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A COMPARISON OF EXTRA-CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS FOR YOUTH:

YOUNG LIFE AND YOUTH FOR CHRIST

By

ALMA CULTON

B.S., Wheaton College

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A. The Statement and Significance of the Problem

The young people of the nation today are the adult leaders of tomorrow. If America is to remain a Christian nation, the youth must be Christianized. In recent years young people have been slipping through the fingers of the Church at an alarming rate. To counteract the weakness in the Church's program for youth, and to reach those who have removed themselves from the influence of the Church, extra-church organizations have arisen. By "extra-church" organizations are meant those organizations which are outside any regular church body. They have the same aims as the denominational youth groups and welcome young people from these groups, yet they have no direct tie-up with any one church or denomination. These extra-church organizations usually seek to cooperate with the organized church program.

The purpose of this study is to survey two of these extra-church organizations for youth: Young Life Campaign and Youth for Christ, ascertaining their reason for existence, surveying their history, and through a study and comparison of their organized programs to note their emphases in reaching young people outside the Church. The basic problem is how these organizations are reaching the unchurched youth. This study will show the answer given to this problem by these two extra-church organizations for youth.

Both of these organizations have arisen in America during the past decade in answer to a felt need. Parental control seemed to have descended to an all-time low. Adults were becoming less and less interested in religion and the dawning realization came to thinking Christians that the hope for the future lay with the young people. This growing conviction gave impetus to youth work. The sad part was that the organized Church, in many instances, failed to realize this or did not know how to cope with the situation. A leading churchman of today writes:

How can the church hold its youth? It can't. A church cannot hold what it does not have. If it had its youth safely within the fold it would not need to ponder how to keep them there. If they are truly in the church they are there because it has drawn them in, appealed to them, touched the deep places of their needs and woven them inseparably into the fellowship. There are churches that accomplish just this. There are far more that blunder and sadly watch those between the ages of 12 and 24 abandon the churches of their childhood.

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Both the careful student and the casual observer of the religious situation among young people agree that youth grow increasingly impatient with denominationalism. They are politely immune to a church that, in a scarcely veiled manner, seeks to gather them in as fuel to stoke the dying fires of an organization cold with sectarian antiquity.¹

In far too many cases this ineffective church program is combined with a spiritually lax home life and the young person is left to drift spiritually. Added to these influences is that of the high schools and colleges with their attitude that science has replaced, or at least rendered obsolete, the "faith of our fathers". The result is doubt and confusion in the thinking of young people. Into this situation has come these extra-church organizations to supplement the work of the

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1. Wesner Fallaw, "Why Youth Programs Fail," The Christian Century, Vol. LXVI, No. 10, (March 9, 1949), pp. 303-304.

Church.

In the past decade young people have attained a higher level of importance than ever before in the history of America. A second World War plunged millions of them into uniforms and made heroes of them. At the same time, they were cut loose from home and church ties with the resulting pessimism of "let's live for today". Many young people took jobs that paid more than their parents were making and this prosperity gave them a feeling of self-sufficiency.

Their spiritual sensitivity was numbed by lowered moral standards and increased laxity. Crime among young people began to climb as they sought newer and greater thrills. One of the main reasons for crime among young people, according to John Edgar Hoover of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, is the lack of religion. He feels that the teachings of God, if followed, will prevent criminality. The stabilizing force of religion is needed today more than ever before, according to him:

The criminal is the product of spiritual starvation. Someone failed miserably to bring him to know God, love Him, and serve Him. Criminals are not born. They are the products of neglect, the victims of indifference, the results of an age which has tossed morality in the junk yard. Moral chaos and crime run hand in hand as they eagerly attempt to destroy peace, order, and happiness.¹

The aptness of these remarks by Mr. Hoover is seen by the following statistics regarding crime among young people today:

During the first half of 1949, males and females, under 21 years of age arrested and fingerprinted numbered 61,373, constituting

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1. John Edgar Hoover, "Crime and the Sunday School," Moody Monthly, (February 7, 1948), (reprint with page numbers omitted).

15.3 per cent of the total arrests. In addition, there were 65,986 (16.5 per cent) between the ages of 21 and 24, making a total of 127,359 (31.8) per cent) less than 25 years old.¹

America has been aroused by such statements and an effort is being made to counteract such a situation. In the hope of partially answering this condition, the extra-church organizations have arisen.

B. Delimitation of the Problem

There are many note-worthy extra-church organizations for youth in existence today, but this study will be limited to the two mentioned above as typical of such organizations, interdenominational in character and outside the organized Church, that today are attempting to evangelize the unreached youth of America. These were chosen as representative in that they have both arisen in the past decade, and they both deal with the young people in their teens. Furthermore, Young Life works within the framework of a student body while Youth for Christ is entirely apart. Thus it was felt that these two would give representative views of the methods employed by such groups to reach the unchurched young people.

Consideration will be given the reason for, the history and the entire organized program of each of these organizations, but the study will be concentrated on the methods they employ. This survey will form the basis for a comparison of the two.

C. Method of Procedure

As to method of procedure, the first two chapters of this

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1. "Uniform Crime Reports," of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Vol. XX, No. 68, 1949.

study will deal with the Young Life Campaign and Youth for Christ respectively. In each chapter the description, history, organization, aims, program and methods, publications, and adverse criticism of the organization will be discussed, followed by a summary. The third chapter will deal with a comparison of the two organizations to determine the different methods used and the emphases of each program in reaching the unchurched young people. The fourth chapter will form the summary and conclusion of the entire study.

D. Sources of Data

The sources of data for this study are primarily the publications of the Young Life Campaign and Youth for Christ. Both of these organizations publish their own magazine and these will be studied for the points related above. In addition to the magazines, books, reports, articles, pamphlets, and bulletins relating to these organizations will be used. In addition, reference will be made to personal letters received from staff members of these groups.

The secondary sources are those books, articles, reports, pamphlets, and theses that have been written about these organizations by those outside the groups. These will serve as background reading, information and criticisms for this study.

CHAPTER I

YOUNG LIFE CAMPAIGN

CHAPTER I

THE YOUNG LIFE CAMPAIGN

The religious world has been aroused in recent years by the problem of the large number of young people unreached by the organized program of the Church. The number who remain aloof from the Church has grown steadily as has also the amount of juvenile delinquency. Religious leaders have faced the problem and many answers have been given. Two of these answers will be taken up in this study. These are given by two extra-church organizations for youth, The Young Life Campaign and Youth for Christ.

This chapter will deal with the reason for, the history, the organization, the aims, the program and methods, the publication, and the adverse criticism of the Young Life Campaign.

A. The Reason for Young Life

America's high schools are a vast, challenging mission field. Any missionary work among them is relatively rare, for it is a "forgotten field" by many. However, there are organizations that are cognizant of this need and are putting forth efforts to overcome the situation. One of the most successful of these is the Young Life Campaign, an organization geared for young people and in the most part, run by young people. It is not too well known, for while it has grown steadily, yet it has done so without spectacular displays. It has gone quietly on its way without show or ostentation.

Young Life is organized on true missionary lines, directed by a group of Christian businessmen throughout the nation, and staffed by trained young men and women who direct the local work. It is not merely another youth movement but is an aggressive campaign, attractively presented to them in terms that they understand.

The leaders of this movement feel that the need is great. There are millions of young people in the high schools across the nation who have never heard the Gospel. "It is this fifteen to eighteen million teen-agers that Young Life leaders are seeking to reach."¹ It is a recognizable fact that young America is steadily drifting away from God and that juvenile delinquency is on the increase.

It is reliably reported that 75 per cent of all our young people never darken the door of a church or Sunday School. . . . The campaign is a specialized missionary movement directed to this age group.²

Millions of these young people are as ignorant of the things of Christ as the heathen in darkest Africa. Here, then, is a vast mission field, not thousands of miles away but in the small towns and large cities, wherever there is a high school. Christ gave the command to preach the Gospel to every creature³ and the Young Life Campaign has answered the call for the high school youth of the nation.

For nine years the Young Life Campaign has been challenging the high school youth with the message of Christ. It has grown steadily and its influence has widened. Beginning in Texas, it has spread into other areas. During these years the leaders have been aware of several

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1. "Young Life Can Help You," a pamphlet.
2. "Here Are the Answers," a pamphlet.
3. Mark 16:15.

facts that should stir all thinking Christians to action: in the high schools they have studied they state that they have found none where even half of the high school "crowd" have any contact with the Gospel; the second fact that has stood out to them is that no one is going to them with the Gospel; and in the third place, all should be aware that here is a mission field at their front door.¹

As the Young Life leaders have studied these situations, they feel that in these schools the Christian testimony is either weak or entirely non-existent. The vast majority of the high school young people in Christian America are unevangelized. To these, Jesus Christ is not Saviour or even a Person but merely a common word used in swearing. The leaders believe that the reason lies in the second fact given above, that no one is going to them with the Gospel. In most of these cases Christian leaders have failed to go to them with a message that appeals to them and is understandable. The young people who head up the Young Life Campaign are not discouraged by this condition but feel that here is a challenge to be met and a situation that can be overcome if sufficient interest and effort is given.

During the brief history of the Young Life Campaign we have dug into enough of the tough situations so that we are now ready to say that by the grace of God any high school in our land, no matter how pagan or difficult it may be, can be evangelized if some of God's people will approach the problem in the same way that missionaries of any field approach the problem pertaining to preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to pagans.²

Thus, while it is recognized and acknowledged by the leaders of this movement that the organized churches in all denominations are

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1. Jim Rayburn, "Young Life Campaign," The Navigator's Log, Vol. VII, April, 1946, p. 17.
2. Ibid., p. 18.

becoming more and more "youth conscious", and are planning excellent youth programs in recognition of the need, yet there is this vast group of young people who remain aloof from the Church, and it is to this group that the Young Life Campaign seeks to minister.

B. The History of the Young Life Campaign

1. The Origin

The story of the Young Life Campaign can almost be said to be the story of a young man, James Rayburn, who is known to thousands of high school "kids" across the country and in Canada and Alaska as "Jim." Therein lies the secret of Young Life's ability to reach teenagers with the message that 'in Him is life', the leaders are pals, not preachers.¹

Jim Rayburn had no conception of ever leading an organization such as Young Life when he attended Kansas State College of Civil Engineering from which he was graduated in 1932. That summer he enrolled in a geology course at the University of Colorado and while on a field trip high up in the Rockies faced the call of the Lord and accepted it. His first work was in the rural communities of the Southwest. He stayed there for five years opening rural churches, some of which had been closed for twenty-five years.² This work had direct influence on his working with young people as one of the leaders writes:

The discouraging part of the work was the indifference of the adults. They had gotten along without churches for years and gave the young preacher anything but a warm welcome. So Jim

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1. John A. Witmer, "They Call Him Jim," Power, Vol. V, No. 3 (March, 1947), p. 1.
2. Personal letter from Kay McDonald, staff member of Young Life.

turned to the teen-agers. He would collect a group for an informal get-together. They'd sing some choruses and songs and chat together about all sorts of things. Then Jim would give them an informal, down-to-earth Bible message that'd hit 'em right between the eyes. 'We didn't have a name for those meetings,' Jim points out, 'but they weren't much different from the Young Life Club meetings.'¹

Since his training had been along an entirely different line, he knew that if he were going to do his job of preaching the Gospel well he needed special training along that line, so he enrolled in the Dallas Theological Seminary. During his stay there he continued to engage in campaigns to reach young people and felt that there had to be a way of getting at them that had not yet been tried, since other efforts seemed to fall short of getting the ones who needed it most. Other students at the Seminary became interested in the work and joined him in his efforts to reach the high school crowd. "It just grew out of the need that existed and the sincere desire in Jim's heart and in the hearts of those who worked with him to find some way to meet that need."²

And so in 1939, while attending the Seminary, he was called upon to lead a "gang" of six high school "kids". The group was largely made up of teen-agers who attended neither church nor Sunday School, and Rayburn soon discovered that he could not hold them with a more formalized type of service and Bible study. His manner, his illustrations and his message had to be remodeled to keep them coming back for more. He revamped his program and through patient work, week after week, saw the original six grow until 170 "kids" crowded into the meeting. That had happened in a high school that was notorious for its indifference to

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1. Witmer, op. cit., p. 2.
2. McDonald, loc. cit.

religion. Rayburn had attacked the problem energetically but for months had made little inroad. "Then he switched his meeting to Monday night, placed it in a desirable home. Almost at once attendance shot up, and the home became the accepted place for a majority of the teen-age crowd."¹

As young people met the Saviour, others noticed their transformed lives. More clubs sprang up and by the time Rayburn graduated the students faced him with the question of what was to happen to the clubs. He tossed the problem back into their laps and they voted to continue the Campaign of winning their fellow students to Christ. It was felt by student and leader alike that here a real need was being met, and that God had led in the movement and blessed these informal meetings.

