continuing miracle

Youth for Christ IN ITS 25th YEAR

It is God Himself,
in His mercy who has given us
this wonderful work of
telling His good news to others,
and so
we never give up.

(II Cor. 4:1-Living Letters)

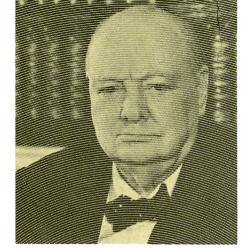
Even the most casual look at the history of Youth for Christ shows how God, operating through committed men, altered the course of countless lives. Through YFC, Jesus Christ has given new life to literally hundreds of thousands of young people and adults.

We cannot possibly do justice to those who have played a significant role in this continuing miracle. This souvenir book is but an overview . . . a brief reflective glance . . . at the amazing story that is Youth for Christ.

the /s

the violent war years











the 4 's

Who is adequate for such a task as this?
Who is able to do it as it should be done? 99
(II Cor. 2:16-Living Letters)

... "Youth for Christ" rallies sprang up

all across the nation. It was astounding—this sudden exception to the usual rule of spiritual apathy. Christian leaders saw the new "rally," held in neutral auditoriums, as an answer to their prayers. Thousands came and heard the Gospel.

The programs were a dramatic contrast to Sunday morning church services. They featured loud up-tempo music . . . and sometimes loud up-tempo speakers. But these were men of God who presented a straight-forward Gospel message of how Jesus Christ could make life meaningful.

These daring men ushered in a brand-new kind of evangelism. They were ridiculed and criticized. Some churches felt the men were "going too far" in their attempts to attract people. But the rallies were effective! People came by the tens of thousands. Thousands were converted to Jesus Christ.











These "Youth for Christ" rallies marked the beginning of..





TORREY JOHNSON
Torrey Johnson, a Chicago
pastor, watched with concern
the throngs of wartime GI's on
the streets of Chicago and
decided to conduct a large
meeting for them. From this,
Chicago's Youth for Christ
movement was born. Soon
Johnson met others holding
similar rallies in other cities
and thought about the potential
of having these independent
efforts brought together as a
single organization. In the
summer of 1945, at Winona
Lake, Indiana, Youth for Christ
was officially organized. Torrey
Johnson was named president
and served until 1948. He
opened an office in Chicago
and hired Billy Graham as
YFC's first full-time worker.

...a youth movement that rocked the world

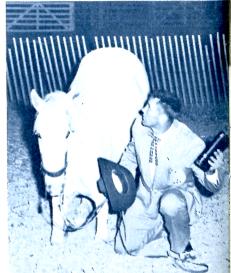
YFC rallies quickly spread to cities and towns all across America. Outstanding preachers crisscrossed North America, Europe and other continents, Torrey Johnson and Billy Graham journeyed to England to bring the Gospel through evangelistic crusades.

In the late forties, Youth for Christ held its first world conference at Beatenberg, Switzerland. It was here that the men in YFC sensed the urgent need for a YFC "world vision" for in-depth, global evangelization.

The concern born in that conference was contagious. Many effective world-wide missionary works evolved out of that meeting—Greater Europe Mission, International Students, Trans-World Radio and World Vision International.

Then, as now, Youth for Christ leaders reflected a burden for the youth of the world—youth living empty lives without Christ.





ee ... He has triumphed over all our stumbling efforts and uncertainties ... 99

(II Cor. 2:14-Living Letters)

Looking back at those early days, one smiles at some of the things that were done to attract people to the rallies. The zany ties, loud suits and boisterous ways of early YFC leaders bring chuckles now, but no doubt in 25 years, they'll be smiling at *our* methods and dress.

And Youth for Christ has always had criticism—part of the price of being a pioneer. YFC's philosophy—"Geared to the times, anchored to the Rock"—meant taking advantage of every worthwhile idea to confront people with the claims of Christ on their lives.

Some of the attractions were the novel actions of the rally leaders themselves—other programs included the bizarre . . .

the extravagant . . .

the clownish . . .

the corny . . .

or even the ridiculous.

Yet, at the bottom of all the fun and flamboyance was a sincere interest in reaching people for the Lord Jesus Christ.







the Solvis

a generation in peril







the continuing miracle

The middle of the twentieth century was a nervous transition from the violent war years . . . to the idealistic sixties.

Young people in the fifties, who were grade schoolers during World War II, had trouble finding the handles of normalcy. The decade began pessimistically when South Korea was invaded . . . putting America in the middle of a costly, tragic war.

