he knew God had something special for him to do, and that was to return to Rwanda and restart Youth for Christ. In the years following they built a Training Center and two schools – one in Kigali and one in another part of the country. Each has grades K through 12 with a full load of trained teachers who teach in French. Youth for Christ is known to have the best schools in Rwanda.

In 1994 Dick Wynn, Asia-Pacific Area Director, found a man in Nepal named Nico Thapa, who was interested in youth evangelism and starting Youth for Christ there. Nepal was a largely Hindu country that had its first Christian convert back in 1951. Yet Nico and the staff he recruited found that young people in Nepal were hungry for something more. Many responded to the Gospel, and in 1999 they held a national Youth for Christ Conference with nearly 1000 youth coming from all over the nation. Over the



The completed Ragpicker building in Madras (Chennai), India



Pioneers of YFC in Rwanda in January 1994 - John Baptiste is third from left in back row (only 4 are known still alive)



Crowd of Hindus waiting to see a doctor in Nepal in 1997



Sam Sherrard

years they held several **medical missions** in conjunction with India YFC and teams of doctors and nurses from the U.S., in which thousands of Hindus were examined, treated, and given medicine.

In 1995 Youth First Concerns, an “under-the-radar” YFC ministry, was begun in another Asian country. Today this Hindu/Muslim nation is one of the strongest and most effective YFC ministries in existence. With a proliferation of programs thousands of young people have been touched with the Gospel.

In 1996 the YFCI General Assembly (name changed from “Convocation”) with 450 delegates was held in Taipei, Taiwan, with the theme “Their Future, Our Passion.” Typhoon Herb had roared through Taiwan the day before it was to start, so many delegates were delayed. Dr. Tony Evans of Dallas, Texas, and Dr. Peter Kuzmic of Croatia challenged the delegates to develop a real passion for youth evangelism. **Sam Sherrard** was elected President. Sam was originally from Sri Lanka and had been the National Director there. But after that he pastored and ran Hawaii Youth for Christ for years.

The directors from the various areas got together during General Assembly for meetings and fellowship. **The National Directors from the host Asia-Pacific Area** took advantage of the meeting being in their home area so they didn’t have to travel so far.



Asia-Pacific National Directors at Conv 96 in Taiwan

Dick Wynn presented a two-year “Organizational Development Study” (ODS) that suggested some structural changes needed in YFCI and a strategy for the way forward. Part of the study included a paper that Art Deyo drew up called “Eight Driving Forces Affecting Today’s Ministries.” This was translated into six languages and accompanied by a 30-minute video, called “The Future’s Wild Ride.” Eleven new countries received charters, bringing the total number of chartered programs to 76.

This Organizational Development Study was accepted by the delegates in Taiwan, but it was never implemented under Sam Sherrard's leadership. Sam did provide a very useful YFCI Handbook in 1998, but he had to resign that year for health reasons. The Board installed Jean Jacques Weiler from France as Interim YFCI President. This crisis of leadership in YFCI was of great concern.

David Kadalie spent several years on staff in the Cape Town and George programs of South Africa. In 1998 he felt called to pioneer YFC in Madagascar. The ministry grew rapidly through English Clubs, and after seven years between 3,000 and 4,000 young people had gone through their English Clubs, which God used to springboard many other ministries. These included music, sports, and radio. They did cycling, soccer, volleyball, and basketball, and at one time they had the second-best soccer team in the country. Many of the young people in the English Clubs were mentored, discipled, and coached to become strong Christian leaders. Many ended up teaching at the university or as YFC leaders in seven cities across the country. After Madagascar, David left there to help start YFC in 10 other African nations, including the Indian Ocean nations of Seychelles, Rodrigues, and Comoros.



David Kadalie and his family while in Madagascar

Leadership Crisis in YFCI

Jean Jacques Weiler had come into YFC in 1963 as National Director for France YFC. He served in that capacity for 24 years and then replaced George Brucks as European Area Director in 1987. In 1989 the Berlin Wall was taken down, and Eastern Europe opened up to YFCI. Under Jean Jacques's leadership, and with the help of Bob Tanner and others, YFCI was able to open ministries in Romania, Slovakia, Moldova, Belarus, and the Czech Republic.

As Jean Jacques took the reins of the organization, he realized that although YFCI was facing some significant structural, relational and financial problems, the heart of the problem was spiritual, and that all in Youth for Christ needed to get on their knees and confess sin. He read that God had told Jeremiah that if the people confessed their sins, God would bless them. For the first year of his Interim Presidency, Jean Jacques traveled the world confronting issues and seeking reconciliation within the movement. The entire leadership team met at The Cove in Ashville, North Carolina and asked for forgiveness. While God was doing some wonderful things through some healthy YFC nations, the YFCI Headquarters was very broken - a weak and ineffective organization.

In March 2000 a **Prayer Conference was held in Multahl, Germany** for three days. About 35 people attended, and the only agenda was prayer. It was organized and led by Prayer Coordinator, Linda Stershic. On the first day people confessed personal sin and had a three-hour "discipline of silence." The second day they confessed corporate sins and talked about YFCI's future. God showed them that many leaders were building "their own kingdoms," and that many staff people over the years had been seriously injured by YFC.



Prayer for YFCI Leaders at Multahl, Germany



*Participants at YFCI Strategy Meeting
in Budapest in May, 2002*

**"...it was
decided
to 'give the
ministry back
to young
people.'"**

On the last day when communion was served, God truly moved. Long distance calls were made seeking reconciliation with former YFC staff who had left injured. The prayer gathering in Multahl was a turning point for the movement. From that point forward the leadership team was committed to work together and saw hope for the future.

Jean-Jacques was an instrument of God to bring healing and health to the YFC movement. When he fully became President at GA 2000, his clarion call was "Kingdom Mentality," putting the values of God's Kingdom and its advancement ahead of any personal agendas.

In June 2001 35 International leaders met in Valence, France, to make some key decisions about the future of YFCI. It was a time of great praise, worship, and prayer. The structure of YFCI was changed along with the YFCI constitution, subject to Board approval. A funding strategy was developed, a new mission statement was written, the YFC logo was updated, and roles were defined and clarified. The major outcome of this gathering was The Valence Covenant, which committed those who signed it to not let the past dictate the future, to choose to believe the best about each other, and to move from mistrust to trust – thus a "kingdom mentality." Copies were sent to the National Directors and Board Chairs. God created a new spirit in YFCI at this gathering.

In September, 2001, the world changed. People all over the world were affected by "9-11" – the Muslim attacks on the twin towers in New York and the Pentagon in Washington D.C. With increased terrorist threats, YFCI knew the ministry to young people was needed more than ever. People frequented church and sought the Lord more, but, unfortunately, it didn't last.

In May 2002 a YFCI Strategy Meeting was held in Budapest, Hungary. The leadership was asked, "What kind of organization do you want?" In response to an earlier mandate God had given the leadership, it was decided to "give the ministry back to young people." In other words, YFCI needed to do youth evangelism

through trained young leaders. There was a strong emphasis on leadership development.

Out of this meeting Jean Jacques asked Linda Stershic to become the Global Prayer Coordinator, taking the place of Ron Berger, who had been in that position for two years. For the next 12 years Linda developed this prayer ministry to the point that she sent out four devotional messages every day along with prayer requests to 13 different groups every week. This included the weekly epray, which went all over the world. The fact that YFCI survived this crisis is a testimony to God's grace in response to people who humbled themselves before Him, and a testimony that God had raised YFC up to reach youth with the Gospel. It was obvious that He was not finished with YFC yet!

In 1997 the leaders of Africa YFC, led by Area Director, **Don Osman**, met in Ghana and were asking, "Where are the results of our labors in Africa after these 50 years?" After several days of discussion, reflection and prayer, the Holy Spirit gave them the directive called "Generation 21." It states that the staff are "to be God's catalyst in faithfully developing a pan-African generation of young people who will be characterized by prowess in spiritual warfare, boldness in evangelism, passion in social involvement, godliness in leadership, and reflecting an exemplary Christian life." Out of Generation 21 several social programs were developed.

The G-21 statement became the model for a Strategic Focus Statement for the movement when the Global Ministry Plan was developed at the strategy meeting in Hungary in 2002. The YFCI Strategic Focus statement is: YFC reaches young people everywhere, working together with the local church and other like-minded partners to raise up lifelong followers of Jesus who lead by their godliness in lifestyle, devotion to the Word of God and prayer, boldness in evangelism, and commitment to social involvement.



Entire group that helped to birth G21



Nadaline and Don Osman, 2000



Art Deyo with eight Ukrainians he trained for serving in Kyrgyzstan in August, 2004

Growth of YFCI Following the Crisis

In 2001 the Asia-Pacific Leadership Team asked Art Deyo to travel to several countries in Central Asia to contact Christians who were interested in starting Youth for Christ there. YFC had received inquiries from two young women, Milena in Uzbekistan, and Asira in Tajikistan, who were interested in helping. In May 2002 Art traveled to Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan to contact pastors, missionaries, and interested Christians regarding YFC's interest in beginning youth ministry there. Milena and Asira served as translators since they also spoke English. Over the next two years Art made five more trips to Central Asia. David Wraight accompanied him on one of those trips. Like the cry from Macedonia that Paul heard in Acts 16, they kept hearing a similar cry, "Come over to Central Asia and help us!"

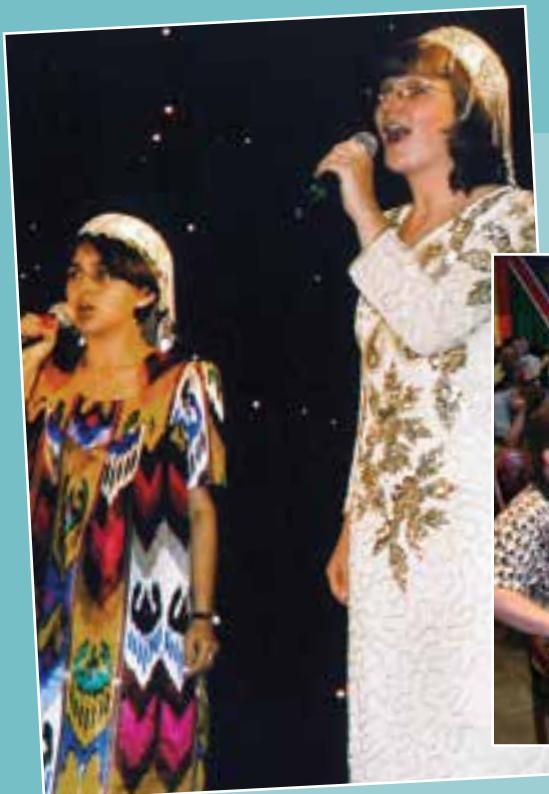
During those visits, it was found that young people in Central Asian countries are mostly "nominal Muslims" who don't practice the "five pillars of the faith." Missionaries reported that a sizable number of people were converting from Islam to faith in Jesus Christ. Art participated in two Central Asia Consultations of nearly 250 missionaries from Central Asia. Only 12 of them were focused on youth ministry – yet most all the missionaries confirmed that "the most neglected age in Central Asia is 14-17-year-olds." When the missionaries discovered that YFC was planning to start ministry in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, many began asking for YFC to come to their country. National pastors from Turkey, Azerbaijan, Tatarstan (Southwest Russia with capital Kazan), and the North Caucuses asked YFC to come there to help them reach teenagers. At that time YFC was at a loss to respond to any of those requests, but slowly God answered those prayers.

Art also made three trips to the Ukraine to recruit **young adults fluent in Russian** who would commit two years of their lives to pioneer YFC in Central Asia. In the process National Director, Andrew Kostyshyn reported that Ukraine YFC had 25 full-time staff working in three of the 25 regions of the

country. They were working with 150 churches across the country to help run weekly YFC clubs. They had 102 clubs reaching 3000-4000 students per week. Four missionaries from Ukraine were identified who were qualified and wanted to go to Kyrgyzstan for two years. Art helped them raise their support for what was dubbed the "Silk Road Project," and in 2005 they went to Kyrgyzstan to launch YFC. Asia-Pacific Area Director, Scott Cougill, helped coordinate that project, and since then ministry in Central Asia has expanded to eight countries with as many as 30 paid indigenous staff.

In July 2002 the Asia-Pacific Area held a conference called ASPIRE (Asia-Pacific in Responsible Evangelism) with 215 high-caliber young leaders from 22 countries. They were kept busy in seminars, workshops, and general sessions which were translated into several languages. Both **Asira and Milena** from Central Asia had their expenses paid so they could attend the conference. Each delegate was challenged to commit to leading new youth mission projects over the next eighteen months. Many were able to plan missions with their national leadership before they even left ASPIRE. At the end of the conference all the delegates were asked to consider making a commitment to the Lord to give their lives totally to youth mission. God moved as 128 of the delegates signed a response form, walked to the front of the meeting room, and placed their pledge in a box to publicly indicate their desire to reach the youth of this world for Christ.

In September 2003 a **YFCI General Assembly was held in Belo Horizonte, Brazil**. More than 80 young leaders were invited to attend from many different countries. They were mostly full-time staff considered to be up-and-coming leaders in their respective national programs. Most of them arrived a week early for training as part of a three-year program that would grant a college certificate in youth ministry. A Global Ministry Plan called for pioneering YFC in 30 countries in the next ten years.



Asira (Tajikistan) and Milena (Uzbekistan)
singing at ASPIRE 2002 in Perth

Delegates in business session at GA 2003 in Brazil





There were outstanding times of praise and worship with an excellent Brazilian worship band and powerful messages every morning from the Word of God by Brazilian pastor Dos Santos. **David Wraight**, of Melbourne, Australia, who had previously been the Area Director for Asia-Pacific, was ratified as the new YFCI President by the 80 nations present. Jean Jacques Weiler was to remain on for one more year to insure a smooth transition.

In July, 2005, the triennial General Assembly was held in Colorado Springs, Colorado. It began with an extended **Concert of Prayer in the World Prayer Center**. This prayer-time was made even more special because we were joined by 100 high school students who were doing an internship at the Prayer Center. 80 countries were represented. One of the speakers, Ron Heagy, was a quadriplegic who became paralyzed in an unfortunate surfing accident when he was 18. His strong faith was contagious and helped us to see the flimsiness of some of our "excuses." He always started out his message saying, "I woke up this morning, breathing, and I knew it was going to be a good day." A highlight of GA 2005 was the presentation of many ministry resources that had been developed by a Global Ministry Team under the leadership of Don Osman, who was serving as Vice President of International Ministries at the time.

In 2007 YFCI President, David Wraight, published his first book entitled *The Next Wave*, which described "empowering the generation that will change the world." David's conclusion was, "I sincerely believe that living authentic, revolutionary lives for Jesus, and reaching, teaching, mentoring, and empowering young people to impact the world is the most strategic thing we can do to ensure as many as possible join us in that great gathering in the heavens with our Lord and Savior."



Former President, Jean Jacques Wieler, washing the feet of new President, David Wraight at GA 2005



GA delegates worshiping at the Colorado Springs World Prayer Center



LEFT: Italy staff at GA 2014 with Ester Montefalcone in the middle

BELOW: Young Leaders Receiving the Keys to YFC at GA2008



During 2007, YFC was birthed in Italy by Ester Montefalcone. Ester grew up in Italy in a non-Christian home. But when she was eight her mother became a Christian, and she began attending an evangelical church. She committed her life to Jesus when she was 15, and at 18 she felt called to serve the Lord for the rest of her life. At age 19 she moved to Bologna to attend the university. During college and even after graduation she worked with young people through her local church. In 2005 she became an Intern at the Geneva, Switzerland office of Youth for Christ. After two years and because of her good work, Area Director John Duncan suggested that Ester begin pioneering YFC in Italy. She set up an office in Bologna and now has **several staff and ministry sites scattered** around the country. Many youth are coming to Christ.

The September 2008 Triennial General Assembly was held in Magaliesburg, South Africa. 750 YFC leaders from 80 nations attended. 323 of those were young leaders who were beginning a two-year “Young Leader Development and Empowerment Process.” **These leaders were symbolically given the keys to the organization** and were allowed to give a great deal of input and leadership. A sizeable percentage of those youth are still involved in the movement, and many of them were the driving force behind the pioneering of new YFC nations during a time of explosive growth from 2008 to 2013.

It was in 2008 that Mexico Youth for Christ was begun by Jose Carlos Gutierrez. He grew up in Guatemala and heard about YFC from his sister who was a volunteer. When he was 17, his parents moved to Monterey, Mexico. In 2007 he was invited to translate for a Project Serve team that came to Monterey from the US. On the last day the team was there, a cocaine addict came crying to the YFC leaders asking if he could find Jesus. This moved Jose so much that he realized if he invested his life in reaching teens



Jose Gutierrez and wife Sarah

for Christ, he would see thousands come to Christ. After his call, he was asked by YFCI to pioneer YFC in Mexico. He agreed but knew he would have to **postpone his wedding with Sarah** for two years. During those two years the ministry spread from one state to seven states in Mexico. They did marry after two years. By 2014 they had impacted over 300,000 young people and are still growing.