2. The Development

Thus in 1940 the Young Life Campaign was born in America. However, the idea and name were taken from the English Young Life. In 1904 two young Irish brothers, Frederick and Arthur Wood, answered the call of God to be evangelists in Great Britain. As they traveled up and down Britain in meetings they noticed that most of their converts were young people and they felt that they should concentrate in work with youth. They conceived the idea of organizing a National Young Life Campaign. They sought the advice of leaders of the day such as Dr. F. B. Meyer, who was of great aid in the organization of the movement. A conference of ministers was called and the Wood brothers were encouraged to launch a series of young life campaigns all over the country. Many young people

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1. Wally Howard, "Young Life Brings Real Life," Young People's Weekly, LXI (February 9, 1947), p. 9.

were won through these meetings and, seeing the necessity for a follow-up, the National Youth Campaign was organized, a board was formed and a magazine started. The organization grew rapidly and in 1937 Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Wood came to the United States for a tour. While in Texas they met Jim Rayburn who was then in school.¹ They noted the work that he was doing and gave him permission to use the name "Young Life" for the organization in the United States. They also expressed the desire to affiliate for post-war plans.²

In 1941, after Young Life in America had been a functioning organization for one year, it was incorporated as a non-profit mission. Five full-time leaders comprised the original staff.³

In summary of the growth of Young Life, these pages from a diary chart composed by the leaders will serve to show the steady and sound growth of the Young Life Campaign through the years:

1941: 20 or 30 spirited clubs meeting in Texas. Peacock Terrace jammed February 24th with 1800 high school kids for the first Young Life mass meeting. Summer tent campaigns reached thousands. Young Life organized in October with five full-time staff leaders in the state of Texas.

1942: Campaigner's Quartet tours Southwest, paving way for expansion into Oklahoma, Arkansas and Tennessee. Over 5,000 kids attend series of seven huge mass meetings, with Dawson Trotman of Navigators as speaker. Navigator materials introduced for use with Christian witnessing.

1943: Northwest leaders in Washington and Oregon join Young Life. Campaigner's Quartet with Jim Rayburn appear in dozens of high school assemblies and rallies. Estimated total audiences for the year: over 200,000. Full summer camping program in swing in five different areas.

1944: "Young Life Magazine" initiated in March with enthusiastic

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1. Mel Larson: Youth for Christ, pp. 31-33.
2. John E. Johnson, "Young Life Ovuh Heah," Young Life, Vol. II, No. 12, (July, 1945), p. 4.
3. Howard, loc. cit.

response. Openings in churches for Young Life ministry constantly increasing. First summer leader's conference held at Bellingham, Washington together with Navigator's.

1945: Leadership expanded to about 30 workers, ministering regularly in ten states, with new office opened in Chicago area. First "Workshop" institute held in conjunction with Wheaton College summer school. Budget of over \$72,000 for the year met in full by voluntary contributions.

1946: Leadership training program has come to front in this first post-war year.

1947: Young Life Club staff developed thorough-going Reorganizational Plan to make expanding work more efficient, more effective. First section of new plan stated: "Each staff member should be intent upon finding local leadership to begin work with him in each club as soon as possible."

1948: Year just passed has demonstrated as never before that God is graciously moving in the direction of developing a great host of volunteer leaders from the Church at large. . . . Leadership training work cited at five institutions of learning.

1949: The highlight of 1949 is the continued progress being made in this field of leadership training.²

As the leaders look back over their record they feel that there is evidence of God's leading at each step of the way, from the first prayer meeting in 1940, through the early tent campaigns where the name "Young Life Campaign" was first used, and down to the present. "The seal of God's approval is the greatest wish of each leader and board member."³

3. The Present Situation

The leaders of this movement feel humble as they look at the way that God has blessed and used this movement for the salvation of thousands of the "hard-to-reach" high school young people. From the five original leaders at its inception, the staff has grown to thirty-four in

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1. "Here's Young Life," a pamphlet.
2. Annual Report for 1949 of the Young Life Campaign.
3. "Here's Young Life," a pamphlet.

number. Twelve leaders were added during 1949. In addition to these full-time staff workers there are one hundred volunteer leaders who have caught the vision of going directly to America's high school students with an aggressive gospel ministry. Requests have poured into the headquarters from all over the country for clubs to be organized in new high schools. The leaders feel that this tenth year of Young Life has begun with wide open doors on every hand. Every week the staff members of Young Life are in personal touch with some five thousand teen-agers in seventeen states. Four out of five of these will be unsaved young people.¹

The leaders of Young Life have accepted the challenge of reaching young people outside the Church and feel that theirs is an organization that is proving successful in reaching those young people considered by many as unreachable. Yet they are well aware that there is still much to be done. Millions of high school young people are waiting to be approached with an attractive presentation of the wonderful truth of the Gospel. One high school boy summed it up with these words, "They're good kids, Jim," he said. "All they need is the Lord. They're not Christians. No one ever took the trouble to tell them about Jesus."²

Numbers are not stressed and no accurate check is kept on the number of young people reached, yet it is estimated by the leaders that in the past year 200,000 young people were contacted by Young Life. They report that hundreds of young people have openly acknowledged the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour before their friends in the meetings. Scores of

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1. "Going Ahead in 1949," a pamphlet.

2. John A. Witmer, "They Call Him Jim," Power, Vol. V, No. 3, (March, 1947), p. 6.

Christian young people are getting down to business and learning to really "go on with the Lord." "But with every Gospel effort combined we are barely scratching the surface. Millions of American young people as yet do not have the regular ministry of the Gospel."¹ The leaders feel that there is much more to be done in this field.

C. The Organization of Young Life

1. The Leaders

The people who make up the organization of Young Life feel that each person in its structure is a vital leader and a personal, close contact is maintained between the Board of Directors and each local club.

a. Board of Directors

Several outstanding business men of the city of Dallas, Texas, and vicinity became interested in the development of Young Life and in 1940-41 the organization was incorporated under the laws of the state of Texas as a non-profit organization. These interested business men were chosen as the Board of Directors and the most of them continue to function in that capacity at the close of the ninth year, September, 1949. The men who constitute the Board are not a figurehead but are in the truest sense directors of the work. Those on the staff who work under them value their counsel very highly and feel that God has indeed blessed them with the benefit of their wisdom and devotion to God. They are outstanding men both as lay leaders in the religious field and as leaders in the business world.²

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1. "May We Come In," a pamphlet.
2. Personal Letter from Kay McDonald, staff member of Young Life.

This responsible Board formulates all policy and actively directs the program. These men come from many denominations and each maintains relationship to his own church. This Board consists of from nine to twenty-one members who are elected annually. It meets twice a year. The Officers of this Board chosen each year include a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and a Secretary-Treasurer. The constitution defines the duties of the Board as follows:

. . . .to maintain and extend the work of the Campaign, prepare the annual budget for approval of the annual October meeting, appoint all staff members, appoint members of the Council of Reference, elect members of the Executive Committee, and delegate authority to such special committees as they shall deem necessary to effectively carry out the work of the Campaign. The Board shall have vested in it final authority in all matters of policy, practice and doctrine and in the interpretation and execution of this constitution.¹

The Executive Committee consists of the above-named officers and the Field Director, Jim Rayburn, and one member at large elected annually. This committee is responsible for conducting the routine business of the Campaign.²

b. The Council of Reference

The Council of Reference shall consist of such Christian leaders of whatever denominational affiliation who by their identification with the Campaign will further its interests. The Council shall have no directive authority in the activities of the Campaign, but shall exist for the purpose of giving counsel to the Board of Directors and the staff, and to promote and cooperate with the work in their respective districts.³

c. The Staff Members

The staff members are appointed by the Board of Directors.

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1. The Constitution of the Young Life Campaign.
2. Loc. cit.
3. Loc. cit.

These are directly responsible to the Field Director, Jim Rayburn. Originally the staff was made up entirely of men but recently women were added. The men are usually young ministers and the women serve both as leaders and secretaries. These leaders feel that God has definitely called them to this missionary work. They have made the winning of young people to Christ their life study and business. Most of them are fresh from Seminary and many have had some athletic experience during their high school or college days that heightens their influence with the high school "crowd". All of them have two characteristics: "They know Christ and they know young people. Their job is to introduce high school fellows and girls to their best Friend, Jesus Christ."¹ They are trained for the job.

d. Lay Leadership

As the leaders of Young Life looked at the growth of the movement they saw what a task lay before them and that it was beyond the realm of possibility that the staff members could lead all the clubs. For every high school touched there were hundreds unreached, where no Gospel testimony was being given out at all. It was decided that the most advantageous move was the training of lay leadership that would work under the supervision of the staff member. The leaders feel that this has been their greatest progress in the past two years. Each staff member is constantly on the alert for capable lay leaders to take over the local clubs. In several institutions of higher learning, interested students meet together for training in this field.

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1. "People Who Do Things," His, Vol. III, No. 8, (May, 1944), p. 23.

We now have students keenly interested in the work and training to do the work in at least 17 universities, colleges, seminaries and Bible institutes. In 16 of these schools there are students who have developed under the leadership training program and are actually working in the field with high school students under staff supervision.¹

The success of any organization lies in its leaders and the Young Life Campaign is blessed with leaders who are keenly aware of the great need existing in the mission field of the high schools of America and are dedicated to this task of reaching the unreached.

2. The Financial Policy

Young Life is incorporated as a non-profit organization just as any faith mission. All financial policies and expenditures are approved by the Board of Directors. All gifts to the work are entirely voluntary as God lays it upon the hearts of interested people to give. The great bulk of operating expenses are met by small regular gifts from hundreds of Christian people throughout America. Financial donors are kept informed about the movement by regular news and prayer letters. Staff members are on a stipulated salary and are paid as the necessary funds are received each month. The local clubs are largely self-supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and Christian friends.²

3. The Doctrinal Basis

All leaders of Young Life, Field Director, Board of Directors, staff members and lay leaders must subscribe to the Doctrinal Basis, general aims and purposes of the Campaign. The following beliefs are

.