Young people of this decade were surrounded by a spiraling material prosperity—cars, new homes, TV—yet were unsure, worried and frustrated. This post-war generation faced uncertainty about the present and anxiety toward the future. With the threat of Communism . . .

the hydrogen bomb . . .

the Berlin wall...

the Cold War...

their fright slowly succumbed to indifference . . . and finally apathy.

During this decade, the men in YFC began to direct their efforts toward youth evangelism,



to concentrate on...



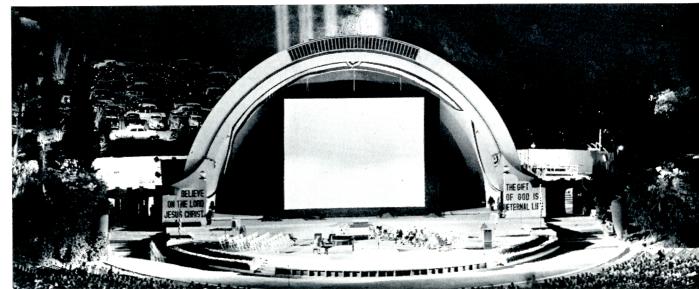


the 50's

ee...not because we think we can do anything of lasting value by ourselves. Our only power and success comes from God. 99 (II Cor. 3:5-Living Letters)

... reaching teens for Jesus Christ







The emphasis of YFC began to shift from the large mass rally to evangelism that was more personal and individual.

Several new projects characterized the fifties—
expansion of the Bible Club program,
leadership training seminars,
Capital Teen conventions,
Bible quizzing,
expansion of the overseas ministry,
development of literature programs,

a "Youth Guidance" program—later called "Lifeline," and the beginning of a film production ministry.

Each program was now geared toward teen-agers, introducing them to Jesus Christ who would





give purpose to life..

...a life worth living

It was to this generation of disillusioned and unconcerned young people, who obviously knew more about Elvis than Elijah, that Youth for Christ brought the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The YFC "image" also began to change as methods changed. But the doctrinal position and deep desire to see young people won to Christ remained the same.











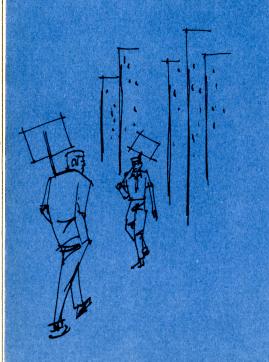


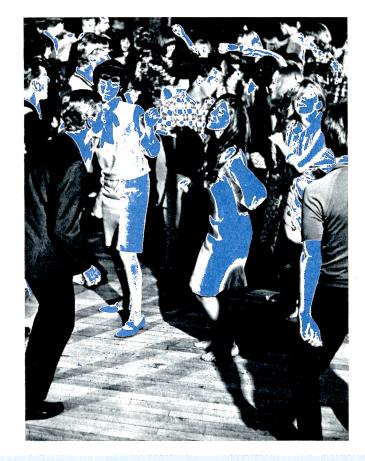
YFC LEADERSHIP CHANGED ROBERT A. COOK (right) . . . "Dr. Bob," as he was affectionately called . . . succeeded Dr. Torrey Johnson and helped YFC launch its mission to the second half of the 20th century. He was president from 1948 until 1957.

TED ENGSTROM (left) assumed the leadership of YFC in the latter half of the decade (1957-1963). He was the first layman to be elected president of YFC. His administrative talents helped YFC adapt to the "new image" of the organization in the late fifties.

the Co's

the now generation





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Teens of the sixties were confronted with a brand-new set of problems caused by the breakdown of family structures . . .

racial prejudice...

adult greed and insensitivity . . .

and a host of other concerns that rose from an impersonal cold selfishness in people. Adults were beginning to notice what was later to be called "The Generation Gap."

Teens of the sixties were admirers of John Kennedy, as well as John Glenn, Roger Maris and The Beatles. They wore their hair long and skirts short . . . "dug" pop art, op art, psychedelics, folk-rock and the bugaloo. They told elephant jokes . . . wore "mod" clothes and were activists against prejudice, poverty and war. Teens of this decade witnessed the nightmare of assassinations and the science fiction reality of transplanted hearts.



the continuing miracle







the 60's

We have gone through many difficulties, but God has kept us through them all. 99 (II Cor. 6:9—Living Letters)



KELLY BIHL Carl Bihl—YFC President, 1963-1965. A dynamic preacher and Youth for Christ staff member, Dr. "Kelly" Bihl was Vice-President of Development before he was elected President in 1963.