The theme of the 2011 Triennial General Assembly held in Denver was “Your Kingdom Come.” The purpose was to explore what it means for the Kingdom to come in the lives of YFCI staff and how they could better characterize Jesus and reach, love, and empower young people to advance the Kingdom of God. **Dr. Ajith Fernando**, of Sri Lanka, challenged the 320 staff from 81 countries with

the importance of Biblical truth in our lives and ministry. Dr. Mike Treneer, President of the Navigators, warned the staff of the dangers of syncretism, pluralism and universalism.

Evidence of the amazing growth we experienced during this time is that after adding six new full YFC charters, we had a total of 71 nations with full charters at the 2011 General Assembly. In addition, we were actively pioneering in 35 nations and targeting another 25.

In 2011 David Wright published his second book, *Kingdom Come – in My Life, in the Church, in the World*. Through compelling stories and biblical investigation, he takes his readers on a journey from complacency and religiosity to radical, world-changing Kingdom living.

Early in 2013, Youth for Christ Mongolia was begun by Sodoo Sandagdorj who grew up in a non-Christian family in Mongolia. He had always wanted to be a clown, so he joined the circus when he was 12. He soon gained status on an elite team of circus performers that traveled to China and other countries. In Hong Kong he and several others on his team were invited to a Korean church where they heard the Gospel. They all accepted Christ as their Savior! After 13 years in the circus, Sodoo felt a call from God to reach the young people of Mongolia. For some time he worked



Dr. Ajith Fernando, Sri Lanka, preaching on the importance of truth in our life and ministry

with the youth in their church, but later he happened to meet a YFC staff member in Hong Kong. After this staff leader visited Mongolia, **Sodoo and his wife**, Gloria, decided to begin Youth for Christ Mongolia in January 2013. They organized many different youth clubs and began partnering with churches. They sent out mission teams and held large, popular summer camps and conferences. Their goal was to reach 10% of the youth population of 2.7 million by 2020.

Geordon Rendle Becomes President in March, 2013

Since David Wright had committed to be President for 10 years, the Board of Directors began searching for his successor in July, 2012. **Geordon Rendle** was confirmed as David's successor in March, 2013, with a plan for them to work together until Geordon became President January 1, 2014. Geordon is Canadian and grew up as a missionary kid in Colombia where his parents served with Prison Fellowship. His mother's family were the "Musical Neals," a family music team that was active in the early days of YFC all over North America. Geordon and his wife, Marilyn, had served in YFC for 20 years, beginning in Victoria, British Columbia, but mostly in Venezuela and Argentina. He became the Area Director for the Americas in January, 2010.

In 2012, with 95 nations reporting, YFC had 237,376 registered prayer intercessors. Today YFCI may have more prayer coverage than at any time in its history, including the early days of the all-night prayer meetings at Winona Lake. Canadian Adam Shepsky was in charge of epray for YFCI through 2019.

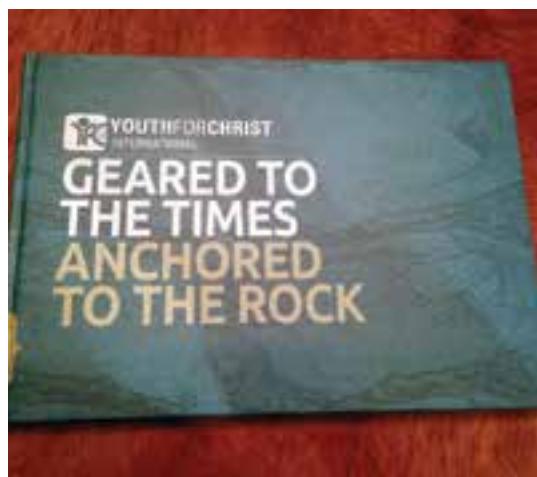
Geordon, Neal O'Boyle, and Larry Williams, along with other staff worked hard to set up GA2014 in Thailand where over 500 delegates gathered to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of YFCI. The theme, "Boldness in Evangelism," continued the premise on which YFC was founded 70 years before. Ravi Zacharias was the main speaker. Bruce Barton, Dave Veerman, Art Deyo, and others put together a commemorative book called, ***Geared to the Times, Anchored to the Rock***. It summarized the history of YFC with pictures, including a picture-page for each non-closed nation and a brief history. It was not only distributed to YFCI staff but to many alumni and supporters as well, and it was very well received.



Sodoo and Gloria Sandagdorj at GA 2014 in Thailand



Rendle Family in 2013



70th Anniversary History Book



Evon Hedley blowing out the candles at his 100th birthday party with the help of his daughter

As President, Geordon was an energizing leader. His ability to encourage people and excite them about their ministry was his forte. With his passion for teenagers and the YFCI mission, he traveled the US and the world speaking in National programs, churches and other venues. When he would leave an area or country, people knew for certain that Geordon cared about them and their ministry. They would be charged up, ready to keep on serving the Lord. For example, after he met former staffer, 98-year-old Evon Hedley, he would stop in to see Evon whenever he was in the Los Angeles Area. He was there for **Evon's 100th birthday party in 2016**, which was attended by 40 YFC staff and alumni. Evon lived two more years to age 102.

Geordon organized teams of people starting with the four Area Directors and the World Leadership Team (WLT). He wanted the offices in their areas to be an extension of the International Office in Colorado. He gave them plenty of flexibility to lead and develop the nations in their area. Under his leadership there was more of a feeling of family. He hired Neal O'Boyle as the Director of Ministry Operations. Toward the end of Geordon's Presidency, Neal moved back to Great Britain to become British YFC's National Director.

In the years since GA2008, the ministry had grown to the point that when Geordon became president there were 83 chartered nations, 56 pioneering nations and 23 target nations. But by 2015 Geordon and the Area Directors realized they had been too lenient in giving pioneering charters. It turned out that some had ministry in name only. Up to that time they had five categories of nations – Full Charter, Associate Charter, Pioneer Charter, Pioneer, and Target. In 2015 they removed “pioneer” and just had four categories. Geordon and the leaders wanted to be more realistic, making sure a “counted nation” had good ministry, a functioning board, and was faithfully sending in all the chartering requirements. By the end of 2018 there were 56 full charters, 21 associate charters, 30 pioneer charters, and 16 target countries – 123 in all. About 20 of these nations are closed countries – ranging from countries where staff must be cautious for their safety to those where staff have been threatened and even imprisoned. One of the miraculous areas of progress in the last few years has been the growth of YFCI in these closed countries!

While Geordon was an excellent visionary and communicator with a huge passion for the youth of the world,

"One of the miraculous areas of progress in the last few years has been the growth of YFCI in these closed countries!"



John and Kelly Bastian and family

the Board felt that Geordon's God-given talents were better suited to serve the mission in the role of Global Youth Advocate; so Geordon resigned in September, 2016. He had moved his family back to British Columbia in the summer of 2016, and from there he continued speaking on behalf of youth around the world as a member of the YFC Canada family. In 2018 Marilyn Rendle became the National Director of YFC United Arab Emirates, so the Rendles moved to UAE. From there Geordon continues his at-large ministry as Global Youth Advocate reporting in to YFC Canada.

John Bastian was appointed as Interim President by the Board in September 2016. John had been hired in 2004 as the Director of Finance for YFCI. He became the CFO in 2012. He had fulfilled that role well, and as Interim President he brought cohesion and direction to the staff who were uncertain and uneasy about YFCI's future. He was an excellent manager and kept the staff stable and focused.

He worked well with GA Director Sumi Flanagan to plan and implement GA2017 in Miami, Florida in September 2017. The story of how God led at GA is worth telling. Six weeks prior to GA the hotel YFCI had booked in Miami had a fire, and they were told they would have to find another venue. John and the staff wondered how they would ever find another hotel so close to the convention-time itself. At the end of August, John, Sumi and Ken Allen traveled to South Florida in search of another hotel. On that day they also sadly found out that long-term talented veteran, Australian Pieter Verhoeven, YFCI Director of Communications, had passed away. They looked at three hotels, and received very nice offers from several others. The head of the Miami Convention Bureau, a Christian, couldn't believe the low-ball offers these hotels were submitting. He said, "Of course, God would do this."

The first two hotels they toured were very warm and hospitable and wanted YFC to come there. The third hotel was the Miami Air-



Group prayer at GA2017

terrible flooding, and the original hotel that had the fire still hadn't reopened 15 months later!

About 10% of those who had registered for the conference couldn't get there because of visa or transportation problems due to the hurricane. But still about 325 leaders from 60 countries came together to celebrate the work God is doing around the world. It was a rich time of worship, Bible teaching, collaboration, strategic planning and laughter. Everyone **singing, worshiping and praying in their native tongues** was a powerful experience.

Dave Brereton as YFCI Director

In October 2017 the Board appointed Dave Brereton as YFCI Director (they decided to stop using the term "president" since all the national leaders of YFCI are called Directors) and John Bastian returned to his role of CFO with huge thanks and appreciation from the YFCI family. Dave had been in YFC since 1995. He served as Executive Director of YFC In Montreal, Quebec, from 1995 to 2000. He then served on the Canadian Board until he became National Director of Canada YFC in 2006. Under his leadership the Canadian ministry grew from 400 to 800 staff and 7000 volunteers in over 400 centers.

Dave and his wife, Katy, currently live in Montreal. God did not give them biological children. However, over the years they took in **21 foster children** – some for one month, three years, or a lifetime.



Brereton extended family

Most of them came from a summer camp Dave and Katy ran. They actually legally adopted three of those children. Two of their foster daughters ran that same summer camp for over seven years. Dave also began "Education Plus," an alternative school for teens who didn't fit anywhere else. Students say this school provides lots of choices, potential, and hope for them. Over 2000 students have gone through "Education Plus" in the past 24 years.

In January 2018 Dave started as International Director while wrapping up his role as the National Director for YFC Canada. He completed that role in June 2018, but opted to keep his home and office in Montreal. He travels to the International Office in Denver every three weeks or so. He spent his first months listening, assessing systems and staff roles. Dave attends YFC gatherings globally to view ministry work and the YFC global leadership in action.

He also is the Chairman of the Board of TECSYS, a very successful publicly-traded software company which he founded in 1983. His brother, Peter, is the CEO of TECSYS.

Dave strongly embraced the transition of Global Engagement (World Outreach) from YFC USA to YFCI. That officially took place in January 2019, with John Bastian in charge of that transition. Dave has



Global Team Summit 2019

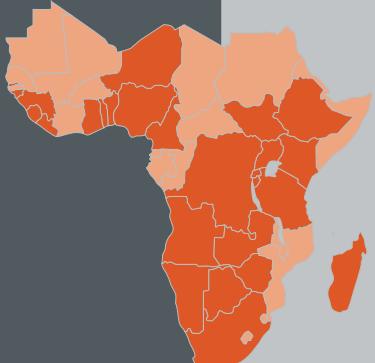
great connections in North America and beyond for development and desires to broaden YFCI's Global Networks. He is a listener, assessor, collaborator, and connector. Everywhere he goes he seeks new contacts and connections. But more than that, he loves Jesus and loves to see young people transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Early on in his Directorship he received more of a global perspective at a Regional Conference in Belarus where his eyes were opened as to the poverty and problems in Eastern Europe. When the International Board met in Lebanon in October 2018, he experienced the ministry in the Middle-East for the first time. The **Global Team Summit held in Thailand in January, 2019** gave him insight into the vision for YFCI, which he plans to present at GA2021 in September, 2021 in the Netherlands. That major conference, with hopefully 600 participants, will have another Young Leader Track. This will be the first time in 40 years that GA is in Europe.

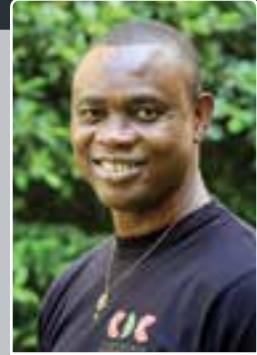


Here is a current list of those on each Area Leadership Team (ALT) as of July, 2019:

AFRICA



- **LEWIS-NICOL, Hilary – Africa Area Director**
- AKOWANOU, Josue - Francophone Regional Director
- VAN AS, E.J. - Deputy Area Director
- MASUKA, Sheunesu - Southern Regional Director
- DUSHIMERUGABA, Luc - Eastern Regional Director
- IMOLOELU, Olusola (Sola) - Western Regional Director
- PALAN, Cyril - Indian Ocean Island Nations Regional Director
- VAN AS, Koekoes - Continental Spiritual Formation Coordinator/Field Rep. on Intl. Board
- MASUKA, Susan - Young Leaders Area Coordinator/WLT
- TANDOH, Charles - Finance & Admin Officer



Hilary Lewis Nicol

ASIA PACIFIC



- **KIM, Sasha – Asia-Pacific Area Director**
- JOHNSON, Scott - South East Asia Regional Director
- LEE, Semyon - Central Asia Regional Director
- HALDER, Peter - South Asia Regional Director / Field Representative International Board
- BEAVERSON, Randy - International Liaison Director for Asia Pacific



Sasha Kim

AMERICAS



Mayra Cano

- **CANO, Mayra – Americas Area Director**
- WILLIAMS, Larry - North America Regional Director
- SELPH, John – Latin America Pastoral Couple/Member Care Chaplain
- SELPH, Karen – Latin America Pastoral Couple/Member Care Chaplain
- SPECKHARDT, Thomas - Director of International Youth Ministry
- THURMAN, Parker - Americas Liaison Director
- MORALES CRUZ, Hector Roberto – Latin America Central Regional Director
- NURMI, Virginia - Training Representative – Americas



Mayra Cano Becomes Americas Area Director in January, 2021

International Director, Dave Brereton announced in January, 2021 that the International Board of Directors recommended **Mayra Cano** for the position of Area Director for the Americas to replace Jose Carlos Gutierrez . This was ratified by the nations in the Americas. Jose Carlos, who lives in Juarez, Mexico, wanted to step down as Area Director to focus his efforts on developing YFC in Mexico.

Mayra first served in Youth for Christ as a volunteer for YFC Columbia at age 18. After four years she moved to Argentine where she became the Administrative Assistant for the Americas Area Director, followed by three years as Regional Director for Latin America. In 2017 she moved to Brasilia, Brazil to learn Portuguese. In 2019 she moved back to her current location in Columbia. She is the first woman named as a YFCI Area Director. As to her personal testimony, Mayra stated, “I accepted Jesus in my heart at 14 years of age. I knew I wanted to be a missionary. I became involved in Youth for Christ and attended the Young Leaders program at the 2008 General Assembly in South Africa. It was then that I made one of the most important decisions of my life: to dedicate myself to full-time ministry.”

EMENA



Edward de Kam

- **DE KAM, Edward – Emena Area Director**
- GRIER, Allan - Regional Director for Central Europe
- REICHERT, Timea - Regional Director Western Europe/World Leadership Team
- KORNEV, Mikhail - Regional Director Eastern Europe
- SAGHERIAN, John - Regional Director Middle East North Africa
- JOHNSON, Brandon - Regional Director for Southern Europe





India is becoming the youngest country in the world

Dave realizes that **one-third of the world's youth live in India** and China, so he is greatly burdened to grow the ministry in those countries. Since most of the world's kids have cell phones, he has a vision to reach kids for Christ through that medium. Dave and Katy are a "couple with a dream," driven by their passions and using the resources that God has entrusted to them to help a hurting generation, believing in the hope and potential of every young person.

The 2019 Annual Report: Serving the Kingdom

Dave Brereton reported that 2019 was his most extensive travel year of his life – traveling 210,000 km and visiting 135 cities. Katy was able to travel with him on many trips, which took them to four different world areas. He stated,

"I continue to be thrilled and amazed to see the work that God is doing in our growing Youth for Christ family on the front lines of loving and caring for youth....

"We worship Jesus as Peter, James and John did on the Mount of Transfiguration but juxtaposed to that story is Jesus meeting the needs of a desperate father with a son tortured by mental illness and demon possession. Jesus is there and present in both situations. It is the call and the desire of our staff and volunteers in Youth for Christ to exalt Christ, magnify his name and teach who Jesus is and what he did for us at Calvary to a lost world. At the same time we are called to be very present in the families to whom we minister; meeting physical, emotional, relational and spiritual needs. We relate so well to the words of the father in our story spoken so long ago 'Lord I believe, help my unbelief.'

"We are excited to see "closed nations" opening up and YFC work beginning. These nations cannot be mentioned by name, but do pray for our brothers and sisters who put their lives on the line every day. They bring the gospel, often in very creative ways, to those for whom it is illegal and often life-risking to follow Jesus. Many countries have also been severely decimated by weather, political and economic crises, and it is the poor and the youth who always bear the brunt of such disasters.





CELEBRATING 77+ YEARS OF YFCI

"Specifically, this year we have begun the implementation of our strategic plan, which has been thrilling to see. We have had two main initiatives in the area of social media with the DASK app for young people who dare to ask questions and www.YFCGO.com where there is an opportunity for hearing testimonies and asking questions. Feel free to download the DASK app or visit the **YFCGO** site to check it out....