1. Annual Report of the Young Life Campaign for 1949.
2. "Here's Young Life," a pamphlet.

those to which they must wholeheartedly subscribe:

1. The verbal inspiration of the Scriptures.
2. The virgin Birth and the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.
3. The substitutionary death of Christ, the efficacy of His blood for the redemption of the world and the historical fact of His resurrection.
4. The presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the work of regeneration.
5. The "glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."¹

Thus the organization of the Young Life Campaign is seen to be a democratic, cooperative organization in which every leader from the Board of Directors on down take active part. It is a well-planned, functioning organization, yet flexible enough to adjust to the local situation.

D. The Aims of Young Life

The aims of Young Life are divided into two parts relating first to the unsaved young person, and secondly, to the saved young person. They may be stated thus:

1. To REACH the unsaved with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ by any and every means as God directs.
2. To TEACH Christian young people to go on with the Lord and encourage a spiritual life which shall manifest itself in Bible study, prayer, and a consistent Christian testimony.²

"The one primary purpose of Young Life Campaign is to present the gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, to America's high school students."³ The leaders recognize that the high school young person seeks success and happiness and they, the leaders, know that the

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1. The Constitution of the Young Life Campaign.
2. Loc. cit.
3. "Here Are the Answers," a pamphlet.

only true source of this is in a personal, saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jim Rayburn states the purpose of Young Life in writing directly to the young people:

As we begin this school year, Young Life Campaign is out to make Him known. With all of our hearts we believe that we come to you with the most attractive proposition that any young person ever heard, and we shall seek by every means at our disposal to get you to listen to the glorious story of what Jesus Christ did for you and me when He died on the cross.

And if you are one who knows Him, the major objective of this school year for you should be to get your pals in school acquainted with the most wonderful story that was ever told. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He arose again the third day according to the Scriptures."¹

The purpose of Young Life is definitely evangelistic. They desire to get the Gospel to these youth by any and every means that God directs. While the primary aim is to save the lost, of second importance, they feel, is the growth of the young Christians. The desire is that these who are saved during their high school days may develop into solid, mature Christians, going on with the Lord in whatever walk of life He may lead. The interrelated program of activities that the Young Life Campaign presents is all geared to achieve these objectives for the high school student.

E. The Program and Methods of Young Life

1. The Approach

A successful Young Life Club does not happen overnight. Sometimes months of patient and persistent effort is expended by a leader in getting next to the young people and starting a club. The leaders

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1. Jim Rayburn, "The Why of Young Life," Young Life, Vol. IV, No. 2, (October, 1946), p. 3.

feel that the vision God has given them of the High School Mission Field is being blessed by a harvest of young lives because it is just the practical experience of New Testament teaching on evangelism. They stress the fact that, although various methods are used to get "next to" the young people and meetings are carried on in the way they like them, the Gospel is in no way compromised.

It is the most attractive message, the most attractive proposition in the world, and we believe that young people should have it presented to them in this fashion, to point them to the Wonderful Saviour.¹

Clubs are started in a number of ways. Contact may be made through interested pastors or Christian young people who have seen the Campaign in action in other places. Sometimes a leader can go in where not a single Christian young person is known and through persistent friendliness get the young people interested in forming a "club". Oftentimes Christian business men, who are interested in young people and have heard of Young Life, will pay the way of several of the high school youth to the summer conference where they see Young Life in action and return eager to start such a club in their own high school.

Entrance to some schools is not easily won. A leader may take sneers and jeers for a year from the students before his patience and kindness win out. Typical of such an instance is this one in a Western mountain city. The Young Life leader set out to make friends with the president of the student body, an extremely likeable young man but entirely ignorant of the things of Christ. The leader proved to be a

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1. Personal Letter from Kay McDonald, staff member.

friend and through this one fellow access was gained to the locker rooms, the "hangout", the games, and such places where contact was established with other fellows and girls. Several of the student body leaders were taken to lunch and plans discussed with them for a "club". The young people did the planning and when the meetings started they were really "their meetings" and they felt the responsibility for them. It was a hard situation and the leader in his report wrote, "The spiritual and moral condition is unspeakably bad. The Lord has enabled us to strike at the very heart of the student body through the key leaders. Now we can only go ahead by prayer and complete dependence on Him."¹

The leader follows the football teams, visits the corner drug-store, and mixes freely with the teen-agers wherever he finds them. He wins them to himself and then the way is smoothed to win them to Christ. Many times the leader is given a chance to speak at assembly programs in the schools and can present his challenge to all the student body. The youth becomes curious and comes out to see what this person has to offer.

What, then, is unique about the approach of the Young Life leader? It is the "close, friendly contact with young people, what one leader calls 'that old personal touch'."² Young people respond to such interest. However, an approach, attractive though it may be, is not sufficient in itself, the leaders feel, but the following meetings must be such that they are interested and come back for more.

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1. Ted M. Benson, "Winning and Holding Teen-Agers for Christ," The Sunday School Times, Vol. LXXXIX, (August 27, 1947), p. 741.
2. "Here's Young Life," a pamphlet.

2. The Regular Meetings

The weeknight club meeting is the backbone of every Young Life leader's ministry. It is usually held in the informal atmosphere of a home where the young people are used to coming and where they feel free to bring their friends. The leaders strive to make them feel welcome and everything is avoided that would embarrass a newcomer or drive him away from the Gospel. "Young people come to a home to hear about Christ when they wouldn't be 'caught dead' in a church."¹ The meetings are held during the week, sometimes on Monday, sometimes on Saturday night when young people are supposed to be out enjoying themselves. The young people do enjoy these meetings and the leaders feel that this is the key to the success of the Young Life meeting. "These kids are having fun finding out that Christ is not just 'an old fogey idea', to quote one of the members, but that He is attractive and that He is for young people."² Informality is the key-note of these meetings. No one is dignified, at least, not for long. Most of the young people, sometimes as many as 100, sit on the floor and sing lustily the songs and choruses, which though sung lustily, are never jazzed or sentimentalized. The meetings are peppy, enthusiastic, but not frivolous. The young people like them and come back for more. They are short, never more than an hour in length, and are conducted in such a way that the message really "gets across" to the hearers. The leaders do not attempt to give them everything the first time they come but try to make it interesting so that

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1. "Here's Young Life," a pamphlet.
2. Winnifred Chasey, "Young Life Makes Tulsa Teen-Agers Wanna Sing Hymns," Tulsa Tribune, April 7, 1944.

they return. The leaders report that in most of the high schools where they are organized, it is popular to attend the Young Life Club. The leaders of the student body go and the rest follow.

a. The Method

The work is considered by the leaders as a missionary movement and, as such, missionary methods are used. They studied the great missionary organizations to see what their methods were in reaching the heathen. A good missionary spends much time in preparation for his work and the staff member of Young Life seeks to learn all he can of the methods of working with young people. He seeks to understand them, their needs and their desires. The leaders are trained and come to the mission field of the high school as well equipped for their job as the missionary going to the foreign field. The missionary learns the language and customs of the people to whom he is to minister. The high school "crowd" has a language all its own and Young Life uses this to make understandable the deeper things of Christ. Instead of being "converted", one "closes in with Christ", or "gets squared away with Christ". The leaders feel that their messages must be given simply, plainly and earnestly in the young person's own language.

If the vocabulary involves a bit of slang not exactly appropriate to a Sunday morning worship service, it is not because of any lack of reverence, but rather a sincere desire to reach young people. That involves speaking the language with the proper idiom.

The leaders attempt to keep away from the trite vocabulary that may be very familiar to Christians but entirely foreign in the ears of the

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1. "People Who Do Things," His, Vol. III, No. 8, (May, 1944), p. 22.

unsaved young person.

Again, the missionary goes after the leaders in the tribe. He gets next to the chief and befriends him and tries, through him, to get a hearing with his people. As was discussed above, that is the method followed by Young Life leaders. Everything is done to get next to the young people and to befriend them and it pays off in big dividends. They make friends with unsaved young people and lead them to the Lord.

Sometimes the work seems slow for leaders have taken as much as a year just making friends with the heathen crowd before starting a club. But in reality, it is the fast way, for once we get on the good side of those kids we literally have them eating out of our hand. We have found that if we listen to what they have to say long enough, they will listen to what we have to say.¹

Thus the method of Young Life is the missionary method. The leaders meet the young people where they are, talk their language, win them to themselves and then win them to the Lord.

b. The Message

As has been discussed, the meetings are short and every word must count. Many lively choruses are sung and sometime during the evening, possibly at the close, a twenty minute Gospel message is brought.

The leaders specialize in presenting the basic doctrines of personal salvation and Christian living in terms that young people can grasp. It is their own grasp of the Word of God and their familiarity with the thinking of young people that makes Young Life meetings so effective. Controversial issues, or those peculiar to a particular denomination, are left to the leaders of the organized churches.²

Whether it is in a Young Life Club or a huge Rally, the message is always direct and simple and true to the Word of God, given in a language they

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1. Personal letter from Orien Johnson, staff member.
2. "Here Are the Answers," a pamphlet.

can understand.

c. The Follow-up

Although the weeknight meeting is the regular meeting and the one that all attend, whether Christians or not, there are follow-up meetings for those who have accepted Christ and desire to grow in the Christian life. In these meetings they are taught the principles of the Christian life, and how to pray and read their Bibles. The basic diet for the Young Lifers is a systematic study of the Bible and memorization of Bible verses. Young Life has collaborated with the Navigators, an organization headed by Dawson Trotman in Los Angeles, in a Bible study plan, the AlphaOmega Bible Study. "It is essential for young Christians to be led into definite habits of personal Bible study, prayer, and witnessing....A young Christian gets started living the life of faith by hiding God's Word in his heart."¹ Leaders know that patient, thorough follow-up is needed for growth of converts. The Navigator system is a set of printed cards containing 108 carefully chosen verses under thirty-six important topics relating to the Christian life. Everything is worked out to help a person get started and then help keep him going in a systematic way. Verses are learned and reviewed. When the first few are learned and the young person shows that he means business, more are given to him. In addition to the memorization of Bible verses, the young person keeps a small notebook where he lists outstanding things in his Bible study, prayer reminders and answers to prayer. The young people meet together and discuss what they have gained from their Bible study and share answers

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1. "Here's Young Life," a pamphlet.

to prayer. This is where the regular meeting is discussed and upheld in prayer.

Young people are urged by the leaders to get into a local church program and be of service there. And so, getting the young person into the regular meeting and converting him is merely the first step, the first objective obtained. The next problem of the leader is to aid him in his Christian growth through careful, systematic Bible study, prayer and witnessing.

In addition to the regular weekly meetings occasional weekend conferences and mass rallies are held. However, these are felt by the leaders to be secondary in importance to the regular, smaller weekly groups.