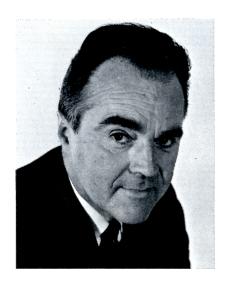
Much of the flamboyancy disappeared. Personalities became less important. The organization concentrated on building individual leadership for local rallies and clubs.

As in the forties, Youth for Christ—"Geared to the times, anchored to the Rock"—was flexible. It discontinued what no longer attracted teens and put into practice the methods that worked for the sixties.

YFC placed additional emphasis on training teenage Christians to actually share their faith with their peers. YFC men multiplied their ministry through youthful witnesses who began to cover the globe,



taking the Gospel to their own generation...



SAM WOLGEMUTH
Sam Wolgemuth, current YFC President,
knows the world need for YFC firsthand.
First a pastor and bishop of the
Brethren in Christ Church, he joined
the staff of YFC in 1952 as representative
to Japan. In 1955 he was named YFC's
Deputation Director; in 1956 he became
Vice-President in charge of the Overseas
Program. Dr. Wolgemuth was elected
President of YFC in 1965.

the 60's

Teens telling teens...







The new emphasis has become to one of young people reaching their contemporaries, "teen-to-teen." This is the cornerstone of YFC in the sixties.

One thousand YFC workers oversee some 1,871 YFC "Campus Life Clubs" in junior and senior high schools... teaching young people to effectively witness to other teens on their campuses. This lively evangelism concept accounts for tens of thousands of conversions each year. Dedicated local directors develop strategies to reach the youth of their own communities. They guide young people to make decisions for Christ, help them learn more about God and how to serve Him.

Many of these young people eventually participate in Teen Teams, Y-2 overseas ministries and other YFC programs.



Reaching the unreachables...

The Lifeline program of Youth for Christ is a vital effort that reaches out with understanding and Christian love to many of the five million teens in trouble with the law each year.

In many cities where YFC has a program, youths are befriended in courtrooms, juvenile homes, jails, the streets and in their homes. Lifeline summer camps are being used by God's Spirit to demonstrate Christian love and concern and help rehabilitate troubled youth.

As these youngsters are led to Christ, concerned YFC directors help them find their way back into a healthy, normal teen society.





Penetrating the teen culture...

Campus Life magazine, with a readership of nearly a quarter million, is a most effective tool in YFC's evangelistic arsenal. It is also an outstanding means of influencing and helping Christian teens grow spiritually.

Youth for Christ has also made several unique strides with contemporary, full-color scripture sections for teen-agers and follow-up materials to help reinforce the faith of young people won to Christ through the local rally work. Separate overseas staffs also publish eight foreign magazines and other supportive literature for use in other cultures.







Building a stronger, meaningful faith...

For Teens: To meet the teen-ager's need for challenge, instruction, inspiration and fellowship, Youth for Christ sponsors a variety of camps and conferences including holiday conferences, leadership camps, area and regional camps, weekend retreats and conferences, and the annual YFC Teen Convention each July. All help to add spiritual dimension to teen lives.

For Adults: YFC's main ministry to non-teenage audiences is its "Adult Seminar on Teen Dynamics"—a two-to-three day concentration of authoritative sessions to help Christian leaders in churches solve youth-oriented problems. Since 1966, the Seminar has been conducted in 56 cities and attended by over 9,000 parents, youth leaders, church school workers and interested adults. A Summer Institute is held each year to train new men for work in Youth for Christ and provide intensive refresher courses for staff from all across the world.







Changing lives around the world...

Torrey Johnson and Billy Graham . . . YFC's first two staff members . . . were also the first to take the Gospel overseas under the auspices of Youth for Christ. Scores of evangelists and missionaries have since followed them.

There are now more than 600 people in 39 countries serving Christ through YFC overseas. These men are confronted by youth cultures that are in many ways the same—in some ways different—from our own. YFC missionaries must become thoroughly familiar with the language, customs and cultures of a country and its usually well-educated youth in order to help them find Christ.

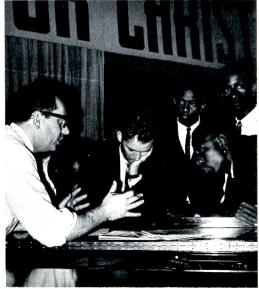


A young couple volunteering two years of their lives through the Y-2 program of missionary outreach.