"As you read through this report you will see that there are so many teams within the YFCI family who each serve according to their gifts. There are those who care for our national directors, our staff, and our missionaries, those that provide IT services, those who launch new missionaries out into the field, and then there are the tens of thousands who work directly in the ministry. Together we have close to 60,000 staff and volunteers around the world. Please pray for them, recognizing that this is only one small part of what God is doing in His Kingdom."



Boy on YFCGO.com website who is struggling with porn

"It is the call and the desire of our staff and volunteers in Youth for Christ to exalt Christ, magnify his name and teach who Jesus is and what he did for us at Calvary to a lost world."



YFC International Vision, Strategic Focus and Core Values

The report set forth the following statements, clarifying who YFC is and what motivates us.



VISION

As a part of the body of Christ, to see that every young person in every people group in every nation has the opportunity to make an informed decision to be a follower of Jesus Christ and become a part of a local church.



STRATEGIC FOCUS

Youth for Christ reaches young people everywhere, working together with the local church and other like-minded partners, to raise up lifelong followers of Jesus who are characterized by godliness in lifestyle, devotion to the Word of God and prayer, boldness in evangelism, and commitment to social involvement.



CORE VALUES

Evangelism and Discipleship, Scripture, Prayer, Church, People, Mobilization, and Integrity.

► Funding

We rely on a combination of missionaries raising personal support, project funding, and donations to the general fund to continue the work to reach EVERY young person. We are thankful for our dependence on Jehovah Jireh, ‘God who provides,’ and are blessed with our infrastructure allowing for 86% of the funding received to go directly to the field.

► Global Social Media Strategy

Reaching young people where they are has always been a hallmark of Youth for Christ, and with today’s technology we are in a digital land grab for the attention of young people. We strive to remain current and on the forefront of technology, developing tools and resources to share the message of Jesus across many different platforms.

► Unity

We continue to build up the Kingdom as one YFC. Prayer is a unifier, as are worship and celebration, and remain cornerstones of our movement. Partnerships express our unity with the rest of the body and avoid ‘the hand saying to the foot I have no need of you.’ We envision a culture where we really care for how our staff and volunteers are doing at a physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional level.

The 2019 Annual Report stated that the world population of youth was 1.1 billion. Following are some of the key ministry statistics from that report:

YOUTH IMPACTED BY DIRECT MINISTRY:

Africa – 424,276
 Americas – 968,849
 Asia-Pacific – 2,324,046
 EMENA (Europe, Middle East and North Africa) – 390,158
Total = 4,097,764.

YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOLLOW-UP AND DISCIPLESHIP:

Africa – 11,894
 Americas – 16,529
 Asia-Pacific – 56,085
 EMENA – 11,730
Total = 96,263

YOUNG PEOPLE WHO RESPONDED TO THE GOSPEL:

Africa – 27,757
 Americas – 62,631
 Asia-Pacific – 66,851
 EMENA – 16,511
Total = 173,750

PARTNER CHURCHES AROUND THE WORLD:

Total= 16,426

As of October, 2019, YFCI had 79 Chartered Nations, 30 Pioneer Nations, and 17 Target Nations for a total of 126.

The Annual Report noted the impact of YFCI ministry in our four areas of the world, Africa, Americas, Asia Pacific, and EMENA (Europe, Middle East, North Africa). Following are some highlights from those reports:

AFRICA

Hilary Lewis-Nicol, Area Director for Africa, reported that he has over 4,600 committed staff and volunteers doing ministry in 28 of the 50 nations (which are organized into five regions: West Africa Anglophone, Francophone West Africa, Eastern Africa, Southern Africa, and the Indiana Ocean Island nations). In sub-Saharan Africa almost half (42%) of the population is under 15 years of age. He stated, "In terms of per capita income, sub-Saharan Africa is the poorest region of the world with 72% of the population living on less than US \$2 a day."

In spite of highly challenging circumstances, such as political instability, religious extremism and others, he said,

"the staff in sub-Saharan Africa were able to reach out to thousands of youth through our cutting-edge ministries: day care, counseling, mentoring programs, Options/Crisis Teenage Pregnancy programs, schools ministry, radio ministry, media ministry, hospital ministry, Kids' Clubs, juvenile detention ministry, youth camps, prayer meetings, leadership training, ... HIV awareness, drug and substance abuse programs, orphanages ... and many more."





AMERICAS

This area covers the entire western hemisphere, where YFC has a presence in 27 nations. In spite of the vastness of the Americas, we read:



"Our Lord provided us a great UNITY; our regions are working together, empowering best practices and sharing the best of our ministry models. Escola da Vida, a school ministry funded in Brazil, now is been replicated in more than eight nations across our continent making our

impact greater than in 2018."

A young Guatemalan student made these comments:

"When (the Youth for Christ staff) came into my school, at first I was just happy that we got to get out of class! But then they played silly games with us ... When they told us about Jesus, I wanted to trust in God, but I was afraid. But the next time they came back to my school, I told them that I wanted to have Jesus in my life. They were so excited ... now I am part of the after-school club where we learn more about Jesus."

ASIA PACIFIC

The Asia Pacific Area is huge, and so too is the opportunity for ministry, as they explore new and innovative ways to minister to young people. One such innovative ministry model is the Happy Hearts Club in YFC Philippines, where pre-teen children are learning how to trust God in their lives. David Bonanno, Area Director, commented about ministry challenges in the area:

"It seems that religious intolerance and even hostility continue to grow against the proclamation of Christ but our nations keep finding ways to overcome these hurdles. Sadly, this is not the case in every nation. When considering the situation, it would sometimes be easy to think it's impossible, but our God is the God of the impossible. In some AP nations, long imprisonment or worse is the expected penalty for sharing one's faith and yet young YFC staffers and volunteers defy fear and proclaim Jesus regardless."

In spite of the difficulties in the AP Area, over 2.3 million young people were impacted by

YFC ministry, 68,851 responded to the gospel, and 56,085 are in follow-up and discipleship.

Footnote to the 2019 Annual Report:

David Bonanno departed YFCI on October 31, 2020 after six years as Asia-Pacific Area Director. He had become Australia National Director in 2002, and in 2011 he became the Deputy Director of the Asia Pacific Area, serving with Area Director Neil O'Boyle, before moving into the Area Director role himself in 2014. At that time he had made a two-year commitment to the role but continued on well past his intended end-date of 2016. YFCI Director, Dave Brereton stated, "His service and leadership to the Asia Pacific Area deserve some of the highest recognition we can offer here on earth. Please join me in congratulating and wishing the best to our brother and friend, David, as he transitions into whatever is next for him and his wife, Jill."



EMENA

Edward de Kam is the Area Director for EMEA. He and his staff work in 34 nations, including new nations in the Middle East and Eastern Europe. During 2019 the ministry in those hard-to-reach nations began to prosper and take root. They continually train YFC staff and local church youth leaders, knowing that together they can reach more youth with the Gospel of Christ. Edward said,

“Our goals for 2019 focused on the theme of building: building our Area Team and Prayer Team, building sustainability, building bridges, building one Youth for Christ, building Youth for Christ in new nations....rather than recreating the wheel, we’re furthering relationships between nations and encouraging the sharing of ideas and resources. We are using new and better ways to translate, eliminating some language barriers, and allowing more and more of our YFC family to feel like they truly are part of One YFC. In 2020 we will continue developing networks and ministries in Greece, I**/P**, Macedonia, Kosovo, and Bosnia, expanding Youth for Christ to more new nations.”

Youth for Christ Lebanon offers different vocational training opportunities and classes to



Syrian refugees and Lebanese youth, Christian and Muslim, boy or girl. A 12-year-old girl from Syrian confided,

“Before I came to this carpentry workshop, I didn’t feel much self-confidence. But learning some carpentry skills gave me the confidence boost I needed to know that I am capable of learning new things, even things that are generally only for boys to do. Now I can be helpful around the house and help mom fix things instead of having to call someone over. There were several girls in my group, and they were even helping the boys do things! I definitely recommend my friends to do the vocational training because they think they can’t do something, but if they try, they’ll see that they can.”

The Annual Report goes on to describe the various support teams that enable ministry to take place globally, offering leadership, guidance, and resources to all our staff and volunteers.

Global Engagement Team

“The Global Engagement Team, led by Kelly Hoeting and Bill Housley, serves the international movement of Youth for Christ through administration, recruiting, equipping, and sending United States citizens who serve cross nationally. ... Along with mobilizing and managing staff, this team collaborates with the Global Training Team and the Pastoral Care Team in caring for GE staff while on the field through continued education opportunities and holistic care.

Number of missionaries: **73**

Number of countries missionaries are serving in: **24**



YFC International Field Ministries

"YFCI's Field Ministry's heart and purpose is to serve and resource the areas, regions, and nations. Led by Chris Kozacek, this team provides specialized areas of service to assist our YFC family around the world, in the mission to reach young people for Jesus. ... Kyler Kregel, the Field Ministry Coordinator, supports the nations in completing the chartering process, collecting information about the ministry, and also leads a regular **prayer meeting for the Pastoral Care and other staff**, praying for YFCI's Global Engagement missionaries.



Missionary Care and other staff praying for our missionaries as they do on Zoom twice a month

Note to the 2019 Annual Report – Kelly Hoeting has moved from the Global Engagement Team to the Field Ministries Team and also leads the above prayer meetings, among her other responsibilities.

Field Ministries include the following support teams:

- The Digital Field Team is led by Martin Ainsworth and helps nations share their story and evangelize powerfully through digital media.
- The Global Prayer team has been led by Adam Shepski and models, trains, and resources YFC nations seeking to develop their praying culture in intercession, staff care, and evangelism.
- The Global Training Team, led by Mike Manna, coordinates a team of Area Training Directors, who help bring vital training to YFC programs around the world.
- The Coaching team is led by Chris Harding to help YFC staff and leadership to discover God's agenda for their life and ministry.
- The Member Care Team for the National Directors has been led by Graham Barker and helps to holistically care for our National Directors and their families.
- The Pastoral Care Team provides support, prayer, and mentorship to our Global Engagement missionaries and YFCI staff.

YFC International Financials 2019

The Annual Report closed with some encouraging information as to our financial situation. Total YFCI income for 2019 was \$11,649,434, which was a 109% increase over 2018. Expenses for 2019 were \$9,701,226, which allowed an increase in assets of \$1,948,208. Income for all YFC national programs worldwide was \$144,425,945, and expenditure for those programs was \$138,202,231.

COVID-19 Strikes the World Hard in March, 2020

In November, 2019 or even before, a new virus sprang up in Wuhan, China. Many people were suddenly becoming seriously ill and dying, but the Communist government of China tried to cover up the severity of the disease. Many tourists from all over the world attended a huge gathering there, thus spreading the Corona Virus to many countries of the world. Most national governments were slow to close their countries and order people to "stay at home." As a result, COVID-19 (as it is called) spread exponentially across the world.

New York and New Jersey became the epicenter of the virus in the United States while Italy, Spain, Germany, and France developed severe outbreaks. By mid-March 2020 many nations were beginning to close their borders. People were mandated to wash their hands frequently, use hand sanitizer, **wear masks** and stay at least six feet apart. The offices of Youth for Christ in Englewood, Colorado, shut down the week of March 16. There seemed to be conflicting medical advice in many instances.

By April 3 there were 1,074,487 cases in the world with 56,989 deaths, and 226,076 people who had recovered. The United States had the most cases at 265,506 and 6,786 deaths. Italy was second, Spain was third, Germany fourth, and China fifth. At least 204 countries and territories had been infected along with several Cruise ships. As many as 40% of the deaths occurred in nursing homes and long-term care facilities.

Many hoped that by July the virus would have nearly disappeared, and we would start getting back to normal. But that wasn't the case. By July 8 there were nearly 12 million cases worldwide in 210 countries and territories, with 25% of those being in the United States. Worldwide there were 546,737 deaths, with 133,972 deaths in the United States. Some staff around the world began returning to their offices wearing masks during May, but most were still working from home and coming into their offices occasionally. Large venues with concerts and sports programs were very hard hit. Some sporting events had to be postponed, while others were canceled all together. By late September 2020 the number of deaths in the U.S. surpassed 200,000, and the number of deaths worldwide went over one million.

There were various waves of the virus all over the world. In some places the virus surged considerably in the latter half of 2020. In other places it waned considerably. Overall, there were fewer deaths per person because of immunity of those who had the virus and recovered and the fact that medical personnel had learned better how to care for patients.

In January, 2021 the number of cases worldwide had reached 88+ million, deaths 1.9 million, and the number recovered 49+ million. The country with the most deaths was the United States. **New York** and California were most affected in the U.S.



Man wearing a mask during the COVID-19 pandemic



7th Avenue Times Square, New York City, nearly empty during a regular day during Covid



"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear."

—1 John 4:18

But in spite of the innovative ways that most of our nations found to do ministry during the pandemic, nearly everyone was grieving over what had been lost. Many were echoing the Psalmist's voice in Psalm 130:1, "Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord; Lord hear my voice..." We've all lost something or someone. COVID-19 has changed our lives and our world. Every Youth For Christ National Director around the world, in over 100 countries, has been affected by the pandemic. They have all had to react, retool, adjust, and relaunch their outreach with the gospel to the young people they hope to influence. They have lost many things: ministry goals, ministry speed, ministry dreams, ministry resources, and ministry staff. Some have even lost friends, loved ones, and family members. All this causes us to grieve, but the challenge our leaders have faced is to continue to inspire strength, be resilient, and persevere.

Fortunately, several different vaccines became available in mid to late December 2020, and that gave people, especially health-care workers and the elderly, hope. However, some of the vaccine rollout was slow in some states and countries, and there was controversy over who should get the vaccine first. In most places people in nursing homes and health care workers received theirs first, then those 70 and older, and on down into the younger ages.

New strains also began appearing around the world and the question arose as to how well the regular vaccines would cover those strains. By the end of July, 2021 there had been 196 million COVID-19 cases worldwide with total deaths at 4.2 million. Many lockdowns and mask mandates were still in effect in many countries around the world. Even with more than half the people being vaccinated in many nations, there were still questions about how effective these were, especially since a small number of people had developed debilitating side effects from the vaccines, and a few had even died.

Because most of our national ministries had to shut down or be strongly curtailed (with much ministry done on Zoom and other platforms), The 2020 ministry statistics were much lower than the statistics given in the 2019 Annual Report. But we are hopeful that by 2022 all the ministries will return stronger than ever. In any case, YFCI's ministry will adapt and continue because kids still need Jesus!

International Director Dave Brereton sent periodic devotionals to all the national staff. In one devotional about COVID-19 Dave quoted 1 John 4:18, among other verses, "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear." Thus, our goal in this pandemic has been to trust the Lord and know that He loves us and is in control. He will never leave us or forsake us. In another devotional in February, 2021 after many of our staff have had their lives and ministries turned upside-down with COVID-19, he talked about the man who was lowered down to Jesus from the rooftop by his four friends in Mark chapter 2. His main point was that we truly do need each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. And his conclusion was that sometimes we will be one of those lowering our friend on the mat down to Jesus, but at other times we ourselves will be on that mat.

Some Very Innovative Nations With Ministry During Covid-19

Some of our most sensitive nations had the best ministry during the COVID-19 lockdowns. One nation celebrated 25 years of service in 2020, serving over a million students through nearly 40,000 activities. They served 63 drug addicts, 208 kids in Children's Homes, 16 of whom were in nursing college. Their discipleship programs ministered to 35 kids, and 4,200 **WakeUp Deborah moms** were praying at least 15 minutes a day. They served nearly 270,000 students, parents, and many others with masks, food, counseling and COVID-19 prevention materials. They harvested 15,000 pounds of rice and hundreds of ducks and chickens, 15 goats, 500 kilos of fish, seven cows, vegetables and fruits. They provided food for 1400 families for three months and financial support to 900 Hi-Club members. Several dozen made the decision to follow Christ and are going through special Bible classes. In one month alone they were able to visit, counsel, and help more than 100 mentally depressed students because many of them feel so lonely that they decide to commit suicide. They are also building a seventh Children's Home. They were very thankful to YFC Korea for their lovely gift of 80,000 totally free masks, which were distributed to high schools and church partners as well as YFC staff and young people.

In 2020, in eight countries in Central Asia:

- **4364** people were involved in ministry
- **32** people believed
- **53** events were held
- **126** employees and volunteers participated

One of these nations completed a training course called "Three Stories," which was accessible to the nation's youth. They used sports activities to build relationships for further opportunities for evangelism, and they are trying to bring youth leaders onto the staff team there. A 14-year-old girl from there named Diana recently had buried her mother and started to live with her sister who is involved in church. Now Diana comes to church every Sunday and participates in YFC activities. **The staff are praying that she will meet Jesus and His love.**

Another Central Asian country developed a football program as their main ministry. Court-yard football games were held, and the national director will soon preach at one of their games. The new interim YFC Director of this country came to Christ at age 5 and when he was 14 he became a YFC volunteer. He prayed about what he should do, and God showed him his calling was to reach youth through sports. Now at 22-years-old he says, "I see different people with their pain, and that makes me want to serve this nation even more. I love that we are open to everyone, regardless of their faith and race. Among our friends and those who are our target audience are Muslims and atheists. They see the truth in us, which is Jesus Christ."