3. The Summer Program

The summer program of the Young Life Campaign centers around Star Ranch just outside Colorado Springs, Colorado, at the foot of beautiful Cheyenne Mountain. This site not only serves for the summer camp but is the national headquarters. "Star Ranch is unexcelled for a happy combination of study, inspiration, and recreation, with ample opportunity for hiking and sightseeing in the famous Pike's Peak region."¹ Star Ranch was formerly the summer home of a wealthy family and in 1946 was purchased by Christian friends and turned over to the Young Life to use. There is no cost to them for its use other than the upkeep and furnishings.²

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1. "Young Life Can Help You," a pamphlet.
2. "The Story of Star Ranch," a pamphlet.

a. Camps

All summer long young people from all over the States gather for a week or two of camp life. These days in the beautiful setting of the Rockies bring leader and camper close together and provide full opportunity for the reality of the Christian faith to make its impress. Short, vital class periods and evenings around the campfire often climax the effect of weeks of club meetings and bring life-changing decisions.¹

Six camping periods for the high school crowd were held during the summer of 1949. The young people could come to one or more if they liked. All the camps were directed by Young Life's experienced staff of leaders and were carefully supervised.²

During this past summer a total of 1,021 high school students and leaders attended Star Ranch. All through those summer months those of you who stood by and watched the Lord work were continually amazed at the tremendous results that came in the hearts and lives of an ever-increasing number of young people. Every week they came, wild, careless kids, oftentimes utterly indifferent to the things of God, and every week the miracle of regeneration took place before our eyes, not once or twice, but throughout each camp in a never-ending sequence of transformations which were completely amazing.³

b. Leadership Training Institute

In addition to the camps for the high school group, Young Life holds each summer a Leadership Training Institute at Star Ranch. Young people of college age come together from all over the country to study this method of reaching the high school crowd. Here is a unique opportunity to study Young Life methods at first hand, in fellowship with other potential young people's leaders and under the guidance of experienced

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1. Wally Howard, "Young Life Brings Real Life," Young People's Weekly, Vol. LXI, (February 9, 1947), p. 9.
2. "Meet Us At Star Ranch," a pamphlet.
3. Annual Report of Young Life Campaign for 1949.

staff members. Any Christian business or professional man, college, or seminary student who is definitely interested in reaching teen-agers in his home town may attend the Institute. The curriculum emphasizes basic principles of pioneer missionary activity among unsaved high school young people. The method of reaching disinterested young people is the main emphasis.¹ The leaders feel that eternity alone will tell of the countless blessings that have enriched lives through these summer programs at Star Ranch.

4. Relation to the Church

Because Young Life is an "extra-church" organization, many consider that it works completely apart from and in opposition to the church. Such is not the case, according to the leaders:

Young Life is in a very real sense an arm of the Church. All leaders are active and loyal members of the Church and many are ordained ministers. Their primary function is to go outside of the doors of the church and to reach the young people who are not reached through the ordinary channels.²

Young Life seeks to cooperate with every faithful Gospel agency. When young people are converted in Young Life, they are urged by the leader to join the church of their choice and to be of service in that church. The leaders, themselves, maintain an active interest in their own denominations and they stand in the same relation to their church as do all other missionaries.

Young Life is not sponsored by any one church, but many pastors are warm in their gratitude to Young Life for its ministry both in reaching

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1. "Young Life Can Help You," a pamphlet.
2. "May We Come In?", a pamphlet.

the unsaved and in strengthening their own young people. Young Life leaders are asked many times to speak in the churches. Many young people have been reclaimed for the church by Young Life. No part of the program of Young Life in any way conflicts with the local church program, but merely supplements what the church is doing. A minister from Colorado has this to say:

Young Life extends the arm of the church into a most difficult field to reach, high school students. In observing its methods, I have been impressed by its effectiveness in making the Gospel attractive. Fellows and girls who are real leaders in school life, but who cared little for what they called 'religion', have been won by the understanding approach of Young Life workers. After winning them to Christ, Young Life offers young people a fine program for growth in the Christian life. From our experience I can say that when a church cooperates, it soon finds its own youth program taking on new life.¹

Thus, if the church is willing and cooperative they can aid and benefit from the program that is carried on by the Young Life Campaign.

F. The Publication of Young Life

1. Description

The magazine edited by the Young Life Campaign is appropriately called "Young Life", the magazine for Young America. It is published from 4215 Live Oak Street, Dallas 4, Texas.

It is an attractive monthly picture magazine and designed to win its way with the average high school young person, while bearing a distinct Christian testimony and offering inspiration and help to Christian young people.²

Its circulation has grown steadily since its inauguration and

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1. "Have You Heard?", a pamphlet.
2. "Here's Young Life," a pamphlet.

has proved very popular with the "Young Lifers". It grew out of the great need for a magazine that would appeal to the high school age, be interesting to them, and present help for all phases of the young person's life. Above all, a magazine was needed that glorified Christ and made Him attractive. The leaders feel that "Young Life" is the answer. In the first issue, Jim Rayburn says:

Jesus Christ is really attractive! So, we seek to present Him in the most attractive way. Young Life Clubs throughout the nation are "meetings that young people like." And that's our goal for the monthly issue of "YOUNG LIFE", too. If you don't like it, we'll change it. We want it to be the high school gang's own magazine, full of real stuff because it comes in the Name of the One who said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."¹

Hazel Goddard was the first editor and held that position until October 1948 when she was succeeded by Wally Howard, the present editor. The first issue appeared in March, 1944, and was a small eight page magazine. Since then it has grown steadily and now averages twenty-six pages in length. The issues are sprinkled throughout with pictures that greatly add to its appeal to young people. Each month the cover page pictures young people engaged in having fun. Well over half of the issues show them indulging in sports, both individual and in groups. They are always attractive and really seem to be enjoying life. The magazine is small, six by eight and one-half inches, and is very readable.

2. Content

The articles that are featured each month in "Young Life" cover all phases of the life of the high school young person. The regular

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1. Jim Rayburn, "Dear Gang," Young Life, Vol. I, No. 1, (March, 1944), p. 1.

features contain "Reactions", readers expressing their opinion; an editorial, "Say, Gang," by Jim Rayburn; a poet's page submitted by the young people; "The Silo", a page of jokes and well named; "Down to Business", daily Bible readings and comments; "Cross Country", news from the various clubs; "Here's Why", questions sent in by readers and answered by staff members; and "Our By-Lines", news items about staff members. Other times they have featured "Kid of the Month", a news sketch of some outstanding young person.

Besides the regular features there is fiction, stories that are interesting and deal with problems that are common to the high school crowd. Each month an average of four articles are incorporated. These cover all subjects: prayer, Bible study, sports, manners, Christian biography, success stories, social life of the young people, and many other current subjects that are vital and interesting.

Comparatively speaking, little is written about the Young Life Campaign as such but most of the space is taken up with meeting the problems that face young people today. The Christian life is upheld as the successful life and the only true success for any person. One must remember that "Young Life" is a magazine for teen-agers and geared to meet their needs.

3. Appeal

There are two features of "Young Life" that need special attention. One is the monthly editorial, "Say, Gang", by Jim Rayburn and the other is "Down to Business", the daily Bible readings. This is typical of the magazine and its well-rounded appeal. Just as the aims of Young

Life are to preach the Gospel to the unsaved and to teach the Christian to go deeper into the Christian life, so these two features are geared to those aims. These two have proved to be the most popular features of the magazine.

"Say, Gang" is definitely evangelistic and aimed at arousing in the young person a desire to know Jesus Christ as Saviour. Here is a typical example:

I hope you have been doing some thinking the last two months about what an attractive proposition Christianity is. Here is another thing that makes it truly ring the bell with thinking young people. Christianity is real. It is actual. As one great writer recently said, "Christianity is an historical fact." And another has said it is a "fact-based religion. . . .the only fact-based religion."¹

The other feature, "Down to Business", is geared for the young Christian who is reading his Bible daily and growing in the faith. It challenges him to go on:

A New Fight. I Tim. 6:12. The Christian life isn't just a lackadaisical, rocking-chair thing. When you step out to live for God, you will meet up with some powerful enemies who will put up a good fight. Remember, though, that "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." Ephesians 6:10-17 will give you some good instructions on being prepared for this battle.²

However, the two are inter-related and appeal to both the saved and the unsaved but the emphasis is different in each case. The leaders feel that "Young Life" presents Christianity in all its attractiveness and carries it into every phase of the young person's life, and that that is the reason for its appeal.

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1. Jim Rayburn, "Say, Gang", Young Life, Vol. III, No. 8, (April, 1946), p. 3.
2. Wanda Ann Mercer, "Down to Business", Young Life, Vol. V, No. 5, (January, 1948), p. 21.

G. The Adverse Criticism of Young Life

Any organization that is active and doing things receives both good and adverse criticisms, and Young Life is no exception. However, Young Life has received less than many such organizations for its work has lacked the ostentation and display that may characterize others. According to Mr. Wally Howard, the editor of "Young Life" magazine, the criticism that they receive at the editorial office can be classified in a three-fold manner:

First, we get opposition from those who are of the liberal school of theology. Naturally they would fight any work which is fundamental. Second, we get opposition, particularly in the South, from those who are not interested in anything beyond their own denominational organizations. Third, we get some opposition from those who believe much as we do about the Gospel and yet either misunderstand our objectives or are jealous of our success in winning the attention of young people.

These objections are generally stated. Adverse criticism of the movement has come from both denominational and inter-denominational sources. One example from each of these will suffice. Some criticisms listed by the Southwestern Advocate, a Methodist publication, are here paraphrased:

1. Boys and girls that have been indoctrinated by Young Life criticize Methodist Church School literature, create disturbances generally, and refuse to cooperate with the youth program. Young Life is definitely harmful to minds of young people and to the Methodist Church.
2. Young Life has no connection with any recognized church.
3. Directors of the organization, who are adults, stated that the membership of Young Life is confined solely to boys and girls in High School....The fact that several known Young Life members are college students was not explained.
4. He affirmed that Young Life is interested only in young people

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1. Personal Letter from Wally Howard, editor of Young Life magazine.

outside the church. However, a great many, if not a majority of the adherents of Young Life, are, or at least at one time were, members of a recognized church. A number are or were Methodists.

5. They sing "simple little choruses." Then an adult leader rams home his interpretation of the Bible for fifteen to twenty minutes.

6. Testimonials are frequent. The singing of jazzed versions of hymns rings over the group. Emotion runs high. In relations with the public and in actual meetings, sensationalism reigns supreme.¹

Another example is that given by the International Council of Religious Education and is paraphrased below:

1. Since they are adult dominated, they are also program centered, giving no opportunity for the actual sharing by young people in the development of their activities and providing in no way for developing in them a sense of responsibility in the Kingdom of God.

2. There is an almost total absence of any awareness of the social implication of the message of Jesus Christ.

3. Because they are non-denominational, they have no direct tie-up with the churches and in practically all communities there is no adequate way of referring those young people who make commitments to the pastor of a local church of their choice.

4. The most severe criticism of these programs is that they do not reach unchurched youth. Despite the claims of newspaper publicity, the most objective observations which we have been able to make in numerous communities point to the fact that the young people supporting the programs are in the main from fundamentalistic churches and that very few of them are in the group which is generally considered unchurched.²

Mr. Howard, editor of "Young Life", sums up his feeling about such criticism by saying:

A much more insidious enemy than open criticism is the apathy and indifference on the part of real Bible-believing Christians to do the job of reaching the lost.³

As is seen above, the most frequent criticism of Young Life

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1. John Barron, "Youth Movements Condemned As Shameful Shams by Methodists", The Southwestern Advocate, Vol. XCV, No. 8, (July 22, 1948), pp. 1-4.
2. "Youth for Christ and Other Non-Denominational Youth Movements", A report by the International Council of Religious Education.
3. Howard, loc. cit.

is that it has no tie-up with the churches; it does not reach unchurched youth; and it is adult dominated and program centered.

H. Summary

In this chapter a brief study has been made of the development and growth of the Young Life Campaign in order to discover its reason for existence and the program that it offers in attempting to reach the forgotten "mission field" of the high schools of America.

