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Youth for Christ

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Youth for Christ (YFC) is the name of a number of previously unaffiliated [evangelical Protestant](#) religious campaigns which led to the creation of **Youth for Christ International** in 1946. Youth for Christ is a worldwide [Christian](#) movement working with young people around the globe. Motivated by their faith in [Jesus Christ](#), they share [the good news](#) of God with young people.

The Roman Catholic Church has its own organization, [CFC – Youth for Christ](#) .

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History of Youth for Christ [\[edit\]](#)

Following [World War II](#), some Protestant evangelists began ministering to the youth of America and especially the younger members of the U.S. Armed Forces. These formerly unaffiliated activities became collectively known as "Youth for Christ" campaigns and were inspired by the work of [Jack Wyrzten](#) in [New York](#) during 1940. Wyrzten was a young ex-insurance salesman who had also played the trombone in a cavalry band. The Youth for Christ campaign idea spread to Washington, D.C., Detroit, Indianapolis and St. Louis. In 1944 [Torrey Johnson](#), a Baptist minister and pastor of Chicago's Midwest Bible Church staged "Chicagoland for Christ" and became the most successful advocate of this type of campaign.

For sixty years, Youth for Christ has been communicating the life-changing message of Jesus Christ to young people. Youth for Christ was born in the mid-1940s via dozens of leaders in different places with a concern to reach young people. This led to young evangelists conducting mass rallies in more than a dozen cities under the name of Youth for Christ. With the rapid expansion of the movement there became a need for leadership and organisation and in 1944 Chicago pastor Torrey Johnson was elected Youth for Christ's first president, with Billy Graham as it's first full-time worker.

The 1950s [\[edit\]](#)

By 1950, Youth for Christ was already an international movement with Youth for Christ springing up in cities around the globe.

The 1960s [\[edit\]](#)

In 1968, in a little publicised conference in Jamaica, representatives from different countries created the International Council of Youth for Christ with Dr. Sam Wolgemuth as the first International President. The number of nations with Youth for Christ ministry had grown to over 100.

The 70s and 80s [\[edit\]](#)

Youth for Christ continued its growth throughout the 70's and 80's. Different ministry models and ministry emphases were developed and refined to reach young people around the world.

The 90s [\[edit\]](#)

In 1994 Youth for Christ launched an extensive worldwide review of the movement led by a Task Force made up of Youth for Christ senior staff from all over the world. Their work was completed in 1996 with the publication of the Organisational Development Study (ODS) Report and presented to the Youth for Christ movement in Taiwan. The ODS recommendations were unanimously accepted by the Youth for Christ movement and so set in motion the most ambitious restructuring in Youth for Christ's 50 year history. The ODS report underscored the need for a 'new birth' of Youth for Christ involving renewal and realignment with a new vision and mission.

2000s [\[edit\]](#)

In March 2000 the Youth for Christ family came together in Muhlal, Germany for prayer and to corporately seek God's direction. Most

of the Youth for Christ leadership, including the International Board, attended the gathering, whilst others were linked through the Internet. Interpersonal and structural issues that were hindering Youth for Christ growth. The Youth for Christ worldwide Staff and Leadership Conference (General Assembly) in Denver, Colorado later that year, with the theme 'Citizens of the Kingdom' reaching the youth of the world', became the starting point for a new interdependent spirit.

In 2001, over 40 key staff primarily made up of Leadership Team members from all over the world, came together in Valence, France to consider the recommendations of the ODS and the changes that were required for its implementation. The result of this consultation was the establishment of the Valence Covenant, that clearly identifies Kingdom principles and a spirit of interdependence that all in the Youth for Christ movement seek to follow in our relationships and ministries worldwide.

The Global Ministry Plan [\[edit\]](#)

In 2002, leadership teams worldwide again met in Hungary to further explore how various Youth for Christ entities could unite behind a global ministry initiative. After a week of deliberation and consultation, the participants developed the framework of what later became the Global Ministry Plan. Between 2002 and 2003, The Global Ministry Plan was communicated and discussed throughout the Youth for Christ movement.