*TOP: Wake-up Deborah mothers
praying in Brazil*

*BOTTOM: New believers
discipleship group praying from
closed country*



In another Central Asian nation one of the staff says, “Despite the restrictions on mass gatherings in our city, we continue to regularly meet every week, playing football and building relationships. Right after playing, the leaders invite two or three unbelievers to hang out with them, to talk, influence them, attract them with our principles, and preach. One fellow who came from a very vulnerable family and considered himself an atheist became more involved in our events and was very attracted by football tournaments. Later we invited him to our home groups. The seed was sown and at our last meeting when we preached the Gospel, he accepted Jesus into his heart, praying a prayer of repentance.”

Another national director in an unnamed country reported, “Entering 2020 we were experiencing a valley of darkness, but as we were passing through, we saw God’s grace and mercy through His people. God met all our needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus...In spite of COVID-19, we were able to contact 902 new young people, share the Gospel with 747, of whom 48 accepted Christ as their Savior. All 48 are in discipleship, nine have been baptized, and nine are being trained at the leadership level, serving the Lord in different ways. We held **Bible Clubs all over the country**, and hundreds of young people went through our Youth Leadership Trainings in person or online.”

Following is the testimony of one girl from that nation:

“Like many people in my country, I was suffering from the power of darkness for a long time. My dreams were so bad and terrifying, and all my thoughts were depressing. I was badly victimized, suffering from harmful things spiritually and physically. One day, unexpectedly, I met a YFC member who lived in a nearby village. He shared with me about Jesus Christ and assured me that Jesus can heal me from these powers of darkness. I listened, and as I heard the truth, my faith increases day by day. I stayed in contact with the YFC member who kept teaching me more about Jesus Christ, until one day he led me through a salvation prayer. I accepted Christ as my Savior, asking forgiveness from God for my many sins. As sometimes happens when people are delivered from demons they have worshiped (as gods) all their life, full deliverance was not immediate. But as I lived with Christ as Master of my life the darkness gradually went away. I am free now! I know joy and peace, and feel happy about my life. I can only say, ‘Praise the Lord!’”



Bible Study in YFC closed country during Covid



Son born to National Director and his wife — they had been waiting years for a baby

Another mostly Islamic nation has a group of women who are meeting with the goal of starting a “baby church.” Most of these women have personal issues which need to be talked through and dealt with, but the YFC staff in charge hope these issues will not overshadow the purpose of them coming together to be fed from the Word so that they are able to go and be all that Jesus has called them to be.

In August, 2020 one nation restarted its soccer academies, and another nation held regular Zoom meetings with the youth leaders in the country to praise the Lord together and to encourage and train them. In another nation the National Director and his wife had been trying to have **a baby for many years, and they finally had success!**

Several countries started innovating with social media to reach the youth. Others raised funds for food vouchers to give to a few hundred families suffering in poverty. One very new nation in the YFCI family

held more than seven weekend camps in different parts of the country with dozens of young people attending each time. When someone commented that no one was wearing masks in the pictures, they said they were more afraid of malaria than COVID-19.

One nation in Europe has been deeply affected by protests and violence. They are trying to cope under a lot of stress. While walking to work one of their volunteers was arrested and beaten. All he could think of during the beatings was to pray “The Lord’s Prayer.” But he felt God wanted him to pray it out loud. Cramped in an overcrowded jail he recited it over and over. After the third time the jail fell quiet and the beatings stopped.

In August, 2020 the nation of Lebanon had a massive explosion at the Port of Beirut which killed over 200, injured thousands, left 300,000 homeless, and **damaged hundreds of nearby building and homes**. Youth from YFC and churches worked together to help clean up the mess and repair YFC’s three damaged facilities and the homes of eight staff. But 14 YFC staff tested positive for COVID-19, and one difficult circumstance after another was extremely challenging for them. However, friends and partners sent funds to not only repair these damaged structures, but also around 100 homes of poor families whose teenagers attend Youth for Christ and who live in the vicinity of the YFC Center – a great witness!



Damage from Lebanon explosion

Many National Directors have persevered with their teams to overcome the challenges of the COVID-19 crisis. Many had to furlough staff, create new strategies, cancel events, homeschool their children. Many lost funding, but their primary motivation was reaching young people with the message of Jesus Christ when the lost and bewildered are needing a Savior! This crisis took its toll on many YFC workers. One National Director said he had been running on adrenaline for many, many months. Many leaders saw that during the crisis they needed to become their own “soul-keepers.” One part of taking care of their souls was making sure they had good relationships with the right people around them. John Ortberg has said, “When you are connected with God and other people in life, you have a healthy soul.”

GA 2020 Postponed Until September 2022

GA 2020 was to be our next General Assembly in the Netherlands. But due to COVID-19, it was postponed until September, 2021 to be held at a beautiful **conference center about 200 km northeast of Amsterdam**. But because of how long the virus extended, it was postponed again until September, 2022. As of this writing, the location has not been determined. There is to be a special emphasis on young leaders sent from the various national programs. We want to make sure the young leaders are fully equipped in the core essentials and operating principles of Youth for Christ as they serve God’s Kingdom in reaching every young person. Equipping them in evangelism and discipleship, scripture, prayer, church, people, mobilization and integrity will give them the boldness to take the Gospel to young people wherever they are. With this foundation,



Possible GA 2022 Conference Center in the Netherlands



As "sages" we met with some of the young leaders at GA 2008 in South Africa



All the delegates at GA 2000 in Denver

we hope to see them carry on the mission of Youth for Christ for the next generation. This is what qualifies a person as a young leader:

- Must be between the ages of 18 and 30
- Currently on staff or volunteering with a Youth for Christ program
- Have the potential to be a key staff or volunteer in the future
- Able to attend GA 2022
- Can commit to pre- and post- GA assignments
- Will continue to work with Youth for Christ after GA and whose nation is committed to keeping them actively involved in Youth for Christ
- Have the full endorsement of their National Director
- Have a strong commitment to their relationship with God and seeing young people know Jesus
- Have a good grasp of the English language, as almost all the interaction with other **young leaders throughout GA will be done in English.**

This will be a very special time as the global family comes together to pray, learn, listen to what the Holy Spirit will say to us, and encourage one another to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel." It is a tremendously uplifting experience to be with like-minded brothers and sisters from around the world who share a common commitment to the vision of reaching every young person and giving them an opportunity to be a follower of Jesus.

There is something extra special about General Assembly. While it is essential that we gather together to work through the most important matters of our ministry, we also experience innovative training, time together in the Word, opportunities to share and exchange ministry ideas, encouragement, affirmation, laughter, challenge, prayer, celebration, rest, and renewal.

As one who has attended 12 of the last 13 General Assemblies since 1980, Art Deyo reflected that these have been **some of the finest experiences** he has had in his 57+ years of Youth for Christ ministry. And GA 2022 looks to continue that tradition.

It was thought that we needed some type of communication with our worldwide staff at the time when we would have had GA in September 2020. So the International staff devised a virtual conference called MORE on September 16 and 17, 2020. It was live-streamed on Zoom, YouTube, and Facebook for three hours on each of the two days. Outsiders were invited to join, and it was estimated that 7,000 – 10,000 people participated. There were many short segments with **speakers from various countries** challenging the staff to do MORE! Translation in five languages was also available. It was an excellent substitute for an in-person General Assembly. That was so successful, that they have planned another MORE Conference on September 15 and 16, 2021.



YFC Lebanon staff conference in Lebanon shown on Zoom for the YFCI MORE Conference

The Future of Youth Ministry

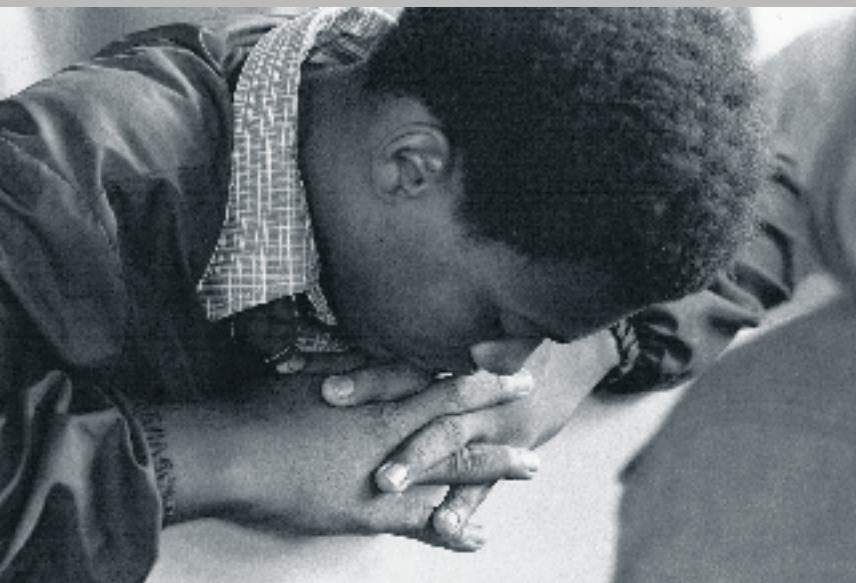
Mark Senter III wrote a book called *The Coming Revolution in Youth Ministry* in 1992. He talked about the proliferation (especially in the United States) of youth ministries. He stated that although organizations like Young Life and Youth for Christ helped launch the youth ministry movement in the 40s and 50s, the Church has taken over much of youth ministry more recently. Yet he stated that “The most effective youth groups in the nation rescue only an average of nine converts each year. The student world is facing a spiritual crisis of gigantic proportions.” He predicted, however, that Young Life and Youth for Christ would still have their niche ministries “50 years from now.”

In December 2018 **Greg Stier of Dare to Share Ministries** referred to Senter’s book and wrote, “This outstanding book was written in 1992 but, sadly, we’re all still waiting for the revolution to come. If anything, youth ministry seems like it has become more and more institutionalized over the last 27 years or so since Senter’s book was written.” But he is still convinced that “there will be a revolution in youth ministry.” He said, “There are seven courageous decisions that enough youth leaders must make if this revolution is going to truly get kickstarted.”

1. The decision to become a serious intercessor.
2. The decision to mobilize your teenagers for evangelism.
3. The decision to invest in a few.
4. The decision to focus on making and multiplying disciples.
5. The decision to get a bold vision for your youth ministry.
6. The decision to start measuring the right things.
 - a. New Conversion Growth
 - b. Baptisms
 - c. Active Gospel Sharing
7. The decision to program your priorities.



Greg Stier, founder of
Dare to Share



Boy praying at desk

difficult to do youth ministry today than in the early days, but Youth for Christ should not be faulted for not reaching all adolescents even though our goal with all participants working together is to reach “every.” YFCI has expanded to well over 100 nations with viable ministry.

Because of good leadership in the last few years, Youth for Christ has been experiencing a revolution, and hopefully this will continue on into the future. Greg Stier was speaking mainly of youth ministry in the U.S., but Youth for Christ International has seen huge leaps in new national programs, strong emerging young leaders, **more intercessory prayer**, new conversion growth, active Gospel sharing, bold vision, and the multiplication of disciples. We have learned to “Kingdom-build” with the Church. We are no longer “out there on our own,” but we partner with other like-minded organizations doing youth ministry.

On June 16, 1945, Torrey Johnson stated his four-fold plan for Youth for Christ in a message in Orchestra Hall: 1) to reach every city, town, village and rural community in North America with the good news that Jesus saves; 2) to promote and encourage great city-wide revival meetings; 3) to lift up our eyes and see the world that needs the Gospel, and 4) to “Go ye into all the world” in this generation. In his 1947 book, *Youth for Christ, Twentieth Century Wonder*, Mel Larson stated, “If Youth for Christ is to achieve these goals, it will be with us for a long, long time. In God’s plan, it may be the channel through which He will pour out His blessing in a new way over all the world.”

Though very astute and well-meaning, Torrey, Mel, Bob Cook, and others of that day could not know the way youth ministry would unfold in the next several decades. Indeed, Youth for Christ still exists and even thrives, but in a very different form than the early pioneers envisioned.

World-wide revival has not yet happened, and we are still praying that it does. The world has changed radically in recent years, and no group or organization will ever again have a “corner on the market” in youth evangelism and discipleship. Yet Youth for Christ is still doing her part in the current effort to reach youth. God knows we absolutely need a *huge revolution* in these critical days of the 2020s.

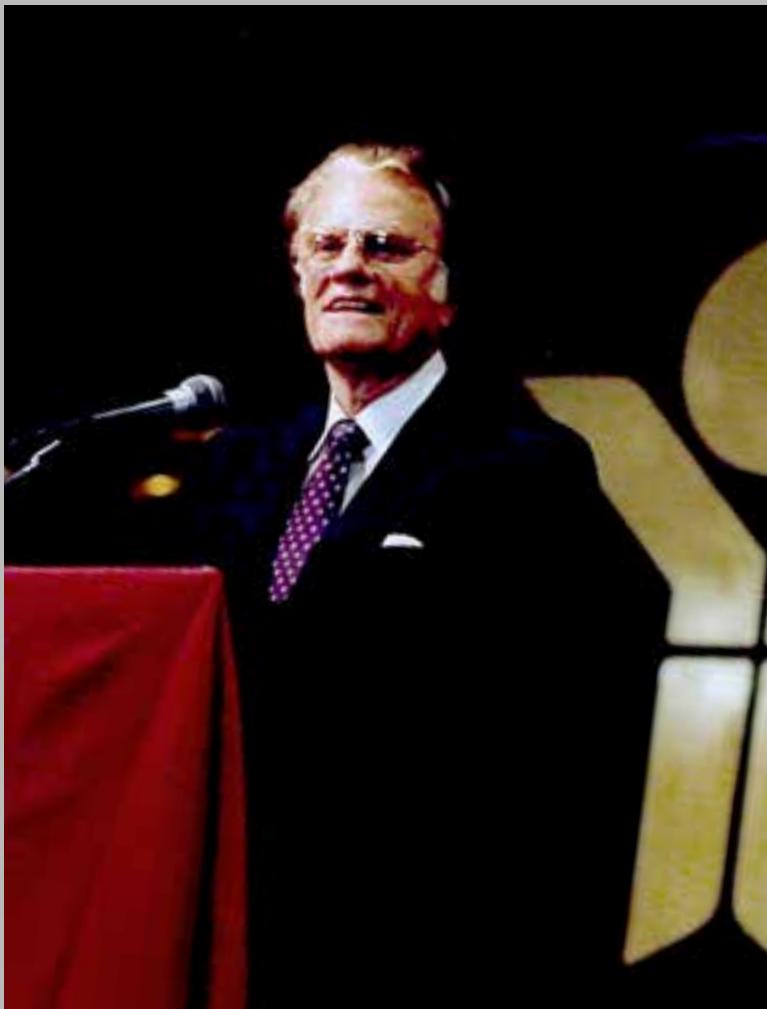
Senter wrote another book in 2010 called *When God Shows Up, A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America*. He wrote of the rise of the American teenager, but that would be true in many nations of the world. He wrote about the larger youth organizations such as The Miracle Book Club, Young Life, Youth for Christ, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes, as well as several smaller agencies.