Study was given to the reason for Young Life, the great aloofness of the majority of young people toward the organized Church today. The history was noted, with its steady growth from five original workers at the beginning in 1941, to thirty-four staff members in 1949. In addition, a large number of lay leaders are being trained to take over the local club thus relieving the regular staff worker for pioneer work.

Consideration was given the organization of Young Life. It was found to be a functioning, democratic organization with every member extremely interested in the work of winning the "hard-to-reach" high school young person to Christ.

The aims were then discussed, followed by the program and methods that Young Life employs in reaching the objectives set up. The program was seen to be attractive, informal, and evangelistic, with the Gospel given forth in language that they can understand. The program is varied and flexible, thereby sustaining the fluctuating interest of the teen-ager. Another part of the program is the publication, the "Young Life Magazine" which is designed for and geared to the needs and desires of the high school young person.

It was seen that while Young Life has made rapid and popular advance, it has not done so without receiving adverse criticism from both denominational and inter-denominational sources.

Thus this chapter has set forth the Young Life Campaign that has arisen in answer to a felt need in the high schools of America and has shown how it attempts to reach these young people by the program and methods it offers.

CHAPTER II

YOUTH FOR CHRIST INTERNATIONAL

CHAPTER II

YOUTH FOR CHRIST INTERNATIONAL

Youth for Christ International is another extra-church organization which ministers to the same age group as the Young Life Campaign. In this chapter consideration will be given to the reason for the existence of Youth for Christ, the history, the organization, the aims, the program and methods, the publication, and the adverse criticism of the organization. Particular attention will be given the methods and program employed by the leaders in reaching young people who are outside the organized church with a mass movement of evangelism.

A. The Reason for Youth for Christ

Youth for Christ arose and spread with such rapidity that it caused many people to wonder just what it was. The leaders of the movement gave their answer. "Youth for Christ is an instrument of God, born of the Holy Spirit and raised up in these last days to promote and work toward the final, complete evangelism of the entire world."¹ Mr. Cedric Sears, Service Director for the Upper Central Region, felt that the second World War marked the beginning of the decay of the twentieth century, and although the signs of the decline of this present age are all around, few seem to be aware of it. He sees the reasons

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1. "What is Youth for Christ", a pamphlet.

for this decline in the education of today where discipline is sadly lacking and in the homes which have failed in their purpose. Thus with the breakdown of the home and school he is not surprised in the rampant spread of crime today and the almost complete collapse of remedies. He feels that the saddest part of all this is that the church has failed, and offers the following statistics in support of his claim:

According to the recent issue of a widely read publication, last year over 60,000 churches in America reported no conversions. Some 27,000,000 youth under twenty-one received no religious instruction whatever. Children under twelve to the number of 13,400,000 are without religious training; 10,000 villages in our country are without churches; 30,000 villages have no resident pastor.

Only 68,000,000 of our people profess any kind of religious belief and only 28% of our people ever attend church. Sunday morning church attendance in America amounts to only 8% of our population, and Sunday evening attendance is only 2%. Rural churches are dying at the rate of 1,000 a year.¹

The leaders of Youth for Christ believe that God brought the organization into being to aid in the solution of this problem. It was felt that the organized church was failing to reach this group with the gospel and so Youth for Christ came to the fore, utilizing a night that was rarely used in the churches for youth activity, and launched their evangelistic campaign to reach these young people. Dr. Robert Cook, the president of Youth for Christ International, writes that Youth for Christ is proving itself to be an effective, workable proposition and that the key to its success is prayer. He explained that youth evangelism in itself is not new, and church effort in

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1. Cedric Sears, "Hour of Destiny," Youth for Christ, Vol. V, No. 7, (October, 1947), p. 10.

evangelism is not new but that the thought on an interdenominational youth rally channeling its converts back into the churches seems to be something new "which God has seen fit to marvelously bless." Dr. Cook goes on to say that they realize that many people think they are dreamers at the possibility of evangelizing the world in this generation, but they feel it can be done and are stepping out on faith to do their best to complete the job.¹

B. The History of Youth for Christ

1. The Origin

The process of discovering the origin of Youth for Christ is an extremely difficult job. Without definite planning, without central coordination or lengthy conferences on procedure, the movement seemed to spring up simultaneously all over the United States in large cities and small towns. It moved so rapidly that it was difficult to keep pace with its progress or follow its movements. The official leaders take no credit for initiating the movement but feel that it is of God:

It is evident that the movement is of such an extensive and inexplicable nature that no human being could be responsible for it. A. L. Dague of San Francisco, California, wrote in the Sunday panel discussion: 'Just as Peter was not the founder of the Church and Martin Luther was not the author of the Reformation, so no mere man can be given credit for fathering Youth for Christ. Christ Himself, working through many widely separated locations, is calling out the youth in this great movement.'²

Although the definite progenitor of Youth for Christ is difficult to ascertain, Mel Larson notes certain youth organizations

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1. Mel Larson, "Whither Youth for Christ," Moody Monthly, 1948 (reprint).
2. Mel Larson, Youth for Christ, p. 31.

that have contributed to its development. The British Young Life Campaign, which was considered in the first chapter of this study, may be acknowledged as one of the forerunners.¹ In America, as far back as the early thirties, young men were sowing the seeds. Percy Crawford, the director of the Young People's Church of the Air program, greatly influenced the method and message of Youth for Christ for he spoke the language of youth in a frank, sincere way. In 1930 Mr. Lloyd Bryant organized The Christian Youth Campaign of America in New York City and conducted rallies in the vicinity of Times Square. Mr. Larson feels that, although this organization has not been used of God to the extent that Youth for Christ has been used today, yet it is the roots of this movement.

A youth meeting was begun in Brantford, Ontario, in 1934 by Paul Guinness who came to Canada from Australia with a burning desire to start a Christian youth movement in the high schools and colleges. Detroit was one of the first organizations to use the term "Youth for Christ" in its program. It was begun by Oscar Gillian in 1937 and rose to prominence under the leadership of Ed Darling and can now humbly boast of being one of the oldest Youth for Christ groups in the world.

By 1940 all of these groups were functioning each in its own place and awaiting the spark to start the fire. That spark proved to be Jack Wyrzten with the organization initiated by him, The Word of Life Hour, and the result was Youth for Christ in its present style and pattern. He was probably the first to call his program "Youth for Christ."

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1. Ante, p. 6.

Before his conversion he played in a dance band but from the time of his conversion his one passion was to hold forth the Word of life. He spent his noon hours preaching in the City Hall Park to all who passed by, both Bowery bums and Wall Street brokers. He was advised by Percy Crawford to get into youth evangelism with the radio as his pulpit. From the time of his first rally in Madison Square Garden, when on April 1, 1944, 20,000 thronged into the meeting and ten thousand were turned away, the movement spread with youth leaders launching meetings all over the United States. By the summer of 1944, the movement was in its early stages in Indianapolis, St. Louis and Minneapolis. All of these meetings were patterned after The Word of Life.¹

For several months prior to this time youth leaders in Chicago had been praying about the matter of starting Youth for Christ in Chicago. This mammoth rally of Jack Wyrzten's seemed to be the needed incentive, and in April, 1944, Torrey Johnson agreed to be the leader and organizer of Chicagoland Youth for Christ.²

It may be correct to say that Chicagoland Youth for Christ, because of its faith, sensational growth, success, and the recognition it received, has done more to spread Youth for Christ than any other single movement.³

When crowds of 3,000 began to pack Chicago's Orchestra Hall, the word spread rapidly. It became widely publicized:

The twenty-two Hearst newspapers have given Youth for Christ much favorable publicity. This publicity undoubtedly has done much to put the movement before the secular . . . Nation-wide coverage followed the first anniversary of Chicagoland Youth

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1. Larson, op. cit., pp. 41-47.
2. Torrey Johnson and Robert Cook, Reaching Youth for Christ, pp. 9-13.
3. Larson, op. cit., p. 57.

for Christ rally.¹

This first anniversary was marked by a colossal Memorial Day Rally in Soldier's Field in Chicago. It is estimated by Mr. Larson that 75,000 packed the field. "From the first announcement given over the microphone at 6:30 p.m., until the voices of the white-robed choir of 5,000 died out at 10:45, a rapid fire program with dozens of celebrities made history."²

The leaders of this movement feel that the organization on an international scale had to come. "It was a question of either doing the job or fighting against God, and eventually those who labored to bring it about were given grace to say 'yes' to Him."³ In August, 1944, they met at Winona Lake, Indiana, and discussed such matters as: how to help Youth for Christ to the right kind of start in cities where the need was great; what could be done to service these different movements with speakers, singers and other help; and what could be done to develop leadership. After this preliminary conference another was held in Detroit in November, 1944. Present were thirty-five leaders representing eight states and twenty-one cities. Here plans were laid for the Winona Lake convention where they hoped to acquaint young people of different cities with one another and train them for positions of responsibility and leadership.⁴

2. The Development

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1. Larson, op. cit., p. 72.
2. Clyde H. Dennis, "Great Soldier Field Rally," Youth for Christ, Vol. III, No. 6, (June, 1945), p. 1.
3. Torrey M. Johnson, "Youth for Christ International," Youth for Christ, Vol. III, No. 3, (March, 1945), p. 1.
4. Loc. cit.

In July, 1945, at the Winona Lake Convention, Youth for Christ International became a permanent organization. Torrey Johnson of Chicago was elected president. The operating budget for the year was set at \$200,000. Here youth leaders from all over North America worked together, adopted a constitution, fixed policies, and outlined plans world-wide in scope.

When the movement was organized, it was reported that there were rallies being held in five hundred cities in the United States. During the following year, 1946, the number, both of rallies and attendance, rose higher. "The largest regular Youth for Christ meeting is held in Minneapolis with an average attendance of about 6,000. Toronto regularly packs in 3,000, Chicago 3,000, St. Louis 2,500, and Los Angeles 2,000."¹

In March, 1946, the first European team, consisting of Torrey Johnson, Billy Graham, Charles Templeton and Stratton Shufelt flew to England for six weeks of meetings.