Teen Teams, featuring sharp young North American musicians and speakers, reach out in contemporary style to bring the message of redemption to teens in countries all over the globe. In turn, YFC Teen Teams from Liberia, Lebanon, England, Korea, South Africa and other nations have taken the gospel beyond their borders.





the men God used

This concentrated ministry to teenagers has involved a parade of dedicated clergy and laymen. The men pictured here and throughout this book are but a few of the men God has used to translate Youth for Christ into a flesh-and-blood ministry. No list could ever be complete or fair to the hundreds of fine leaders who have or are now working with YFC.



the continuing miracle





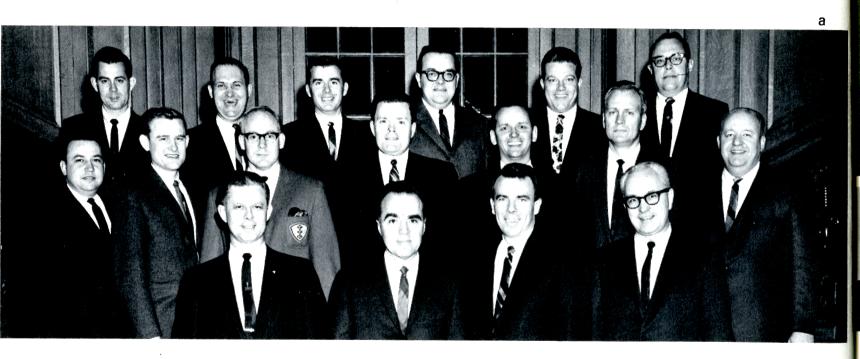




(a) Merv Rosell, Evon Hedley, Greg Tingston (b) Warren Wiersbe (c) Hubert Mitchell (d) Don Lonie (e) John Teibe (f) Grady Wilson (g) Walter Smyth (h) Ken Anderson, Mel Larson, Vern McLellan (i) Gene Jordan, Spencer DeJong (j) David Morken, Harold Ockenga (k) T. W. Wilson (I) Myron Boyd, Orville Butcher (m) [bottom row] Carl Gundersen, Bob Cook, Ted Engstrom, Billy Graham, Sam Wolgemuth, Ed Darling, Jack Sonneveldt [top row] Elliott Stedelbauer, Ben Weiss, Roy McKeown, Frank Phillips, Bob Pierce, Al Metsker, Floyd Ankerberg, Jacob Stam, Jack Hamilton, Paul Hartford.

m

the men God used



(a) [bottom row] Earl Schultz, Sam Wolgemuth, Gene French, Jack Daniel [middle row] Bruce Love, Harold Myra, Jim Smith, Ted Bryson, Willie Foote, Wes Aarum, Wendy Collins [top row] Ron Wilson, Bill Eakin, Jay Kesler, Dave Bury, Bufe Karraker, Paul Van Oss (b) George Beverly Shea (c) Russ Johnson (d) George Wilson (e) Winfield Arn, Frank Phillips (f) H. J. Taylor (g) Cedric Sears (h) Peter Quist (i) V. R. Edman (j) Mel Johnson (k) Dave Breeze.



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the 's' 's and beyond



exploding opportunity

What great and exciting times are just around the corner? How shall we prepare for the next decade?

Anniversaries are appropriate times to sit back and assess the accomplishments and frustrations of the past, to take encouragement in "how far we've come since" those early days. God raised up a miracle 25 years ago that has revolutionized evangelical Christianity and expanded the spiritual boundaries of Christ's church. But we are not content to rest on past achievements. The books are closing on a quarter century of glorious history. We have not assumed that God has completed the miracle. We believe that God has chosen us to cooperate with Him, to have a share in the next "act" of His great drama of the history of the world.

If anything, the times today are more crucial . . . the teen-age population greater . . . the end nearer. We must be willing to meet the challenges of the next quarter century.

Today's leaders are committed men with burdened hearts prepared to make any sacrifice necessary to reach a world of teenagers.

With the leadership of the Holy Spirit and on the authority of the Word of God, YFC will face its responsibility for tomorrow.

The only hope for our world is in the person of Jesus Christ. He is the one alone who forgives sins, and brings fulfillment to the disillusioned, searching teenager.

It will take all of us, praying, working and giving. With expectation and enthusiasm we will face our future!

You will be pleased to know that the total income from your banquet donation will be used in the continuing ministries of the International work of Youth for Christ and your local Youth for Christ program.

The cost of producing this souvenir book and the expense of this 25th anniversary banquet has been underwritten by the individuals and business firms listed below.

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For the complete story and background of Youth for Christ, watch for a book being written by James C. Hefley to be published in June by Word Books, Waco, Texas.

the continuing miracle