He spoke of a decline in most para-church organizations toward the end of the twentieth century and of organizations like Youth for Christ USA trying to “reinvent” themselves in the first decade of the twenty-first century. He pointed out that youth ministry in America totally misses three-quarters of the adolescent population in America. It is definitely more

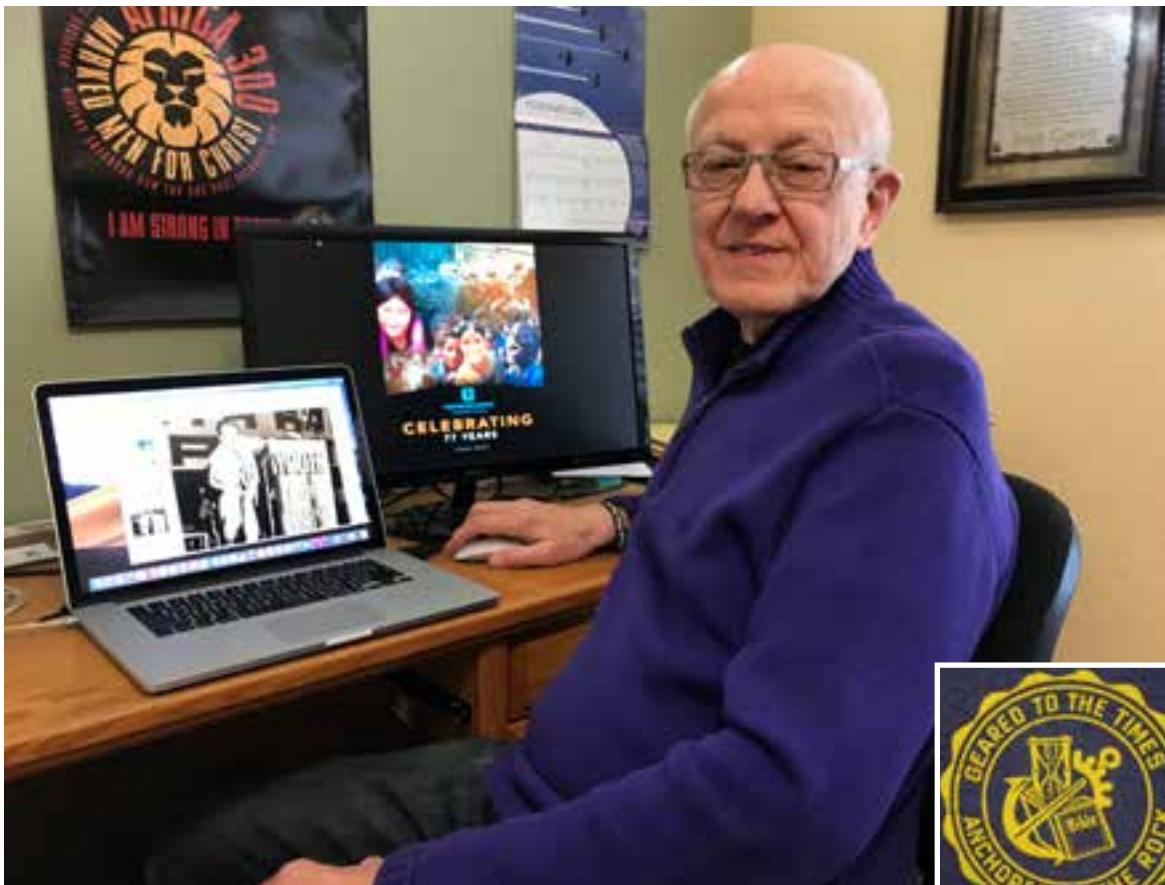
Great Memories, but Even Greater Dreams

When Lloyd Bryant organized weekly youth rallies in the heart of Manhattan in the early 1930s, he had no idea what his efforts would lead to. Little did he dream that this movement would catch fire and inflame a large part of the globe. Torrey Johnson, Billy Graham, and the godly leaders at Beatenberg dreamed of worldwide revival. Evangelicals are still waiting and patiently praying for that elusive revival. But God has led Youth for Christ International from “day one” to see “revival” one youth or hundreds of youth at a time.

In 1959 on YFC’s 15th Anniversary, **Billy Graham proclaimed**, “To me the story of Youth for Christ will go down as one of the miracles of the 20th Century, not only in its origin but in its development. No one sponsored or promoted it. It also has been a miracle in its provision, as money has been given in answer to prayer. But the greatest miracle of all is the matter of the miraculous results. Literally thousands have been won to faith in Jesus Christ. Yet the job is far from completed. There have been many ‘miracle decisions.’ There will be many more in Youth for Christ, because to me Youth for Christ is one miracle after another. And I thank God for it.”



Billy preaching at a YFC gathering in 1987



Author Art Deyo working on YFCI's History on his home computer



*Original Logo for
YFC Slogan*

As I complete this part of the text celebrating this anniversary of YFCI, I am struck by the resiliency of the Youth for Christ ministry. Although there are upcoming threats to the ministries of Christian organizations by the U. S. government, (which is nothing new in many of our nations), I believe we will continue to adapt, even at the risk of fines, and even worse. We must continue to follow God's Word and not some arbitrary anti-Christian law. Times have changed radically since we were so free to go into the schools and other public places for our programs in the 40s and 50s. Regardless of the threats to our ministries, God has always shown us how to overcome them with new and innovative methods. He still wants to adopt young people into His heavenly family!

Humanly speaking, Youth for Christ should have disappeared long ago, but God has held it together, helped it grow and become one of the "miracles of the 20th century." We have some great memories of the miracles God has wrought. But we have even bigger dreams and visions for what God is yet going to do. As we celebrate this milestone, let us thank God that YFC has been faithful to the original purposes for which God raised it up, and to which the founders were committed. Now....on into the future, trusting in God's leading and provision – for YFC to be a miracle of the 21st century – still "**Geared to the Times, but Anchored to the Rock.**" Come, Lord Jesus!



YOUTH FOR CHRIST
INTERNATIONAL

PARADE of NATIONS



**A**

YFC Angola

In 1992 a group of Angola young people participated in a youth camp in Namibia, and later that experience caused them to start YFC in Angola. Avelino Rafael, Lino André, Pastor Bernardo Chinoia, Beto Fontes and others were the ones who participated in the youth camp, and after training from YFC Namibia, Lino André became the first National Director of YFC Angola. He has now been succeeded by Pastor Chinoia.

Our main outreach methods before COVID-19 were a weekly lunch with underprivileged youth followed by Bible studies and discipleship; seven days of teen and kids camps, and addiction-free youth camp; cultural activities for each center; and schools outreach. A very important ministry is "Worth the Wait," a program we take to school calling young people to stay pure until marriage, offering the opportunity to sign an annual written commitment not to have sex until marriage.

For over eight months we hardly did anything during COVID because the majority of young people in our country don't have access to good internet. Facebook has helped a lot to keep us connected, but even that requires the internet. Fearing the economic crisis, our donors have stopped since the first announcement of the pandemic. Thus, we have had little resources for our full-time workers and other needs of the ministry. Now we do online conferences and online discipleship for those who can afford the internet.

Our vision for the future after COVID is to resume our normal activities; start an agriculture project, "Business for Ministry;" raise funds to complete our campsite, and use it as a sustainable source of funds for the ministry; and open a food bank to help poor communities.



YFC Angola 2021 Staff giving food baskets to needy families



YFC Antigua Kids Live Club

YFC Antigua

Youth for Christ Antigua has been in existence for the past forty (40) years and was recently reincorporated on 9th September, 2019. Our mission is to ensure that the young people in Antigua and Barbuda are given the opportunity to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. We do this through various activities to include our Kids Live Club, sharing the Gospel of Christ while visiting different youth groups around the island, Worship in the House and Vacation Bible School.

Our Kids Live Club has been successful since its inception and we have had the opportunity to celebrate with hundreds of sons and daughters who have committed their lives to following Christ and have joined churches where they will continue to hear of the love of God.

With our partnership with Fresh Oil Ministries over the past year, we have been able to show our love in action by providing care packages containing food, clothing and toiletries to families who because of the COVID-19 pandemic, had no source of income.

We at YFC Antigua will continue to do all that we can to share the good news of Jesus Christ to the youth in our twin island nation.

YFC Armenia

YFC EMENA and YFC EE members John Duncan, Malcolm Johnston, Peter Hewitt, Tom Shortland and others prayed for many years to start YFC in Armenia. After meetings with Armenians Frank Garabedian and Rene Leonyan, senior pastor of the Evangelical Church of Armenia, Malcolm Johnston went to Armenia to present YFC to the Church, followed by a team including YFC France Director, Jean-Jacques Weiler, and the process of starting YFC Armenia began. Arev Sarukhanyan was chosen in 2009 to coordinate the new YFC Armenia.



YFC Armenia prayer parents

The main ministry of YFC Armenia is "Children at Risk" ministry, a long term, life changing, after-school care for children. Day Centers for children provide much-needed rest, nutrition, recreation, social, and Christian/moral education for them, as well as productive and wonderful future through daily work, summer camps, sports, clubs, discipleship, and parenting services. Today YFC Armenia has more than 400 children in more than 20 Day Care Centers.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Day Care Centers were online for several months last year. More than 150 of our volunteers prepared food packages for 380 families during the quarantine. Today all centers continue to work with the children. We also have a "Praying Parent" ministry, which aims to raise parents who will pray for their children every day and a "Super Woman" teen-girls club ministry for vulnerable girls.

The war started by Azerbaijan has had severe consequences for Armenia, but we continue to reach youth for Jesus Christ. Our vision is to equip our volunteers with knowledge and skills, to open 12 new Day Care Centers for 300 war-affected children, to implement 12 day-camps and sports programs, and open 12 new teen girls' clubs for 140 teenagers, in partnership with local churches.



YFC Australia team members and passionate Christians in front of Australia's Parliament House during YFC's National Gathering 2020

norms about sexualization and pornography, and finally Abide Internship training. We have a strong prayer emphasis. The COVID-19 pandemic forced us to initiate new and effective online ministry.

B

YFC Bahrain

Established in 2013 with support from YFC UAE, YFC Bahrain seeks to reach young people from across the country and the Gulf. Although the director resigned in December, 2020, she is still a volunteer. Each year we host a youth camp called Desert Challenge. DC is a fun weekend filled with worship, fellowship, and games. DC provides an opportunity for Christian youth to grow in their faith. It is also a great way to introduce non-Christian friends to Christ. Each year around 200 youth from Bahrain and surrounding countries attend Desert Challenge. We have eight volunteers who are part of the core team for DC and another 50-60 who help run the program.

YFC Bahrain also works to train and equip young people for leadership roles in the local church. We do this through small group mentorship and providing opportunities to serve.

All activities of YFC were suspended due to COVID-19. We are not sure what the future holds for YFC Bahrain.

YFC Australia

Youth for Christ Australia is going after the lost sons and daughters of our nation through equipping and training young people in evangelism and discipleship and sending them out. In essence, boots on the ground, or workers for the harvest. Our boys and young men are not thriving and we are sounding the alarm. We have published a book, *Lost Boys: Bring Them Home* which is hitting a raw nerve amongst the churches of Australia as they are seeing more and more young men walk away from their faith.

Our four main ministries are: Jesus Campaign training in evangelism and discipleship, Hope Movement training in evangelism using HOPE cards, videos and online activity, What's Normal, a school/youth group program that challenges the cultural



YFC Bahrain Desert Challenge 2020

Bangladesh Youth First Concerns

Bangladesh YFC was born in 1995 with one person. After over 25 years, now there are 7 chapters, 2 Rehab Centers, 6 Kid's Homes, a national ministry center, almost 10 acres of land, a small income generation program, 134 full-time and part-time staff, more than 200 volunteers, and a national board from around the country. And thousands made a first-time decision for Christ. Currently, our annual operating budget is around US \$600,000.

In the 10 years, 2009-19, we have received national AWARDS 9 times from the government for our excellent services toward the students, youths, orphans, and addicts in the country. Now our two-fold goals are: Best Ministry Model and Best Quality Products (making contact with 25.3 million 6-12 graders, and 25,000 Hi-Club members, giving treatment to 4,500 addicts at our Rehab Centers, and settling them back to their families and communities). This also includes 1,000 orphan and destitute kids getting shelter, food, education, health care, job-skills training, and spiritual guidance in the next 25 (2021-2045) years, all with a couple of thousand having an opportunity to enter into the Father's house (John 3:16 and 14:3).



YFC Bangladesh Music Ministry Team Concert for Senior High School and Junior College Students

YFC Belarus

The work of the YFC in Belarus began in 2008. Our friends from Ukraine helped to start ministry to children with cancer and organize training for leaders.

Before COVID-19, the main focus of our work was to develop ministry for children-at-risk through Day Centers in local churches. The Day Center is a 3-5 hour program in the church, attended by children twice a week. Church volunteers help and care for children, feed them a hot lunch, help them complete their school homework, conduct a Bible lesson and various master classes, and play board and outdoor games. As of May 2021, we had 22 Day Centers. We also developed sports ministry, helping churches to reach children and youth through Sports Leagues, tournaments, amateur teams, and church clubs.

After the coming of COVID, most of our ministry was paused. But even though many of our Day Centers were not operating, the Lord provided us with resources and allowed us to visit families in need and provide them with food packages. Subsequently, this resulted in a large project of training parents on the most relevant everyday topics, and all our centers continued to work after the first wave of the pandemic.

In the future, we see 60 Day Centers throughout Belarus, which can be independent and transfer this model of ministry to other churches.



YFC Belarus children and leaders in a Day Center



YFC Benin Life Skills, training, and prayer meeting for Public School students in Cotonou

YFC Benin

YFC Benin's desire and ministry challenge is to help each young person in Benin to be fully engaged for Christ from early age to adulthood. We wish to raise a new generation of faithful leaders, impacting churches, lives, communities and our nation.

For this purpose, each week we gather more than 2000 youth in schools or universities for worship, training and empowerment. We are committed to train groups of parents, church leaders, and teachers in appropriate care for youth, and engage them in prayer. Moreover, we gather young professionals and civil servants to raise a generation of godly leaders like Daniel, who can reconcile our nation with God and introduce godly principles in governance.

Girls who are victims of violence are also targeted for reconciliation with God, their family, and new life perspective. For the past ten years, we have gathered young people each year to train them and engage them in community service for free medical care, evangelism, and social actions for the needy. We have planted more than 10 new churches in collaboration with local church leaders.



YFC Bolivia volunteers

when you change." A third program is "Secure Youth," designed to help prevent violence, vices/addictions, and human trafficking.

During the pandemic we were able to develop three programs in a virtual way through Zoom platforms, Youtube, and Facebook, always showing the love of God toward youth.

YFC Bolivia

Youth for Christ Bolivia began sometime in 1987, out of prayer and passion to share the Gospel, reaching youth with different tools of evangelism. Starting in 2011 new challenges arose with programs centered in announcing the good news of the love of Christ.

Throughout these years we have been forming new programs, like "Barnabas, son of Consolation," where we help the youth grow intellectually, relationally, physically and spiritually. Another program is "School of Life," which encompasses schools, where we develop principles that transform, using the theme that "everything changes

YFC Brazil

YFC Brazil will celebrate 70 years next year. Throughout this time we have developed a strong ministry at schools and camps. We have three student ministries: School of Life, School Chaplaincy, and Students in Action. We have two camps: the YFC Camp in the Macacos Valley in Minas Gerais and the YFC Surf Camp, on Shangrilá Beach, in Paraná.



YFC Brazil's Surf Camp summer of 2020 in Paraná State

The Coronavirus pandemic forced us to rethink our ministerial action. Since last year we have developed a Game ministry on the internet, called Cross Play, and an evangelistic channel on YouTube called Tudo Muda (Everything Changes).

We give thanks to God for our motto: "Geared to the Times, but Anchored to the Rock". With creativity and faith, we moved forward, even in the face of so many challenges brought about by the pandemic. National Director, Marcelo Gualberto and many other YFC workers got COVID. It was a very difficult time, but also a great opportunity for growth and many other blessings. God is good at all times. At all times He is good.

C

YFC Canada

At Youth for Christ Canada, our mission is to see "Every young person living fully in Christ." Our goal is to engage and equip youth to know and follow Jesus by holistically meeting the needs of youth in communities across Canada.



YFC Canada Lifeteams staff and students on the Juan de Fuca Marine Trail in British Columbia

From the first YFC Canada rally on December 30, 1944 at Massey Hall in Toronto, Ontario, YFC Canada has continued to share the good news of the Gospel with young people. Our 37 Chapters/Affiliate Chapters work with youth in almost every setting imaginable including youth centres, concert venues, skateboard parks, schools, camps, and coffee shops from Vancouver Island in the west to Halifax in the east.

This past year we have focused on sharpening our vision and enhancing the training and development of our staff so that they are better equipped to work with young people. In the midst of an unprecedented COVID-19 year, we continued to prioritize the mental and spiritual well-being of our staff through virtual guided spiritual retreats.

We have refined our program focus with the development of Core Ministries that categorize the programs we offer throughout our chapters. Core Ministries enable us to create guidelines and share best practices throughout the country so chapters can customize these programs to meet the specific needs of youth in communities across Canada. In 2021 and beyond, our focus is to bring the eternal to every young person we meet.



YFC Costa Rica

YFC Costa Rica, began in 2010 when Abner and Aimee from Canada visited and pioneered this amazing ministry.

We are doing most of our programs from an online platform. Through Zoom we are teaching English classes, doing discipleship, and walking along with 10 teen moms. COVID-19 has brought some significant changes to the way we do ministry. in some ways we've learned to adapt to the resources we have, and in other ways it's been frustrating to have to be open to change every week or two, depending on what the government says.

Also we've learned that walking with youth does not depend on a building. It depends more on their need and our willingness and ability to be there for them. Our programs go from tutoring online, teaching classes, workshops for the moms and their babies, all the way to creating a secure community around teens who love surf and teaching them through relationships the real meaning of following Jesus.

We don't know if COVID is going to be over anytime soon, that is why we are trying to build or rebuild programs that can run regardless of the pandemic or not.



Two YFC Costa Rica staff volunteers with three Teen Moms

YFC Croatia

After pioneering efforts in the mid 1990s, YFC Croatia was officially founded in 1997, just as the war in Croatia was ending. The team has always been led by national leadership and staff. YFC Croatia adapted and further developed various ministry models from other YFCI programs such as hosting Project Serve teams, Daniel Generation training for young/lay leaders, outreach in schools through drama ministry called Switch, and the interactive meditative outreach Labyrinth.