This was the kind of trip for which Youth for Christ International had been organized. By pooling the strength of all of the groups, the various rallies in North America could send four first-rate young men to tell what God had done through Youth for Christ in America.²

The second Annual Convention met at Medicine Lake, Minnesota, in July, 1946, with 700 leaders present who reported that in some regions the number of rallies had increased ten times in just one year. The European trip had showed what could be done overseas.³ It was voted to

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1. "Story of Youth for Christ," a pamphlet.
2. Larson, op. cit., p. 93.
3. Loc. cit.

send five teams of evangelists to Britain, Scandanavia, Australia and Japan in the coming year. Torrey Johnson was re-elected president, and a plan was adopted to tithe offerings received at local rallies to carry on the world evangelization policy.¹

The idea of a world congress in Switzerland in 1948 had come to Torrey Johnson during his trip to Germany. This plan was presented at the Third Annual Convention at Winona Lake in July, 1947, and enthusiastically accepted. Other decisions that highlighted this meeting were:

1. At least twenty Youth for Christ teams authorized for 1947-48.
2. Budget of \$538,000 unanimously approved.
3. Over 450 decisions for salvation and dedication from the young people who were present at the convention.
4. Setting of a goal for a rally in every county in the United States by the 1948 convention, over 3,000 in all.
5. Re-election of Torrey Johnson president.
6. Adoption of a world program calling for expenditure of \$340,000 in the next twelve months.
7. Plans to spend \$100,000 for clothing and relief next year.²

The Fourth Annual Convention was again held at Winona Lake in July, 1948. Mr. Frank C. Phillips, the executive vice-president, presented the following items in looking back over their past year: numerically, Youth for Christ was about twenty per cent stronger; on the average, attendances were smaller; a very important spiritual growth was seen; the rallies were on better foundations, better grounded, and getting better cooperation from local churches and pastors; and an increasing number of souls was being won to Christ. It was emphasized that in the coming year sinner contact must be renewed; a spiritual deepening emphasized; a program bathed in prayer; a stronger follow-up;

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1. "Blessings Untold at Medicine Lake Conference," Youth for Christ, Vol. IV, No. 9, (September, 1946), pp. 21-22.
2. Mel Larson, "Report from Winona Lake," Youth for Christ, Vol. V, No. 7, (October, 1947), p. 5.

more passion for souls; structural discipline in working together; and lastly, missionary daring. Two of the most important aspects stressed were the European Campaign and the work of Youth for Christ in the Bible clubs in the high schools. Dr. Robert A. Cook of Chicago, was elected president; a budget of \$872,000 for the next year was adopted; and a report was given that their aim of the previous year for a rally in every county had not been realized but that about one-third of the outstanding cities now had active rallies.¹

Immediately after this convention thirty-one of the delegates flew to Beatenberg, Switzerland for the first World Congress of Youth for Christ International. Thirty nations were represented. The Congress met for one purpose, that by pooling ideas and resources the world might be evangelized in this generation. Unity and prayer permeated the Congress and emphasis was placed on shortness of time in which to evangelize the world.²

The Fifth Annual Convention met at Winona Lake, in July, 1949. From the reports that came in, the leaders felt that Youth for Christ was more virulent than ever before and poised for a spiritual offensive across the world. They rededicated themselves to the now familiar slogan, "the evangelization of the world in this generation." The leaders voted to steer the movement into an even deeper spiritual emphasis. It was felt that concentration should be given in the following year to the rural areas of America. A reselling job would be done in cities where

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1. Annual Report for Youth for Christ in 1948.
2. Theodore Engstrom, "World Congress Report," Youth for Christ, Vol. VI, No. 7, (October, 1948), p. 5.

enthusiasm had lagged or ebbed away. More city-wide campaigns and world vision conferences would cast stronger gears for the work ahead. It was reaffirmed that Youth for Christ would continue to operate only as an evangelistic agency, not as a missionary society, and they pledged their loyalty to the existing missionary societies that were represented at the Convention.

A report was given by Al Metsker of Kansas City as to the High School Bible Club work. The leaders felt that here was one great aim for the coming year, to organize such clubs in other areas. The Convention set up an International Bible Club Department, and thereby launched concentrated intra-school evangelism. Of great importance was the approval of a plan to blanket Europe in the summer of 1950 with some one hundred teams carefully chosen out of American colleges and Bible schools. These teams are to be sent out, largely supported by their own classmates, and will specialize in open-air evangelism in such countries as France, Italy, Germany and the Lowlands. At the end of their campaign they are to attend the World Congress slated for August and share with the delegates the impact of their evangelistic campaign. As the week ended, the Conventioneers left convinced that Youth for Christ was more alive today than ever.¹

3. The Present Situation

Youth for Christ International has now been a functioning organization for five years. When it was first organized, many opinions

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1. "Report from Winona Lake," Youth for Christ, Vol. VII, No. 6, (September, 1949), p. 52.

were expressed as to its survival chances. "Youth for Christ may last six months, or possibly a year or two at the most, skeptics said in 1944."¹ The leaders are happy to report that this was not so:

But they guessed wrong, because youth seemed to like the idea of a wholesome program for Saturday night. Since 1944 when Youth for Christ started against a background of war-spawned juvenile delinquency, it has expanded now to 1,450 cities, towns, and villages across the United States. In addition, there are 550 rallies in fifty-four other nations.

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At the rally a week ago in Minneapolis auditorium 6,000 persons were in the audience. Of this number two-thirds were under thirty years of age.²

To the question as to whether Youth for Christ had stopped growing, Dr. Cook, the president, answered:

The best answer is an honest appraisal of the facts. Certainly Youth for Christ swept everything before it like a prairie fire in those first months. . . It would be a tragedy if Youth for Christ were only a grass-fire, however. Some of us like to think that a better comparison is that of the process required in getting up steam in a boiler. First, the kindling and the hot flash of flame that ignites the coal. Later, and better and more lasting, is the quiet burning that gives off heat and power. It is the steady heat that pulls the load.³

Dr. Cook feels that Youth for Christ has grown in a way not measurable by facts and figures, that of spiritual depth. With this spiritual growth has come a new awareness of the real reason why God raised up Youth for Christ, the evangelization of this generation.

"The conviction persists that God has raised up Youth for Christ International for His reaping ministry in this hour of crisis!"⁴

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1. John Nyberg, "Youth for Christ Now Covers 1,450 Cities," Youth for Christ, Vol. VII, No. 2, (May, 1949), p. 52.
2. Ibid., pp. 52-53.
3. Bob Cook, "What Happens Next," Youth for Christ, Vol. VII, No. 4, (July, 1949), p. 5.
4. Ibid., p. 8.

C. The Organization

1. The Leaders

The leaders of Youth for Christ feel that "organization" is not exactly the term that is applicable to their movement but that it is rather a "fellowship" of like minds and faith. It has no official jurisdiction over any local rally or any group of rallies anywhere in the world.

a. The Official Board

The officers of Youth for Christ International consist of a president, a vice-president, an executive vice-president, vice-presidents representing regional areas, a treasurer and a secretary. This group constitutes the Executive Council. These are elected by a vote of the majority of official delegates at the Annual Convention. There is also a Cooperating Council International composed of representative clergymen and laymen, elected by a majority vote of the Executive Council. It was decided to keep the organization as simple as possible in keeping with efficiency and effectiveness. Local groups are to be established on at least a city or county-wide basis. These should be grouped into regional areas as determined by the Executive Council.¹

In addition to the Constitution, Youth for Christ has a Statement of Policy which sets standards for local groups and re-emphasizes the fact that Youth for Christ is international and interdenominational in fellowship but non-denominational in emphasis.²

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1. Constitution of Youth for Christ.
2. "Reporting Historic Convention of Youth for Christ International," Youth for Christ, Vol. III, No. 9, (September, 1945), p. 14.

b. The Staff Members

The staff members are practically all young men. Mel Larson describes them as: "Young men of vision, young men of prayer, and young men of uncompromising Christian character. Above all, they depend on the Lord for any results which may come from their efforts."¹ Mr. Larson sent out questionnaires to these leaders and in the 153 that were returned these things were noted: the average age of the directors was 33.37 years; average age when directors were converted was 15.6 years; the denominations represented among directors were 20; and the denomination with the most directors was the Baptist with 64 represented. One of the criticisms of Youth for Christ has been that it played up the man too much and failed to sufficiently glorify Christ. Mr. Larson answers thus:

The answer is partly in understanding that there is a great difference between "sheep feeding" and "fish catching". It's not necessary to use fishing bait to attract sheep to the feeding trough. Natural hunger is sufficient--but the sinner is not hungry. . . . Young people tend to be hero worshippers. Because of that human trait Youth for Christ leaders have sought to reach them through outstanding men and women in various fields. The crux of the matter lies in switching their attention from the individual to Christ.²

The leaders are cognizant that the local leadership of some rallies has not always been up to the standard which they like. "At times we have been embarrassed by the mediocre or 'doubtful' type of work being carried on in some places."³ Dr. Oswald J. Smith, world missionary leader of Toronto, Canada, says this of the leaders: "I am

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1. Mel Larson, Youth for Christ, p. 98.
2. Ibid., p. 114.
3. "What is Youth for Christ," a pamphlet.

intimately acquainted with the leaders of Youth for Christ. I know them to be spiritual. In spite of the many objectionable methods used in early days, these men were out for souls."¹

Mel Larson has discussed several things which characterize almost every Youth for Christ leader. He usually has a pleasing personality; he is happy about his Christian experience and life; he has a sense of humor and is not afraid to try the unique; he has vision and the faith to do what that vision tells him to do; he is a good organizer, unfettered by denominational ties or insignificant differences between believers; he is a man of prayer; and many times, he is a musician or a leader in sports or the business world. Examples of these are: Torrey Johnson, a young pastor who was a "crack" swimmer and won the breast stroke meet in a National tournament; Billy Graham, who is president of Northwestern Schools in Minneapolis; Charles "Chuck" Templeton, who was a sports cartoonist for the Toronto Daily Globe before his conversion; and Gil Dodds, the holder of the world indoor mile record. God has called busy young men to the task of winning other young people to Him.²

c. Lay Leaders

Because of the looseness of Youth for Christ organization, the leaders feel that great importance is to be laid on the lay leadership. "The character of any local rally is determined by the consecration of the local leadership."³ The connection of the official Board

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1. Oswald J. Smith, "Vision of Youth for Christ," a pamphlet.
2. Larson, op. cit., pp. 98-109.
3. "What is Youth for Christ," a pamphlet.

and the local rally is mainly advisory. "It appears to be a laymen's movement because the executive committee, those who make and carry out the plans in the local organization, usually consists of a larger number of Christian laymen than pastors."¹ In addition to the local executive there should be an Advisory Committee formed from the representatives of each church and other sympathetic Christian groups, and a Youth Council consisting of selected members from participating churches.²

2. The Financial Policy

The leaders feel that Youth for Christ is a miracle in the provision that God has made for it. No church, denomination, missionary society or group of wealthy people underwrite it. It is entirely dependent upon the Lord as He moves people to give. In the movement there are no accumulated funds, no endowments and no investments. It is a day by day answer to prayer. Tithes and gifts are sent in from the local rallies which are self-sustaining. No pressure is put upon local groups for support and no organized campaigns are made. At the First Annual Convention recommendation was made as to two methods that might be used to help finance Youth for Christ; first, a tithe of the income of the local rally; or secondly, one offering per year from each rally held monthly.³

3. Doctrinal Basis

Youth for Christ has a seven point Statement of Faith to which

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1. "Organization," a pamphlet.
2. loc. cit.
3. Torrey M. Johnson, "What is Youth for Christ International," Youth for Christ, Vol. VI, No. 5, (August, 1948), p. 32.

each leader must subscribe without mental reservation:

1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.
2. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
4. We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful man regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.
5. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
6. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
7. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in Christ.¹

A signed copy of this Statement must be filed by each official worker with the Executive Secretary.

Thus the organization of Youth for Christ is seen to be more of a fellowship than a closely knit organization. The International group stands in an advisory capacity to the local groups. Each local group is self-sustaining and aids in the support of the larger organization. The International and local groups are bound together by their common Statement of Faith to which all official workers must assent.

D. The Aims of Youth for Christ

The major objectives of Youth for Christ were drawn up at the First Annual Convention in 1945:

1. To promote and help Youth for Christ everywhere.

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1. Constitution of Youth for Christ.