After consultations with most of the Youth for Christ chartered nations, the Global Ministry Plan was unanimously approved by the General Assembly at a gathering of the worldwide Youth for Christ family in Belo Horizonte, Brazil September 2003.

At the Belo Horizonte General Assembly a new strategic focus statement was also adopted which is foundational to the Global Ministry Plan:

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 lead by their godliness in lifestyle, devotion to the Word of God and prayer, passion for sharing the love of Christ and commitment to social involvement.

2008 General Assembly – Young Leader's Process [\[edit\]](#)

In September of 2008 the Youth for Christ worldwide family gathered in Magaliesburg, South Africa for the General Assembly. This was special event as over 350 young leaders from around the world joined the staff and a new initiative was launched: The Young Leader Development and Empowerment Process.

The British branch is now a member of [The National Council for Voluntary Youth Services](#),^[1] by virtue of its work for the personal and social development of young people.

Formation of Youth for Christ International [\[edit\]](#)

In 1945 [Charles Templeton](#) of [Toronto, Canada](#), and Torrey Johnson met with a number of youth leaders from around the [United States](#) at [Winona Lake, Indiana](#). Their agenda was to form a working group that would become an organization known as "Youth for Christ International" which was born in 1946. Torrey Johnson was elected as its first president. Popular youth events such as Bible quizzing, which is now embraced by many Christian denominations, were originally begun as Youth for Christ activities.^[2]

Billy Graham's evangelistic beginnings [edit]

Evangelist [Billy Graham](#) was the first full-time evangelist of YFCI. Graham took over Johnson's local radio program called *Songs in the Night* which was broadcast over a local station in Illinois and predated YFCI. Later still Graham left YFCI to form his own evangelistic association and commence the *Hour of Decision* broadcast.

Promotion by William Randolph Hearst [edit]

Success for YFCI came from the promotional publicity in the newspapers and magazines owned or influenced by [William Randolph Hearst](#). Due to the publicity by Hearst during a [Los Angeles](#) campaign, Billy Graham suddenly became a media star.

By 1946 Youth for Christ International had approximately 300 units in the United States and over 200 overseas. The average attendance at rallies in 1946 was 350. The largest attendance at that time was 70,000 at [Soldier's Field](#) in Chicago.

Staff [edit]

Current President of Youth for Christ U.S. [edit]

Dan Wolgemuth, a 1977 [Taylor University](#) graduate, is the current president of Youth for Christ U.S. ^[3]

Current International President [edit]

David Wraight, is the current International President of Youth for Christ.

Affiliated ministries [edit]

CTI Music Ministries is Youth for Christ International's official at large music ministry. They specialize in mobilizing short term musical missions teams to work with established ministry partners internationally, such as YFCI.

External links [edit]

- [Youth for Christ International](#) ↗
- [Youth for Christ U.S.](#) ↗
- [Youth for Christ military youth ministry](#) ↗

References [edit]

- ↑ [Full list of NCVYS members](#) ↗
- ↑ [Bible quizzing tournament audio at a YFC convention](#) ↗
- ↑ http://www.forbes.com/lists/2010/94/best-colleges-10_Taylor-University_94395_2.html ↗

Book references [edit]

- Billy Graham, a biography, by Roger Bruns. Greenwood Press, Connecticut. 2004. [ISBN 0-313-32718-1](#) (See pages 23–34 for details of Billy Graham's involvement with YFCI.)
- Charles Templeton, Farewell to God, by Charles Templeton. McClelland & Stewart, Toronto. 1996. [ISBN 0-7710-8508-7](#) See page 4: "Youth for Christ was a North American phenomenon in the 1940s. The atmosphere was informal and upbeat - more like show business than church - and young people flocked to the meetings in their thousands in various American cities. ... When a few months later a group of us formed Youth for Christ International, I was named as one of three vice-presidents and, at our first meeting, moved that we appoint Graham our evangelist-at-large."
- Young Man on Fire: The Story of Torrey Johnson and Youth for Christ, by Mel Larson. Youth Publications, Chicago. 1943. Reprinted by Kessinger Publishing. ISBN 143670738

Categories: [Evangelical parachurch organisations](#)

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