The small but mighty Croatian team almost immediately started focusing on developing unique and culturally relevant ministry models which have had great success in reaching youth all over Croatia and establishing YFCC as one of the most creative and forward leaning ministries in the country. These include The Advent Labyrinth, The Stations of the Cross, and The Reformation Exhibition. YFCC is now undergoing an intense growth spurt: a local chapter is being opened in another city, a new SuperWoman ministry is starting nationally, and a Multimedia Studio ministry is being built and began operations during the COVID year. YFCC is also providing leadership in pioneering and establishing YFC chapters in the neighboring countries. Please pray that the YFCC team and ministry would continue to be deeply rooted in Christ and wisdom as they sustain this exciting ministry growth.



YFC Croatia staff, Ruben and Melanie leading children at the "Stations of the Cross"

YFC Cyprus

YFC Cyprus in its current form was started in 2016 by Natalie Oghassabian, and Brandon and Angie Johnson were very instrumental in its growth after that. The ministry originally started around 1949 and had died out. Being evangelical is a challenge as Greek Orthodoxy is the dominant religion in the country, and we face challenges every time we are asked who we are.

Cypriots are a very relational people, so reaching out to the youth in Cyprus before COVID was mostly through camps, island-wide youth events, and “After Hours,” our youth cafe. Due to a fire, we had to close “After Hours” down, and COVID further restricted our relational ministries, as we were not allowed to socialize and meet new young people. Ministry continued online of course, but with much reduced effectiveness.



YFC Cyprus camp 2019

Coming out of COVID, we plan to start our camp up again as well as new ministries, and in time reopen “After Hours Youth Café” in two locations.

YFC Czech Republic

Youth for Christ in the Czech Republic has been active since 2009, involved in interdenominational missionary events. We cooperate with churches and organizations. Before COVID-19, we worked in five centers, where we had activities for teenagers and youth. Five employees are still involved in this ministry. Thanks to them and volunteers, this first mission team can reach dozens of street teenagers with the Gospel every year. We also work with schools where we can talk to hundreds of students and teachers.

The second mission team prays for the healing of people in the ministry of the Father's heart. This team has more volunteers who participate in activities in which we reach 1000 people a year. The third mission team is established in Prague and organizes a music festival and evenings of praise for young people. Our vision is to implement summer mission camps for children and youth, start a conference of spiritual renewal, and stabilize the mission team for new ministry.



YFC Czech Republic summer camp for teenagers



YFC Denmark teams gathering at a learning community for the "incubator"

developing their businesses and various projects inside and outside the church. We have around 30 teams connected to these activities. The goal is to see a movement of young creators that want to impact the youth in Denmark with the Gospel.

D

YFC Denmark

YFC in Denmark was founded in 1948. Today we have 2,500 members and are yearly in contact with 30,000 kids and young people. Ten people are on paid staff.

Usually we have lots of visits in schools and churches doing concerts and events. During COVID-19 we had to go online instead. That has been a great challenge but gives us a new outreach outside the church context.

An interesting new invention is our “incubator” called Skaberværk, meaning “The Creation.” Here we try to help young people with

F

JPC France

Jeunesse Pour Christ France has been working passionately with children and young people in France since 1947, with rallies and evangelization campaigns, a holiday center in the 1960s, concerts, and youth outreach evenings. For so many years the vision of JPC has been built and developed on the following: to allow everyone young to live the Gospel. Our values: interdenominationalism, enthusiasm, character of Christ, and pro-local church. Building deep relationships with young people,

and supporting them in living the life of a disciple, have always been top priority for the JPC France team.



YFC France — summer camps welcomed more than 100 children in 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has allowed us to reflect on the “how” without ever giving up on the “why.” After taking time as a team to seek the will of God, we chose to invest more in personal relationships (phone calls, visits, etc.) and in digital technology to support young people in their reality. We have added an emphasis on social networking and online training and rallies as YouTube events.

We also choose to maintain activities “in person” such as camps for children and young people, evangelization events, neighborhood programs, because we believe in the future of youth in France!

G

YFC Gambia

Youth for Christ Gambia was started by Donald Osman at Wesley Methodist Church in August, 1980. We run an International School (nursery, primary and high school) and a Vocational College in the capital city area and give children and young people within the institution an opportunity to know and follow Christ.

YFC Gambia also engages government (parliamentarians and community leaders) through their leadership development program. This is also a platform to share the hope of Christ. We also create jobs for young people through their manufacturing, export and poultry project. Today, the top gospel ministers in the country are former disciples of YFC Gambia. Other programs include sports ministry, nationwide gospel tours, Easter parades, etc.

The restrictions on gathering due to COVID-19 affected our events and school projects. After COVID we will restart our agricultural project and use it as a platform to reach out to young people, providing jobs and helping to reduce food insecurity in the country. We will also consolidate the YFC school project.



YFC Gambia leadership development for government parliamentarians



YFC Georgia — one of their evangelistic clubs learning a new song in Shavshvebi

YFC Georgia

YFC started in Georgia in 2018 as a response to a need of reaching kids and teenagers for Christ. We thought the model of Evangelistic Clubs, Day Care Centers, and Camps would be a good way to accomplish that.

2020 with COVID-19 was unusual for everyone, so we had to stop and restart the ministry many times during the pandemic period. But our vision is to continue to multiply safe places for young people from disadvantaged families to come and hear the Gospel and learn to develop their gifts.



YFC Germany staff and volunteers 2019

YFC Germany

YFC Germany, founded in 1948, used its 70th anniversary in 2018 to refocus all ministry departments to our primary target group of unchurched teenagers (aged 12-17). Believing that youth can be reached best through youth, we love to work with young energetic believers (age 18-25) to care for teenagers together. Discipleship is vital to all our programs, which consists of outreaches (local, national, and global) through Project Serve, small groups (e.g. SuperWoman), and regular youth programs. We are establishing drop-in options in and around Darmstadt and want to extend to other drop-in facilities in the next years as God directs. We strive to combine relationship-based youth work with a wise use of digital media (like the DASK App).

YFC Germany has 12 full-time paid staff members that serve alongside more than 70 full-time volunteers (gap-year programs) each year. The need for consistent and sustainable relationship-based youth work is huge in our secular nation! Lockdowns in 2020 and 2021 have made the situation for teenagers on the margins even more dramatic. We long to come alongside those teenagers in need!

YFC Great Britain

We have come a long way since June 1944 when our very first ministry called Youth for Christ started on the streets of Liverpool to provide an alternative event to the Saturday night drunken street parties (two years before Billy Graham visited). Now with a national mandate and a local presence with a ministry that reaches out to over one million young people a year in so many different ways, the fire that began to burn in Liverpool burns all the brighter today.

We take seriously our need to present a wholistic Gospel of demonstrating and declaring the good news. That includes our schools work (chaplaincy, clubs, or RE curriculum for teachers), at risk young people in prisons or who face exclusion, missions and evangelism teams, internet evangelists, our church resources department that exists to equip the local church, or our active local ministries who engage with young people wherever you might find them, to provide help, guidance, and the life-changing message of Jesus.



YFC Great Britain those receiving a Certificate in Schools Ministry

YFC Guatemala

Youth for Christ in Guatemala started in the 70s thanks to Virgilio Zapata and others. Then beginning in the 80s it was directed by Uriel García for more than 25 years. In 2015 it stopped, and at the end of 2019 Carlos Bámaca Rossil was called to take the ministry for this season.

Before COVID-19 our ministry consisted of mobilization of young people for missions, youth camps to connect youth with God through nature, and the training of volunteer leaders to lead others and make disciples.



YFC Guatemala Zoom contact with youth during COVID

One of the most outstanding programs of our ministry is the Bus of Life, a program that catalyzes, mobilizes and connects young people to volunteers. Due to the pandemic, we could not continue this, but we have connected with young people so as not to lose communication. By migrating all our programs and resources to virtual mode during the pandemic, we connected more with people, got to know the homes of involved young people, and were able to create a food bank that helps the families of involved youth who are most in need.

Our vision is to strengthen the faith of young people so that they can face the present and future times with their eyes and lives set on God.

YFC Guinea Bissau

Youth for Christ Guinea-Bissau was established in 1997 by an American missionary couple, Jack and Polly Wilson. The main ministry is through “Education”, in the following areas: English, French, Typing Master, and Computer courses. This has been one of the most efficient outreach methods used by YFC Guinea-Bissau. As a result, more than 19,150 had a chance to listen to the Word of God and make a decision for Christ by studying at the Center. This ministry is a shining example of a sustainable ministry model, as YFCGB has no monthly financial supporters, but funds its entire ministry by the money that the Center generates.

YFC was hit hard during the COVID-19 pandemic, and all its services were cancelled due to the lockdown. Being a non-Profit organization, the center was unable to carry out many activities, namely, infrastructure maintenance, evangelization, and discipleship programs.

After COVID-19 is over, YFC aims to resume all its activities: a massive youth evangelism campaign, discipleship clubs, sports outreaches, youth concerts, and social aids.



YFC Guinea Bissau staff members

**H**

YFC Haiti

YFC Haiti was started in June 2018 by Godwin Altidor who began ministry in Port au Prince and Jeremie. Our main outreach is to partner with already existing ministries to teach them how to do youth ministry. We help resource them with materials and support. Now we have our own church-based clubs and are in the school system with school-based clubs. We host clubs once-a-week all over the central plateau of Haiti.

COVID-19 put a complete halt to all our ministries. When we restarted we had an explosion of ministry opportunities. Things weren't as bad here in Haiti as in other places in the world. We have bigger issues with insecurity and politics. We have done more adjustments for violence and kidnapping than for COVID-19.

When the pandemic is over, I'd love to have mission teams visit and invest into our ministry. We would love our ministries to grow and impact more youth for Christ.



YFC Haiti kids from school program in a rural area

YFC Honduras

Since the start of our ministry, our main focus has been outreach and evangelism, sharing mostly in schools, Bible clubs, and at our ministry camp. After COVID-19 hit, our visions and hopes for ministry refocused. God has led us to spend most of our time and energy pouring into and ministering to our volunteers through discipleship programs, Bible studies, and time spent together as a YFC family.

We responded to the devastation left by COVID-19, as well as two hurricanes that hit our country, by teaching our volunteers the importance of giving and serving and putting that into practice. We are so grateful to God for our volunteers, with their hearts of service and love for Him and others. Our prayer is that they become strong leaders, committed to God, who enter this world as lights proclaiming the Gospel truth.



YFC Honduras various ministries

YFC Hong Kong

YFC Hong Kong connects with mission teams from all over the world. Since its beginning in 1972, God has never stopped sending teams to Hong Kong. On average, ten to twelve teams come to Hong Kong each year. Under the umbrella of YFC Hong Kong, these teams go to schools where they can sing, dance, do mimes, perform magic, share testimonies, and preach the Gospel – evangelistic outreaches inside the schools.

Other evangelism venues include streets, parks, malls, community centers, restaurants, etc. The teams do evangelistic outreaches all over Hong Kong. In 2020, in spite of COVID-19, by God's grace, we managed to hold 335 outreaches in this little territory. Praise the Lord!



YFC Hong Kong — New America Singers from California singing Disney songs and sharing the Gospel to students

YFC Hungary

Youth for Christ Hungary has been doing children and youth mission for 30 years. We aim to help young children experience that God can be rock-solid in their everyday lives. During the recent years, we were working on a project to translate a new Bible, which was created especially for the youth. The Rock Solid program is a strong pillar of our work and we organised camps and trainings not only in Hungary but also abroad. One of our colleagues spent a year in Transcarpathia (Ukraine) on a mission trip. We were also invited to a youth conference in Debrecen to lead the worship session.



YFC Hungary

Because of the coronavirus, we had to postpone many of our camps, teen conferences and trainings. We had to switch to regular online meetings with our colleagues. But this period was suitable for us to edit new materials for Rock Solid, including a revised book and videos, in which we explain the message of each chapter of the book. With these, we would like to help youth workers in launching Rock Solid programs.

After the funds are raised, we will be able to purchase a camp in west Hungary, and we believe that we can hold children camps there this summer. Our team has expanded recently, and we aim to involve more volunteers to make strong bonds. We also plan to contact other organizations to start new projects together.

**I**

YFC India

YFC India was begun in 1947. YFC India's stated mission is to reach young Indians starting from the high school level. To achieve this objective, we established over 50 centers across India, where Bible Clubs and Camps were regularly organized, except during the pandemic.

The global pandemic brought regular operations to a standstill, but we saw this as an opportunity to re-strategize for relevance. We organised Regional Camps, connected with many Christian leaders and partners across India over weekly prayers and provided member-care for IYFC staff through weekly staff meetings – all online, using Zoom. This would be next to impossible if one had to plan it as a physical meeting.

We also re-strategized ourselves to reach the exiguous (small, remote) parts of India and kept ourselves prepared to meet physically at the first opportunity. Then in March 2021, we had a window to organise a young leaders training camp in Jharkhand (eastern India, south of Bihar). We met physically for this and our greatest joy was that many dedicated themselves to join IYFC's work.



YFC India Young Leader's meeting in Jharkhand in March 2021



YFC Ireland young people playing soccer at Nomad Cage soccer camp

YFC Ireland

Youth for Christ Ireland is called to come alongside young people as "spiritual surrogate parents." To do this we have established our youth hub in the centre of Ireland to be a light and help all churches reach all young people. We care about identity, belonging, and the significance of every young person. Rock Solid, Nomad Cage soccer, drop-in, and Alpha are the ways in which we show this by linking arms with all Christian denominations.

Moving forward our vision is to establish our youth hub online to continue to be a light and help all churches reach all young people. We will do this through online platforms but always pointing young people back to the real world, real churches, and a real Jesus.

YFC Italia

Youth for Christ Italia started in 2007 out of a vision of a small committee to see unchurched Italian young people reached out with the Good News of the Gospel. The work started in Bologna and after a few years spread to other parts of Italy through some gifted, visionary and passionate youth workers who were in Bologna for an internship with YFC and then moved back to their cities of origin to start a similar ministry there.

YFC centers are presently in Bologna, Tuscany, the Naples area and in Sicily. School work, camps, Rock Solid clubs, sports outreach and service projects are some of the ministry models we utilize to reach out and disciple young people. The ministry is essentially relationally based, as we believe that it's through the connection between our stories and the young people's stories that we can point them to God's bigger story.

The "COVID season" has moved our ministry to a lot of one-on-one conversations and a few online meetings. We have gone deeper with some relationships, but we have really missed the fun and interaction of being together in person with the young people. We have also experienced how much the lock-downs and restrictions have had an impact on their mental and emotional health and we want to be there to help them process all this. Our vision is to go back to camps, retreats, conferences and all that makes youthwork truly relational and personal.

J

YFC Jamaica

Youth for Christ Jamaica (JYFC) was founded in 1947 by George Forbes. This transpired from a meeting with individuals from the USA who had suddenly developed a fast-growing youth movement called Youth for Christ International. Our Saturday Night Rallies held in every Parish then were very popular.

Rev. Dr. Gerry Gallimore, our first National Director, eventually became a YFCI President. Since then, the four National Directors have been Dexter Gordon, Donovan Thomas, Herro Blair Jr., and Dexter Johnson, who has served for 10 years.

The ministry evolved with a diverse range of programmes meeting the differing taste of today's youth. Those programmes include Discover Jesus Weekend Missions, School Tours, Church Visitations, Concerts, Sports, and Talents For Christ competitions. Our Acts12 Drama ministry produced 3 full-length award-winning movies blossoming into Jamaica International Faith Film Festival (JIFF). The cutting edge Media Ministry involves a Recording and Video Studio. Our social media features gospel artists sharing the message. After 74 years we are pressing on for Him.



YFC Italia Cage Castelbuono



YFC Jamaica Ministry Collage



YFC Kenya staff and volunteers

Eldoret, Meru, Nakuru and Kisii. Our main focus is evangelism and discipleship implemented in activities such as Bible study, prayer sessions, children's ministry and school's ministry.

The kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children (Luke 18:16). They are the future. To secure this future, we advocate for abstinence and sexual purity. To achieve this, we developed a sexuality manual 'Worth the Wait' that helps them understand sexuality and highlights abstinence. We also empower the youth to uphold the sanctity of human life. We run Crisis Pregnancy Ministry where we indulge prevention (preemptive training) Intervention (counselling) and aftervention (rehabilitation). This provides support to victims of sexual abuse, depression, rape, incest, marital problems, and adolescent issues.

Young people are our greatest asset so we do more than just ministry, we train and equip them with skills for self-sufficiency. In the recent past we have begun training on film production, digital skills for commerce, all with discipleship as a mandatory component. This is in progress in Nairobi as a pilot program and hope to introduce it in other chapters as God gives the grace. We also have a Youth for Christ music band – Voices of Truth – who spread the truth of Christ through music and daily life.