2. To encourage world evangelism among youth.
3. To emphasize radiant, victorious living.
4. To foster service international of youth through existing agencies.¹

The leaders feel that their job is to rescue souls from the world of sin and to channel them into the local church and other agencies who are out for the cause of Christ. "Youth for Christ exists exclusively for others and will survive and flourish as long as it loses itself in service to others."²

E. The Program and Methods of Youth for Christ

1. The Approach

The local Youth for Christ organization usually springs from one person who has caught the vision of reaching young people in his community and has the enthusiasm to carry it through. Mr. Cedric Sears discussed the ways and means of getting a local rally started after someone has caught the vision. He feels that the person who begins the local movement should be a member of the community, a consecrated Christian, and one who has definite leadership ability and standing in the community. Before launching the movement, he should call together all interested persons and meet in some neutral place. Those who should be invited to such a meeting are all pastors who are true to the Word of God, all young people's leaders, and several Christian business men. Since Youth for Christ is a local affair, there is no set rule for organization but an Executive Committee should be chosen from those who

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Torrey M. Johnson, "What is Youth for Christ International," Youth for Christ, Vol. VI, No. 5, (August, 1948), p. 32.

attend this meeting. Both young people and adult leaders should be represented on the Committee. They are warned to avoid a one-man organization by giving as many as possible places of responsibility. Above all else, decisions must be made through persevering prayer. Once the rally is underway, the local group will probably seek affiliation with Youth for Christ International.¹

Certain fundamental principles that each local rally should keep in mind when establishing a successful rally are these:

1. Its message is to the unreached youth. It is interdenominational; solicit the cooperation of all churches.
2. As far as possible your meeting place should be a neutral auditorium other than a church, such as a high school auditorium, civic auditorium, or other neutral building, though sometimes a church must be used.
3. Remember--spirituality can never be supplanted by organization.²

To aid in the organization of local rallies, the Executive Council from the International office sends out full-time field representatives to offer advice as to new rallies, to revive old ones, and to speak when the opportunity provides.

2. The Regular Meeting

Youth for Christ is geared for young people and the program and methods are those which the leaders feel will accomplish their aim of evangelizing the world in this generation. The regular meeting is the Saturday night rally. The methods, message, and follow-up of these will be noted.

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1. Cedric Sears, "Hour of Destiny," Youth for Christ, Vol. V, No. 7, (October, 1947), p. 11.
2. "Organization," a pamphlet.

a. Method

Youth for Christ reaches its young people through the medium of the mass evangelistic meeting. They recognize the fact that young people are mass-minded, doing what others do, and going where others go. Youth for Christ has been criticized more for the methods they employ in reaching young people than for any other aspect of their movement. Commenting upon this Torrey Johnson says:

Our hope from the very beginning of "Chicagoland Youth for Christ" was to help meet the challenge of a day of constantly increasing sinfulness. We believed with all our hearts that God was leading in this matter and we're leaving no stone unturned, either by advertising, by the arrangement of an attractive program, or by the preparation of ushers, personal counselors, and speakers, to present God's very best to Chicago's youth.¹

The leaders admit that some of their methods are bizarre but are justifiable, as Ed Darling of Detroit says, "Programming is a tough thing. I believe God has used Youth for Christ somehow to try everything, even including horses. There's a place for everything."² Youth for Christ sets up a four-fold standard for their methods: "Every servant of Christ must be sure that his methods are, first of all, PURE; secondly, POTENT; thirdly, PROGRESSIVE; and finally and supremely, PLEASING UNTO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST."³ These mass meetings are characterized by spectacular numbers, colorful personalities, and lively music.

The meetings are generally around two and one-half hours in length. They are timed to the last minute. Usually the first half-hour

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1. Torrey Johnson and Robert Cook, Reaching Youth for Christ, p. 20.
2. Annual Report for Youth for Christ for 1948, p. 23.
3. Torrey M. Johnson, "The Methods of Youth for Christ," Youth for Christ, Vol. III, No. 9, (September, 1945), p. 6.

is given over to music, either an organ recital or a band concert.

Then in rapid succession there follows a song service, various musical numbers and special features, and short testimonies by Christian students, service personnel, and other young people. Through these features the atmosphere is set for the climax of the meeting, the message given by an outstanding evangelist or pastor. This is followed by a straightforward gospel invitation.¹ Since the message is the focal point of the meeting, the official leaders have prepared a seven point list of advice that is sent to prospective speakers:

1. Be on time, 7:00 for prayer meeting.
2. Begin your message promptly without too much "ice-breaking".
3. We have found a message of 25 minutes most effective. This, in view of the fact that Youth for Christ is not a church service but a different type of approach altogether.
4. You may conduct your own invitation or turn back to the director to conduct same. At any rate, turn it over to the director before dismissing the audience.
5. Dwell on the positive aspects of salvation and consecration, and leave doctrinal hobbies strictly alone. We cannot alienate our Arminian brethren at the expense of the Calvinists, or vice versa; but we must preach the Gospel, pure, simple, clear, forceful, persuasive and let indoctrination be the job of the local churches.
6. State clearly in your message HOW to be saved. Many of the criticisms we receive from young people themselves grow out of the fact that the speaker preached a good sermon, without telling them exactly how to be saved. Remember to do this on a Bible basis. Not just your opinion, but the Word of God is the thing that counts.
7. Don't criticize or poke fun at the local church or pastor. Youth for Christ is for the church and the pastor--we pray that we may aid and supplement pastoral work, not compete with it.²

Mel Larson notes that the unusual features offered by these meetings keep young people coming. "Humor flows like a steady stream

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1. Mary Anne Klein, "Mass Meetings Win Youth to Christ," His, Vol. IV, No. 1, (October, 1944), pp. 12-14.
2. "Programming," a pamphlet.

through the meetings, but it is not excessive."¹ He quotes Charles Templeton as giving an adequate solution, "Youth for Christ cannot be a Sunday night service, nor can it be pure entertainment. It should be sparkling and entertaining, and yet spiritual."²

b. The Message

The leaders of Youth for Christ feel that they have a unique message. The American Magazine wrote of Jack Wyrzten:

For a long time, he feels, many churches have made a grave mistake in attempting to present religion to young people in candy-coated packages. There have been too many bird and bee sermons, he thinks, and too many book reviews and poetry sessions. There has been too much stress placed on entertainment and rumpusrooms and gymnasiums, when all the time what youth craves is the plain, unvarnished Gospel. The churches have been feeding them too many ice-cream sodas, in his opinion, when they are starving for bread and meat.³

As has been said, the message of the evening is that to which all else moves, and the invitation is the focal point of the message. The leaders are intensely serious about their work. They state that the greatest need of the world today is the plain presentation of the way of salvation and a call to repentance. Their message is clearcut:

There is no trace of modernism or higher criticism in the message of Youth for Christ. It is sound and evangelical. Go into Youth for Christ rallies and you will hear a clearcut message on salvation or consecration. Youth for Christ believes in the necessity of regeneration. It emphasizes the new birth. Men are urged to accept Christ. The Christian is told that God expects him to give up all known sin and live a Spirit-filled life. There is no compromise at any point. Worldliness is condemned; Christ alone is exalted.⁴

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1. Mel Larson, Youth for Christ, p. 74.
2. Ibid., p. 133.
3. Clarence Woodbury, "Bobby Soxers Sing Hallelujah," American Magazine, March, 1946, (reprint).
4. Oswald J. Smith, "Vision of Youth for Christ," a pamphlet.

Torrey Johnson concludes that through such messages young people discover that God is no faraway, gloomy being who lives solely in edifices of stone, brick or concrete, and who habitually casts a look of disapproval on a good time, but they have found that He is a joyful God, full of blessings, and One with whom they can fellowship.¹

c. The Follow-Up

At the Fourth Annual Convention in 1948 the need for a definite follow-up was stressed. Mr. Frank Newell spoke of the great need of plowing the Word of God into the hearts and lives of the young people brought to Christ in the meetings:

Unless the Word of God is taught to them, unless they are solidly grounded in it, you know from painful experience how often the enemy has come along and snatched away the seed that has been planted before it has had time to sprout.²

In a pamphlet published by the International office they give information concerning this important matter. At the rallies the invitation to accept Christ is given and those who raise their hands are ushered into a separate room where they are dealt with by personal workers. A New Testament or Gospel of John is given each convert and he is encouraged to attend church. If he has not noted any church preference, the personal worker directs him to one that he feels will be helpful. On Monday morning after the rally a personal letter is written to each convert and a tract is enclosed. The pastor of the church of his choice is written, telling of the convert's decision and requesting his help in getting him established in church. Records are kept at the

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1. Larson, op. cit., p. 133.

2. Annual Report of Youth for Christ for 1948, p. 36.

Youth for Christ office until the convert has joined a church, whereupon he is considered under the care of the church and the follow-up is discontinued.¹ Before each rally a Bible Study and Memorization club meets at which time they drill on Scripture they have learned during the week. The method used is that of "The Navigators", a plan which was discussed previously.²

The most recent development in the problem of follow-up is the High School Bible Clubs that are being organized under the supervision of Youth for Christ in local areas. The president, Dr. Cook, states that the High School Bible Clubs are the next frontier in the country.³

Thus the regular meeting of Youth for Christ, to be effective, must be dynamic in method and Christ-centered in message. Converts must be followed up with a definite program to foster growth in the Christian life.

3. The Summer Program

Youth for Christ has no definite summer program in regard to the young people themselves. The leaders meet each summer for an Annual Convention where the results of the year's work are carefully examined, a time of spiritual refreshing is had, and future procedures are planned. However, these meetings are usually held on some large conference grounds such as Winona Lake, Indiana, and many young people attend these meetings. Local rallies provide special meetings and social functions for their groups but, on the whole, no organized summer program.

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1. "Follow-up," a pamphlet.
2. Ante, p. 21.
3. "What's the Answer," a pamphlet.

is planned for the entire organization. Young people are urged to participate in other summer conferences and meetings.

4. Relation to the Church

Because Youth for Christ is "extra-church", many feel that is "anti-church". The leaders of the movement refute this and give the attitude of Youth for Christ International toward the local church in this Code for Success:

1. All young people should be home by midnight. Those in the earlier teens by eleven o'clock.
2. It is expected that Christian young people be on time and prepared for Sunday school and church on Sunday morning. Let no one say, "Youth for Christ kept us out late."
3. Be loyal to your church and pastor. He is one of your best friends, and the work of your own church is of utmost importance.
4. Support your city-wide youth organizations. Our association should result in more work for the Lord, not less.
5. Come as often as possible. Bring others, but especially pray God's blessing on these meetings.
6. There are opportunities for hundreds of young people here. Find a place and fill it. God will bless you as you do.¹

The leaders are cognizant of the fact that no movement of any kind can survive apart from the good will and active cooperation of the local pastor and congregation. For that reason Youth for Christ directors and committees everywhere are doing all they can to maintain and increase and strengthen their relationship to local churches. "The attitude of the whole movement is to cooperate in building young Christians to fill a place of real service in their own neighborhoods and their own churches."² In speaking of the relation of Youth for Christ and the denominations, Torrey Johnson writes, "Youth for Christ is strictly inter-

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1. Torrey M. Johnson, "Youth for Christ and the Local Church," Youth for Christ, Vol. III, No. 4, (April, 1945), p. 1.
2. Ibid., p. 2.

denominational and cooperative. Youth for Christ believes in denominations. We believe that unity in the Spirit does not necessarily imply uniformity in doctrine or practice."¹ Again, in speaking of the relation of Youth for Christ and other youth organizations he writes:

One of the marvelous things about Youth for Christ is that it does not and needs not displace any other youth organization. Youth for Christ can be a tremendous "spark" to every other youth group, while at the same time not interfering with or hindering the other groups.²

It has been noted that the main feature of the Youth for Christ program is the Saturday evening rally where a dynamic message is given in a unique way, with the aim of winning young people to the Gospel. They assure the church that they do not strive to alienate the youth from their own churches but seek to win those outside the regular churches and supplement the program of those within.