COVID-19 has affected most of our programs, making school ministry impossible when students are at home. Some discipleship programs have been compressed or stopped all together. We have responded by creating new online engagements mainly through YouTube and Facebook.



YFC Lebanon Staff 2020-2021

Lebanon for eleven years and turned the ministry over to John and his wife, Nancy, who served until about 2012 when the ministry was turned over to the current National Director, Maher El Hajj.

Holistic outreach has become a large part of YFC Lebanon's ministry. We actively engage youth in football (soccer) training, arts and crafts, drop-in recreation, psychosocial support, after-school tutoring, reconciliation, evangelism and discipleship. We run Manara Youth Center for at-risk and marginalized youth, as well as Lebanese and Syrians refugees. We also minister to Syrian youth living in tent communities in east Lebanon's Bekaa Valley.

K

YFC Kenya

Youth for Christ Kenya began in 1975. Brian Cummins was the first National Director. Cummins built a good foundation and since then the Ministry has grown tremendously and impacted thousands. Youth for Christ Kenya is currently made up of five chapters (regions) namely; Nairobi (with 2-centres),

L

YFC Lebanon

After four years with Kansas City YFC, Leonard and Pauline Rodgers moved to Lebanon in 1963 to begin Youth for Christ. One of the first young men they met was John Sagherian, son of an Armenian pastor who had attended the YFC Congress in Beatenberg Switzerland in 1948. They served in

Our traditional Schools Ministry, which encompasses evangelism and discipleship among Lebanon's middle and upper classes, took on a digital aspect during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue with social media going forward, as this has proven to be the best way to reach this internet-savvy generation. We also continue serving the local church by training and equipping youth leaders all over Lebanon and the Near East.

M

YFC Madagascar

YFC Madagascar operates in seven different regions reaching young people for Christ by different approaches. We minister through weekly radio shows, presenting Bible films like the Jesus Film, dance and drama teams, computer and English training and prison outreach.

In the capital city of Tana, for example, we are mobilizing 93 volunteers following the G21 Now vision, developing young leaders (a one-year commitment, then renewed if they want to). They minister in a prison after a two-months training. Another prison ministry in Antsirable reaches 99 boys and 100 women, preaching the good news and helping them return to the community when they are set free.

We minister to college students using Bible films like the Jesus Film in the northwest (Amparafaravola) and introducing improved rice growing technology to agricultural students in a college in Moramanga. Where possible, we challenge the students to receive Jesus as personal Savior. Computer clubs in the west (Bakaro) and Ambositra enable us to minister Jesus to students during devotions while equipping them with computer and even English skills to help them find work.

In each of our regions we have three to seven local board members plus seven national Board members. After COVID, God willing, we plan to pioneer YFC centres in each main location, so please pray for that.



YFC Madagascar volunteers celebrating Christmas 2020 and YFCI's 77th anniversary



YFC Mauritius staff and youth at a historical UNESCO site remembering where slaves jumped to their death as French slave-masters approached

YFC Mauritius

Youth for Christ in Mauritius started in 1974 with missions from Southern Africa through the initiative of Denis House and Geoff Rutter.

On 8 June 1980, Youth for Christ Mauritius was officially fully chartered. Terry and Pauline Sparks were the first full-time workers and Rodney Curpanen became the first National Director. Cyril Palan after being a Board Member became Secretary, then Board Chair, Acting National Director and National Director and currently Regional Director. Dylan Palan took over as National Director in 2018.



YFC owns a property partly donated by YFC SA in the centre of the island where numerous activities are regularly organized: sports, music, clubs, trainings, outings, social involvements and outreach programmes, geared towards youth interests.

The second COVID-19 wave triggered the need for a reshaping, especially with islanders less accustomed to online ministry. However, we must face realities and align ourselves to this crucial situation and find ways to reach the younger generation with the Gospel.

YFC Mexico

Youth for Christ Mexico began in 2007 with the help of Elí Beltran and founder, José Carlos Gutierrez, in the city of Monterrey.

Our ministry consists of reaching the most vulnerable and at risk sector of youth, carrying the message of the Gospel through sports activities, and creating followers of Jesus through them.

We now face the challenge of the remote and digital age, empowering our volunteers with the tools to develop effective ministry.

Our vision is to focus on growth in order to serve a greater number of young people in the communities of the states of Chihuahua and Nuevo León. Please pray for us.



YFC Mexico Staff 2021



YFC Mongolia "True Friend" youth leaders' camp 2019

cafés in the churches. We also run "TRUE FRIEND," a national youth evangelism and discipleship program.

By God's grace during the pandemic crisis, we've been developing and shifting successfully all our ministries into digital and online mode. You can visit these modes at www.facebook.com/Youth-forChristMongolia, www.instagram.com/yfc.mongolia/, and www.youtube.com/channel/UCxSUI-1Ok_rzVRe4flle1Sw.

YFC Mongolia's vision is serving to transform our nation by reaching the young generation for Christ.

YFC Mongolia

Thirty years ago religious freedom came to Mongolia right after communism fell. So, the Gospel has been reintroduced, and there are now 60,000 believers and 600 churches within a population of three million.

YFC Mongolia was founded in 2013 by national youth pastors, Sodoo and Gloria, and their powerful team. Now we have seven full-time staff and thirty GenZ volunteers who hold youth clubs and

YFC Moscow, Russia

Russia is a huge country, and but we have only three offices: (Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Samara) for 20 years. We have three directions of ministry:

1. We actively teach the younger generation to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the "Academy for Evangelists". This is our main passion. We are promoting the #Silentnomore about Christ movement.
2. We care for orphans through day centers and developing a "real life" project that creates pairs: mentor and follower.
3. We serve at-risk children through football clubs. We are always glad for the cooperation and partnership in making disciples.



YFC Moscow #Silentnomore about Christ Conference

YFC Myanmar

In 1967 YFC Area Director, Victor Monogram, visited the Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC) youth department. The first cooperative youth leadership seminar was held in 1974 and subsequently a Christian youth council (MCYF) was formed, appointing Mehm Tun Thein as youth director. YFC work was established under MCC in 1980. Programs stopped and restarted a number of times during the 1980's due to structural changes in MCC and political situation in the country.

In 1989 Albert Lee (Singapore YFC National Director) helped re-start evangelistic programs and Saw Leh Htoo was appointed director for Yangon and Bago. In 1992 Saw Sai Hai was appointed the first National Director of YFC Myanmar, and the organization was officially recognized on May 5, 1994. Zaw Hla Than (Jimmy) served as National Director from 2008-2018. Rev. Mahn Gideon is currently National Director.

MYFC's ministries include free tuition centers, youth mobilization training courses, "Be A Light" traveling music gospel team, and the St. George's retreat center.



YFC Myanmar's youth program in Yangon



YFC Namibia teens showing team flags at camp

they keep sending their kids. We have a very good Operation Hannah mothers group that is constantly praying for our programs and the young people of our nation.

COVID-19 has really caused the flow of our ministry to be stagnant. We tried to connect to our young people through social media platforms, but sadly not everyone has access to social media and most of our young people drifted away. Now with the lockdown being lifted and we can meet with 100 people, we can run the ministry full swing again. After COVID is completely over, we will use those being impacted currently to do a massive outreach in our Nation.

YFC Netherlands

Youth for Christ in the Netherlands is a strong local movement. With more than 30 teams (almost 100 employees and more than 1000 volunteers) we focus on vulnerable young people in society. From local youth centers we meet young people on the street and invite them to come to our activities. In the relationship we build with them we share what Jesus has done for us and put them on the track of His Kingdom.

We have also made a few videos following the lives of a number of young people. This is to give them a voice. In addition, we support the churches in our country with equipping and training programs. We provide hundreds of volunteers, youth leaders, and youth workers with materials and programs. The foundation of our mission lies in that personal relationship.

Because of COVID-19, the mission has come under considerable pressure, and our work has become mostly digital in creative ways. We have drawn extra attention to vulnerable young people with different actions around the country. We developed online programs for the churches so they could stay in touch with the youth, and those programs turned out to have a great impact.

We approached the press and expressed our concerns about what we saw happening to young people, and we wrote letters to all the churches in the Netherlands and to the government to keep a close eye on young people. Youth for Christ has become very visible in the Netherlands, and we experience that as a great blessing!

N

YFC Namibia

YFC Namibia started in 1985 under the leadership of Jos and Sylvia Holtzhausen. Before COVID our main ministry focus was different camps (kids, teens and youth camps). We did various school prefect camps as well as school ministry where we did morning assemblies and life skills teachings in classes.

YFC Namibia has a very good relationship with parents and children attending our programs, to the extent that

they keep sending their kids. We have a very good Operation Hannah mothers group that is constantly praying for our programs and the young people of our nation.



YFC Netherlands Tour d'Orange with more than 100 staff and friends of YFC cycled and raised over 40,000 Euros in September, 2020

YFC Nicaragua

YFC Nicaragua has been known as a relational ministry. For ten years we have served our people through evangelism programs like: the Game Plan, English as a second language, Bible study, Celebrate Recovery, children's ministry, and leadership training. Our method has been to work in small groups so we can have the chance to listen to each participant and clarify what God is leading us to share. This way

we have been able to reach more than a thousand youth in a year.



YFC Nicaragua 10th grade students from Herman Gmeiner High School

When COVID-19 hit our country, we had to learn how to serve in a different way, using technology like phones and internet so we could continue sharing the Good News. We have found how powerful media is, and now it is part of our program. We still do our programs physically in groups of no more than 15.

Something we miss is mission teams coming in to help us share and train on the field.

YFC Niger

Ali Moussa Hamani started the Youth for Christ ministry as a pioneer in Niger in June 1998. In 1999 we were officially recognized by the Republic of Niger as a religious association.

We started the ministry with a musical group called Peniel and a football team. Both of these programs have proven to be very effective in evangelizing young people. In 2005 we opened an Evangelical School called Peniel. Today we have over eight hundred young people to whom we preach the Gospel five times a week. We also have television programs that allow us to preach the Gospel to thousands of people once a week.

Since the coming of COVID-19, things have changed a lot. From March to May 2020 all activities were suspended. But from June 2020 we restarted activities by respecting the barrier measures decreed by the authorities. We have developed social media communications to bypass restrictions related to COVID-19. We are glad to see that this form of communication works very well by the grace of God.



YFC Niger staff, L to R, Mamoudou, Assistant National Coordinator, Akani, Office Secretary, and Timothy, Training Director

**P**

YFC Philippines

In the Philippines, Youth for Christ was in Manila for 30 years but closed in early 2000. However, a Korean missionary, Cho Hyoun Jo, pioneered Youth for Christ in Baguio City.

YFCP has been reaching the youth through Happy Hearts Club which reaches out to pre-teens five to 12 years old, Campus Life that reaches teens on school campuses, and Youth Life that caters to those out-of-school. We also reach “at-risk” and marginalized youth, and even juvenile delinquents.

During the pandemic, DIGIVANGELISM is our new normal. It is a ministry of YFCP for reaching the youth, including children, virtually. This platform enables us to connect with youth in a wider scope even when the government restricts face-to-face encounters. The Internet and all forms of social media is where the youth are found and thus this gives a greater influence among the youth of the Philippines.

YFC will continue to reach young people in Baguio City and in other parts of the Philippines through face-to-face and digital platforms when government restrictions are eased.



YFC Philippines collage of various ministries



YFC Poland Beginnings Conference New Years Eve, 2019

a special time to enter the New Year, plans, dreams and resolutions with God. We want it to be the beginning of something new, the BEGINNING of life in the POWER of Him who is the source of joy, peace and abundance. The beginning of life with the one in whom our identity, our self, is hidden.

YFC Poland

YFC Poland was started in 1993 by two missionaries from the UK. Recently the situation in Poland and in the world has changed the activities of YFC. Most importantly, however, we managed to survive this difficult time thanks to the support of our friends and relatives of YFC Poland.

One of our large projects is a New Year's Eve conference called “Beginning” organized for the young and by the young. The Beginning is

About 850 people participated in the last edition of the conference at the end of 2019. Due to COVID-19 we went online with the activities. We have become a platform for building unity between Christians by sharing good interviews, lectures, worship and blogs.

Narnia Club is a space created for children from the surrounding courtyards, the so-called Wrocław's "triangle", one of the places in this city where young people need love and support the most. Our pupils spend their time there at educational workshops - theater, art, sports, etc. Children are supervised by leaders who care for them and show them unconditional love.

At this point the restrictions are being reduced so we can return to live activities in our club. We are also waiting for the acceptance of a new 2-story building for our kids, which was given to us from the city. The rest of our projects are waiting for all restrictions to be removed so that we can go back to work.

YFC Portugal

MPC started in Portugal in the late 1950s through missionary groups that came to sing in churches. These groups came from the USA, then in the 1960's God raised a person in Portugal to lead this ministry. In the following years, MPC/YFC Portugal grew, using creative ministries and sports for this purpose. In the 1980s it even had a training center for young people.

The methods of this ministry before the COVID-19 were made through networks of friends and churches for which it was necessary to generate an enormous amount of leaflets. The ministry of MPC/YFC already had periods of great influence in the 80s and 90s, where many young people were awakened and won for the Kingdom of God. In 2018, after a long lapse in leadership, an evaluation was done of MPC/YFC Portugal. It was decided to do leadership training in Brazil in 2019 and establish a partnership. In the meantime, God had already raised a couple of missionaries to come to Portugal.

In 2020 two young women went to Brazil to take the Youth Leader course, and National Director, Rui Pereira, was left to run the ministry. Ministry started to grow during the time of COVID-19 because God moved among the young people, adults, and pastors. During the year 2020 we built the Board of Directors, the Fiscal Council, held general meetings, and wrote some projects for the 2021 action plan. The God of the improbable acted and everything happened, but the best is yet to come.

The vision for the future for YFC Portugal is very positive. This year God showed us three cities where we will survey workers/volunteers in order to identify needs for a second phase. We want to train young leaders from churches to work with YFC. We also desire to launch a book containing our vision and mission and even cooperate with Portuguese-speaking African countries.



YFC Portugal open air ministry activity



YFC Puerto Rico Board of Directors, 4th from left is Daniel Peal, National Director

YFC Puerto Rico

Youth for Christ Puerto Rico was pioneered in 2018 by YFCI missionaries Daniel and Laura Peal. In February 2019, YFC Puerto Rico was recognized by the island as a non-profit organization, and a Board of Directors was established.

The Lord began to open doors for Campus Life ministry sites in both public and private schools beginning in 2019. Another weekly ministry site began in the home of the Peals which quickly grew into a site of more than 50 people. 2019 ended with plans to begin City Life ministry sites on Vieques, a smaller island off of Puerto Rico, as well as in the local apartment complexes.

In January 2020, ministry plans were stalled by thousands of earthquakes that struck the island. Shortly after the earthquakes, COVID-19 completely shut down all

in-person ministry as the island went into a very strict government lockdown. Online ministry through Zoom began with weekly gatherings of students nationwide..

In the middle of what seemed to be the most difficult season of ministry with the uncertainties of the pandemic, the Lord provided the funds necessary to secure an 11-acre property for YFC Puerto Rico. This property will provide a place for students and families to hear the hope of the Gospel for generations to come.! While in-person ministry was called off for almost an entire year, both staff and volunteers were able to transform the abandoned property for future ministry. In-person ministry on site at the property began in February 2021 and continues to expand.

Looking ahead, we believe that the best is yet to come for the youth of Puerto Rico. The new property, school ministries, and urban ministry will provide countless opportunities for us to connect to the hearts of the next generation. The resilience that we have seen on the island in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, in the midst of thousands of earthquakes, and through the pandemic has encouraged our YFC Puerto Rico team to press on with our eyes fixed on Jesus.



YFC Romania staff team 2020

R

YFC Romania

YFC România started in 1997 and operates in 6 regions: Ploiești, Brașov, Slatina, Târgu Mureș, Alba, and Oradea.

Throughout the year we organize many activities such as Rock Solid Clubs, SuperWoman, summer camps and events. Hundreds of teens participate in our weekly activities and in the summer, we reach over 2000 youth.

In 2019, we began our 3000 Steps campaign.

Our goal is to buy a campsite in the middle of Romania, grow our team from 10 to 30 staff, and reach 5000 youth yearly. Since then our staff has doubled in size. Praise God! More is yet to come...

S

YFC Serbia

YFC in Serbia was formed in 2001 by Zvonko Valentini who led YFC until 2011 when his brother, Estera Valentini, took over until 2017. Beginning in 2017 Kristian Vučković took over the ministry.

Our main ministry models are reaching out to the youth of Serbia through our Community Coffee Shop called Lighthouse. We want to make a safe place for Christian and non-Christian youth to meet, share stories, and to give us the opportunity to share the Gospel through creative workshops and seminars like Alpha course. We use the funds gained from this café to help fund other ministries we plan

to start in Serbia. We have a yearly conference called Mobilization where we teach our youth to share the Gospel, and then we take them to the streets to share our faith with street youth. Our worship band, Serbia Worship, helps us serve local churches for out-reaches, concerts, worship evenings, and conferences, etc.

COVID slowed down our ministry opportunities, but we kept our same passion for all the projects God has placed on our hearts. Our vision for the future is to serve youth that are struggling with their mental health, to be a light source for youth in the popular pastime of playing video games, and to develop a sports ministry.



YFC Serbia - Team that shares Jesus with the youth of Serbia

YFC Singapore

“Keen Teen Crusades” (week long training camps) in the late 1950’s immersed Singaporean youth in the Word of God. The crusades encouraged them to reach out into their communities through the sharing of Gospel tracts and invitations to evangelistic meetings held each night during the camp. Young leaders emerged from KTC, including YFC Singapore’s first National Director, Kee Kok, who dedicated 18 years of his life to Youth for Christ. Nine of those years he served as both National Director and Area Director for YFC Southeast Asia.

During the 1960’s and 70’s YFC began school club meetings and teen-to-teen evangelism. “Geared to the Times, Anchored to the Rock” meant YFC kept up with the youth scene through IT, sports, and adventure initiatives in the 1990’s and beyond.

Now, with many schools closed or conducting online classes due to the COVID-19 pandemic, YFC has been running E-Missions and Virtual Quests. Richard Tan became YFC Singapore’s National Director in 2020 as SYFC continues sixty-plus years of reaching Singaporean youths for Christ.



YFC Singapore students competing in a Playmax event in 2017



YFC Slovakia

YFC Slovakia was founded by Marian Lipovsky, Bob Tanner, and others in 1995. In the past years, the ministry included worship school, counseling school, and various conferences and events at our mission center in Kralova Lehota.

Our biggest event, summer youth festival CampFest, welcomes more than 6,000 people every year and offers worship, teaching, concerts, performance art, movies, and workshops on four stages. Our long-term focus is counseling ministry – we provide hundreds of counseling sessions a year and train more than 100 counselors every other year in a systematic two-year school of Christian counseling.

YFC Slovakia also runs a Christian TV station reaching 600,000 households in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. During the COVID crisis, we transformed our counseling school to online teaching and focused more on our volunteer program for young people in difficult life crises. Our vision is to create a Christian counseling and mental health center for these people.



YFC Slovakia CampFest



YFC Spain - Most of current staff

YFC Spain

YFC began in Spain in 1948 right after the Beatenburg World Congress. It thrived on big rallies for several years but later fell on hard times due to lack of leadership. Mark and Stephanie Dodrill were married in 1977 and later went to Spain as missionaries in 1982. Later Mark took time out to get his Masters degree from Fuller Theological Seminary and then his doctorate from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. When then returned to Spain, they were the only staff left. But through much hard work as National Director the ministry began to thrive.

In YFC Spain we mobilize leaders to reach youth for Christ and train other leaders to do the same. In 2019, we were in weekly contact with 270 youth of different ages in the variety of programs at three ministry sites. In addition, we operated eight weekend retreats and six summer camps. We reached another 130 leaders annually through a variety of leadership training activities including our own

biblical and theological seminary, government certified youth counselors', activities directors' training, and specific ministry skills training events in different areas of the country. In addition to this ministry in Spain, we have been pioneering work in Bulgaria which has an unusual model of youth teams who plant churches. More than 60 churches have been planted over the last decade through that work.

During COVID much of this direct ministry had to be converted to online formats, but it has really given us a vision for developing leadership training courses and curriculum materials resources available in digital format both within Spain and around the entire Spanish-speaking world.

YFC Sweden

Sweden is a pioneering YFC country with local youth clubs in the city of Västerås. We are currently working in an immigrant area reaching out to tweens from many different ethnical backgrounds. It is also the vision of YFC Sweden to help and assist local churches in reaching young people for Christ. Each semester we translate and upload new and fresh youth material onto our resource page, which is available free of charge to churches all over the country.

At this point we offer Rock Solid, Lumen, and Superwoman material in the Swedish language. As the COVID-19 pandemic recedes YFC Sweden is looking forward to reunite with our tweens again, and we also hope to present our resources to more churches and assist youth leaders in starting new youth clubs.



YFC Sweden Rock Solid Club



YFC Taiwan camp co-organized with the Church

T

YFC Taiwan

Youth for Christ Taiwan has used the internet for gospel ministry for 21 years. We've been trying different ways to reach teenagers. Examples are social media like Instagram, Facebook, Line APP, and the one-by-one counseling mailbox on the website "www.walei.tw". We have reached millions of teenagers so far.

Since 2010, we've been developing outdoor escape games to help young people understand the beliefs and values of Christianity. Since 2018, we have also co-organized gospel camps with the church for different issues, such as emotion, Sustainable Development Goals, and interpersonal communication.

Taiwan keeps a low coronavirus infection rate, so the ministry isn't impacted too much. During 2020, more than 700 elementary and middle schools registered for our free inspirational quote bookmarks. We held four outdoor escape games and one camp during summer vacation. With the publication of emotional intelligence lesson plans and board games at the end of 2020, we can guide church fellowships or school teachers to counsel young people.



YFC Tanzania

Youth for Christ Tanzania was officially registered in 1987. James Broun Mwambagi played a great role in pioneering YFC Tanzania under the help of YFC Kenya who was directly involved in the pioneering process and provided all the required support.

Our programs before COVID-19 included the following: evangelism and discipleship, school out-reaches, Worth the Wait abstinence program, leadership development and training, life skills (challenges facing modern youth), prison visits, sports ministry, music and dance ministry, evangelism to street children, prayer, and many more. The uniqueness of our ministry is how we connect with young people and disciple them through local churches.



Because of COVID-19 some of our ministry programs have changed to online and digital platforms. The ministry programs above involved more face-to-face, but under COVID restrictions we reach out to young people through WhatsApp, Zoom, Facebook and YouTube.

Our vision after COVID-19 is to establish social media Evangelism. We have observed this has great impact on the young generation. In the picture the man on the left is Zaburi Obadiaah, our YFC Tanzania National Coordinator, and some of our key staff.

YFC Thailand

Early in 1973 Dr. Billy Kim, Rev. Leon Gold and Jet Lin had a meeting in Manila and agreed that Jet Lin would pioneer the YFC ministry in Thailand. He established this mission in mid-1973 as the first Director of Thailand YFC. For 48 years YFC has developed the ministry in Thai society with a clear mission to evangelize and make disciples of Thai youth during the leadership of four National Directors: Jet Lin (1973-1974); Dr. Chaiyun Ukosakul (1976-1984); Nitichet Sadudeewong (1984-2005); and Pattawit Onkchareon (2005-present).

We focus on sharing the Gospel to students under year 12 as the statistics of other YFC countries indicates that the youth in that age are more open-minded. YFC will not plant a church but works in partnership with local churches through three main strategies.

1. Power: Proactive evangelism.
2. Ants devour elephants: Share the Gospel and make disciples through youth volunteers.
3. Partnership: Work together with churches and other organizations.

After the pandemic of COVID-19, we have explored every new way to share the Gospel and make disciples via online channels along with face-to-face ministry.



YFC Thailand Youth Challenge and Online Evangelism



YFC Trinidad and Tobago home gardening for our 2020 virtual Camp Glorious website

Glorious with over 12,000 devices used. Additionally, our monthly Prayer Revival meetings, Boyz Talk and Girlz Talk, geared toward teenagers, have been our focus. The stage is being set for additional models to be implemented virtually.

As soon as the opportunity permits we intend to return to our face-to-face ministry methods.

YFC Tunisia

YFCI started a pioneering work in Tunisia in 2011 in order to press forward with the vision of reaching every young person in every people group around the world with the Good News of Jesus Christ. With over 6,000 unreached people groups still existing in our world today, YFC Tunisia recognized that they could not complete the incredible YFC vision alone. Working with the local church and other Christian organizations would be vital to reaching every young person. The pioneers of YFC Tunisia started partnering with the Live Dead Church Planting Partnership to train and equip young missionaries to take the Gospel all across the Arab world.

Praise God for the 34 different teams that have since been trained and launched into Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, Yemen, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Lebanon, Iraq, Bahrain, and to the Syrian refugees in Turkey. In reality, our work has just begun and we are excited to see hundreds of teams trained, equipped, and sent so that every young person has an opportunity to hear.

YFC Tunisia and its team have also headed up the professional identity and Business as Mission department (BAM) for the Live Dead Partnership. They have trained and equipped hundreds of young leaders and missionaries in the principles and skills of Business as Mission. This training has empowered teams to successfully launch out with the Gospel into difficult-to-access nations all across the Arab World.

YFC Tunisia also continues to reach young people across Tunisia through its own ministry programs that they facilitate each year. Praise God for the way He is building his church in Tunisia. The COVID-19 pandemic did not hinder or slow down God's work in Tunisia in any significant way.

YFC Trinidad and Tobago

In August 1956, Trinidad and Tobago welcomed to its shores Keith Rowe, a young Jamaican. He introduced the YFC movement to our twin-island state.

Over the past two decades, we have had some exciting times under the leadership of the National Director, Pastor Frank Porter. During this time, models including Liberation Day, Camp Glorious and Prayer Kids have impacted the national community.

However, in 2019, with the advent of COVID-19, we have been forced to change our operation from being face-to-face to virtual. Thus far we had a very successful virtual Camp



YFC UAE Big Weekend students and leaders Feb., 2020

U

YFC United Arab Emirates

Youth for Christ was established in the United Arab Emirates in 2002 by Neil O'Boyle, starting in Abu Dhabi, the capital city. Early on, it was called Arabian Gulf YFC. National Directors over the past twenty years include Amy Kellogg, Paul Coles and Marilyn Rendle, supported by a National Board and volunteers. The mission of YFC UAE is to Partner with the local church and like-minded partners, Empower teenagers, and Serve the nation. The name Youth Unlimited (EYU) is used as the community service arm in an effort to honor and respect our Muslim host country.

Partner - A national Youth Leadership Network (YLN) made up of youth pastors and student leaders works collaboratively to pray, plan and present the Gospel to EVERY teenager in this unique nation. Youth Leadership events called EQUIP give the mostly volunteer leaders helpful insights into reaching youth with the Good News of Jesus, as well as opportunities for soul care.

Empower - A flagship activity has been an annual youth camp originally called Desert Challenge and now, Big Weekend, the most recent one involving over 200 teenagers and youth leaders from 12 churches and 35+ nations in February of 2020, only days before the COVID lockdown.

Serve - There are over 600,000 teenagers in the UAE and over 80% of them are from almost every other nation on earth, giving YFC/EYU opportunities to teach about Third Culture Kids, young people that grow up outside of their passport country. This transitional population is readily drawn to the Truth of an unchanging, loving God. Undergirding all ministry is a robust prayer presence, partnering with national and Emirates-based networks called Wake Up Deborah, where women pray together for their own children, as well as the local population.

Ministry through this last year of the pandemic has mostly been online via Zoom with monthly YLN meetings, collaborative virtual music group compilations, a Big Weekend reunion, practical testimony and digital tech trainings with the YFCI Digital Field Team, a hybrid Project Serve, Cross Cultural Kid awareness, and transition seminars.



YFC Uganda school youth

YFC Uganda

YFC Uganda was founded in 1992, and since then we are passionate about reaching young people with the gospel of Christ. We do this through school and community evangelism and discipleship outreaches, counselling and care of pregnant teenagers, leadership development, and education of young people in need. Through music, dance, drama, life stories, training, counseling, and care we deliver the gospel to young people.

Over the years, we have established three Centers, namely our head office, "Zion" in Kilokole (Central Uganda), Idudi (Eastern Uganda), and Gulu, Northern Uganda. Our vision is to continue to reach young people focusing more on discipleship of young people who will evangelize and disciple others.

YFC Ukraine

In 1991 when Ukraine got independence, God brought Jean Jacques Weiler, then director of YFC Europe, Bob Tanner (USA), John Campbell (Northern Ireland), and John Duncan (Northern Ireland) to Ukraine. They met Andriy Kostyshyn, who became a long-term National Director of YFC Ukraine. From 1992 till now John Campbell has become a key partner and Board member of YFC Ukraine.

Over the years we had many ministry models: Rock Solid clubs, camps, prayer ministry, social evangelizing of youth and families through Day Centers, sports, drama ministry, Leadership Development (One Million Leaders by John Maxwell), publishing department, resource center, teaching at Christian seminaries, institutes and conferences.

During COVID-19 YFC Ukraine changed focus from mass ministry to more personal and practical work: trainings through zoom, small groups, Art of Connection, Schools of Leadership, coaching, social gospel. We distributed food packages for families, organized day camps for kids at risk, and built relationships with churches. We saw the lockdown as an opportunity. People seek God and need YFC.



YFC Ukraine staff on top, bottom left to right, John Campbell, Jean Jacque Weiler, and Andriy Kostyshyn



YFC Uruguay friends gathered at National Parliament

tunity to serve. We can draw near to them with His love, a love that is so difficult to many to see in their lives on their own.

Across the years, a creative, motivated, and innovative team has formed and joined forces with churches and organizations within Uruguay, Latin America, and the Caribbean. This team has developed and grown pertinent and relevant methods to reach children and youth with the Gospel. This partnership, begun by Youth for Christ Uruguay, was named Sur-Sur (South-South), and is one of the distinctives of our ministry that we participate in today, with a staff of more than 180 individuals and many volunteers.



YFC USA

Youth For Christ USA, 77 years old, is a movement that builds relationships with young people to introduce them to Christ and uncover God's story of hope in their lives. We activate volunteers, leaders, mentors, and staff as the hands and feet of our ministry efforts. Every role in our movement points back to building relationships that work to introduce young people to Christ. We are a bold ally of the local church and partner to like-minded organizations, working alongside them to reach kids and create Christ-centered, biblical communities. All of this is rooted in 3Story® - the idea that the work of the Gospel happens in the overlap of God's story, our story, and our neighbor's story. It's the DNA of our ministry that we hold to as we pursue meaningful relationships with young people.



YFC USA - one of many YFC camps across the country

Our latest Impact report registers that we have 23,000 staff and volunteers serving kids across the United States. Young people numbering 123,147 shared their name with a YFC leader, 75,896 of those are in conversation with our YFC Leaders, and 43,308 young people are in an authentic Christ-sharing relationship with a leader. We give glory to the Lord that 9,079 young people came to Christ during 2019. This emboldens us to continue partnering with the local church and like-minded partners to move these young people into discipleship, envisioning them as future leaders in the Lord's work!

On April 1st, 2021, The Youth For Christ USA, National Board of Trustees unanimously selected Jake Bland as YFC's 10th president and CEO. Jake's appointment arrives on the heels of Dan Wolgemuth's announcement of his retirement as YFC president and CEO, after 16 years of dedicated service. Jake assumed the new leadership role as president and CEO on June 1, 2021. Jake has been involved with YFC for 23 years – first serving as a high school student in YFC, then as a volunteer, an intern, and was consistently promoted up through the ranks over two decades. We celebrate with Jake, Ali, and their children, Silas and Ivy, in this new chapter with YFC.

V

YFC Venezuela

JPC Venezuela was founded in Caracas in 1995 by Geordon Rendle who got involved with many church pastors to help them understand the ministry and its purpose. He also dedicated himself to recruiting volunteers to work in youth evangelism with the support of fellow pastors.

During all this time, various strategies have been used to reach young people, such as: youth meetings at the JPC headquarters,



YFC Venezuela Staff

talks in schools and high schools, recreational and evangelistic activities in open spaces, and camps, among others. At the same time, intensive training of youth leaders has been carried out.

When the pandemic arrived, we stopped outside activities, and dedicated ourselves to prayer and reflection to find a way to continue. Currently, we are activated to work through social media. JPC Venezuela will continue to reinvent its way of working to reach young people to know Christ once the pandemic ends.



YFC Zimbabwe girls in Heany Junction given a sexual health talk by a volunteer studying nursing

Z

YFC Zimbabwe

Restarted around 2011 our stated mission was “passionately pursue lost teens with urgency as the doors to the Gospel seem to be closing fast,” This statement seems to echo an even greater urgency today.

Our ministry to young people in schools, communities, on sports fields, and the streets grew, drawing teens to a language they understood, communicating challenges that resonated with reality. Student leadership camps have equipped pupils with tools to be catalysts for change in their area of influence. As if preparing for the COVID curveball, six staff attended digital ministry training by the Ainsworths, YFCI Media Ministries, helping the team remain geared to the times and on the cutting edge.

We look forward to effective digital evangelism and continued provision of basic needs to vulnerable youth affected by the pandemic. More ministry at grassroots will possibly be birthed out of recent collaboration with 30+ Christian leaders. The “Life Pregnancy Help Centre” initiative stands to address the challenges of teen pregnancies.

Søren Kierkegaard stated, “Life must be understood backward, but it must be lived forward.” Thus, we will go everywhere and take every opportunity to pursue youth and connecting them to Jesus.



YOUTH FOR CHRIST
INTERNATIONAL

<https://yfc.org>