F. The Publication of Youth for Christ

1. Description

The publication edited by Youth for Christ International is called "Youth for Christ Magazine". It is published from 130 North Wells Street, Chicago 6, Illinois. The editor is Ken Anderson.

Before Youth for Christ was organized, the Indianapolis Youth for Christ published the magazine for their local organization. The original magazine was begun in 1943 under the directorship of Roger B. Malsbary who turned over to Youth Publications and the International

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1. Torrey M. Johnson, "Youth for Christ and Denominations," Youth for Christ, Vol. III, No. 5, (May, 1945), p. 12.
2. Torrey M. Johnson, "Youth for Christ and Other Youth Organizations," Youth for Christ, Vol. III, No. 6, (June, 1945), p. 5.

organization all rights to the magazine. The new Youth for Christ Magazine is indebted to them for the name and a subscription list of about one thousand. The Youth for Christ Magazine began in March, 1945. It has been a monthly publication since that time.¹

In speaking of the magazine, Frank C. Phillips, the Executive Vice-president of Youth for Christ says:

I heartily agree with Torrey Johnson that it is the greatest Youth Magazine in America. But, notice that only 83 of our 956 rallies are receiving the magazine in quantity. It's the greatest piece of promotion you can have to give to your committee or pastors in town and to businessmen and yet, hundreds of the rallies don't receive them. Let's double our subscription list this year and make it 40,000.²

The magazine is small, 6 x 7 3/4 inches; the page is set up in two columns of clear readable print. The cover page usually features attractive young people engaged in sports and obviously enjoying what they are doing. In the first years of its publication by Youth for Christ, the magazine averaged seventeen pages in length but increased in size quite rapidly and now averages around seventy pages. Pictures are sprinkled liberally throughout each issue, usually of various rallies throughout the country and this heightens interest.

2. Content

Most of the space in the magazine is given over to items directly concerning the organization. However, there are other articles

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1. "We Take A Bow," Youth for Christ, Vol. III, No. 3, (March, 1945), p. 11.
2. Annual Report for Youth for Christ for 1948, p. 9.

that are of interest to young people. The regular features include: "Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down", the reactions of readers to the magazine; "Photographic News", news items of Youth for Christ shown through the medium of pictures; "Scrap Book", where "corn" and serious items are intermingled; "Book Review"; "Pen Pals", where young people write in, describing themselves and seeking other young people of similar interests with whom to correspond; "News", concerning the various rallies throughout the world; and usually an editorial page wherein the president writes to the young people. At other times they have included "Youth Counselor", where questions that are sent in are answered. At various times, "Meet the Director" has been featured with stories about outstanding leaders. Besides these regular features, a poetry section supplied by the readers is included. Articles and fiction are incorporated into each issue with the articles outnumbering the stories. About once a year a story-writing contest is sponsored by the magazine and the winning stories featured. The articles average about four in each issue and the majority of them are written concerning some phase of Youth for Christ.

3. Appeal

In planning the magazine the editors have two objectives. First, they desire to serve as a clearing house of information concerning the Youth for Christ movement for they feel that their constituency is limited almost exclusively to those interested in world-wide Youth for Christ. In the second place, they want the magazine to be carefully slanted to the needs and interests of Christian young people.¹

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1. "Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down," Youth for Christ, Vol. VII, No. 6, (September, 1949), p. 2.

The first objective is very apparent in that most of the features such as "News", "Photographic News", and many of the articles are geared to the promotional aspect. News is given from both the United States and the various countries around the world. Success stories of local rallies are played up. Numbers are given constantly. A page picked at random revealed that out of twelve rallies reporting, ten of them gave the number of young people in attendance and the number of conversions.¹

In regard to the second objective, while the articles featured are of interest to young people, few directly relate to the everyday experiences of the young Christian's life. One issue, chosen at random from the years, was July, 1947, and it revealed the following articles: "The Graham-Barrows Story", this concerned the European evangelistic tour; "A Britisher Reports on Youth for Christ", the content of which is apparent; "Mediterranean S-O-S", a Youth for Christ meeting in that area; "Youthful Novelist", the story of a winner in the short story contest; and "What Happens to Youth for Christ Converts". Thus it can be clearly seen that the Youth for Christ Magazine fulfills its main purpose of disseminating the news of Youth for Christ throughout the world.

G. The Adverse Criticism

It was not surprising to the leaders of Youth for Christ that

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1. "Girdling the Globe," Youth for Christ, Vol. V, No. 10, (January, 1948), p. 57.

their organization which was receiving so much publicity would find a great deal of criticism within that publicity:

The honeymoon days of Youth for Christ are over. The days of the bobby sox and the bow tie, so far as our spectators are concerned. Now we're beginning to be knocked around a bit. We're being¹ criticized, accused, scoffed at. And we're praising God for it!

Torrey Johnson feels that any movement that exalts the blood of Jesus Christ is in for much criticism in this age, and that the surest proof that a religious movement is doing good and causing concern to the forces of evil is this criticism. When criticism arises, therefore, he continues, it must be of one of two origins: either from misinformed people or those who oppose the gospel of Jesus Christ and are willing to take an open stand against the only hope for this world of today.²

More criticism was published about Youth for Christ in the formative years of 1945, 1946, than has been published recently. This criticism of Youth for Christ has run all the way from slight disapproval to that of naming it "Shameful Sham"³ and "Fascist".⁴

One of the first articles to appear in this regard was by Mr. Harold Fey in the "Christian Century". This article appeared in June before Youth for Christ was organized in July, 1945. According to Mr. Fey's analysis, Youth for Christ was considered a streamlined revivalism that used to advantage the selling technique of radio. His

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1. "Torrey Talks to Teen-agers," Youth for Christ, Vol. IV, No. 3, (March, 1946), p. 33.
2. Ibid.
3. John Barron, "Youth Movements Condemned as Shameful Shams by Methodists," The Southwestern Advocate, Vol. XCV, No. 8, (July 22, 1948), p. 1.
4. "Youth for Christ Leader Denies Fascist Tinge," New York Herald Tribune, October 27, 1945.

opinion of the leaders was that they were all young men whose educational equipment was acquired in high schools and fundamentalist institutions. The message was concerned primarily with conversion and, while not explained, was made to seem very urgent. He felt that the follow-up was vague, consisting of getting the convert to sign a card announcing his decision, and told to join a church if he could find one that was true to the Bible. He was also advised to continue to attend Youth for Christ meetings and to "witness". Much was spoken about sin, Mr. Fey continued, but the terminology was not clear as to meaning. He felt that their religion dwelt too much upon the perpendicular plane with little social concern toward one's fellowmen. He closed the article with the concession that the movement would bear watching, for many ministers felt that Youth for Christ was cutting across sounder programs of Christian Education in their own churches. When the article was written Mr. Fey was of the opinion that it would not last long but that its very existence revealed a spiritual famine that was not being met by the churches at that time.¹

In November, 1945, the International Council of Religious Education circulated a paper reporting on Youth for Christ. A summary of the points made is given here. (1) The movement claims to be inter-denominational but investigation shows it to be non-denominational. Ordinarily it does not have the official approval of the representatives of any of the regular denominational agencies in the local community. Many of the leaders criticize the regular denominational churches as

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1. Harold E. Fey, "What About Youth for Christ," Christian Century, Vol. LXII, No. 25, (June 20, 1945), pp. 729-731.

being unchristian in purpose and outlook. (2) The goals are very indefinite. The emphasis is upon evangelism of youth with the leaders expressing a desire to be of use as long as possible. (3) It is adult controlled with the young people merely sitting in as spectators. It has a strong emotional appeal. (4) The majority of people in the audience are adult rather than youth. (5) It is fundamentalistic in theology. (6) It is not reaching the unchurched youth. (7) It serves to warn traditional Christian groups that there are still millions of people unreached by the ineffective programs developed through the local churches. (8) There are three attitudes that the churches may take: first, openly oppose them but this is felt to be unwise; secondly, ignore them completely and such contributions as are made; and thirdly, the churches may analyze their own programs and see wherein they have failed to reach these people and seek to remedy the failure.¹

One of the severest criticisms that has been hurled at the Youth for Christ Movement was given by the Right Reverend C. Ashton Oldham, Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Albany, wherein he accused them of being Fascist in character, anti-Catholic, anti-Semitic, and anti-Negro. He also was quoted as saying that while ostensibly and superficially it looked like an earnest Christian movement, yet there was danger that young people might be drawn into an organization that is Fascist. This attack was vigorously denied by the leaders. The attack was seen to be false and was dropped quite quickly.² The Christian

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1. "Youth for Christ and Other Non-Denominational Youth Movements," a report prepared by The International Council of Religious Education.
2. "Youth for Christ Leader Denies Fascist Tinge," New York Herald Tribune, October 27, 1945.

Century, whose opinion of Youth for Christ was discussed above, came to the defense of Youth for Christ when this charge was published:

Some months ago the charge was widely circulated that the evangelistic campaign known as Youth for Christ was actually a cloak to cover the efforts of a group of fascist-minded business men to capture the mind of American young people for their own purpose. No evidence was offered to support the charge and it fell of its own weight. Recently an attempt was made to revive the charge. It has been based on the plan of Youth for Christ to start one of its weekly Saturday night meetings among the Negro churches of South Chicago. The cry of "Jimcrow Christianity" has been raised. Again it appears that the point is badly strained. Nobody claims that Negroes are not welcome at the downtown meetings of the organization. The movement is expanding and it is probably thought that a metropolitan area as large as Chicago can support more than one meeting. The Negro pastors and other sponsors of the south side enterprise have been astonished at the outcry. They reply that if this is "Jimcrow", then so are the meetings of their separate churches. The incident ought not to be allowed to obscure the real nature of the movement. Youth for Christ is a streamlined expression of a traditionally conservative type of revivalism. It is little concerned with the social or ethical bearing of the Christian faith. Because of that fact it may and probably will blunder into alliances with persons or groups which seek to exploit its mass appeal for other than religious purposes. When that occurs, it will be time to point out the danger of these alliances. But that has not happened yet, and until it does, name-calling by groups who have their own axes to grind should be dismissed as the unpleasant business it is.¹

An example of a denominational opinion and a more recent criticism was that published in the "Southwestern Advocate", a Methodist magazine. In it Youth for Christ is accused of being deceitful, disgusting, and cheap:

Each Saturday night these alledged Youth for Christ groups hold their own respective 'Hit Parades' of jazz hymns and listen to the exhortation to 'hit the trail back to religion.' In Dallas last week 300 people crowded their way in to a steaming-hot Salvation Army auditorium. Of this number not more than half could be classified as youth. . . . The program was planned and con-

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1. "Has Youth for Christ Gone Fascist," The Christian Century, Vol. LXII, No. 46, (November 14, 1945), pp. 1243-1244.

ducted by adults. And whether or not shouting, trombone playing, and 'swing' renditions of hymns are 'for Christ' is highly debatable.¹

Taken from all these sources it would seem, in summary, that the most common criticisms of Youth for Christ are: it is streamlined revivalism, strongly evangelistic and fundamental in theology; the goals are indefinite and the follow-up is vague; Christianity is cheapened by their methods; the social implications of the gospel are lacking; the movement is non-denominational and critical of the regular churches in many cases; it is adult dominated and program centered; and it does not reach the unchurched youth.

H. Summary

In this chapter a brief study has been made of the organization, Youth for Christ International, and its answer of mass evangelistic meetings for the problem of unchurched young people.

Consideration was given to the reason for the rise of Youth for Christ, the need for evangelization of young people around the world who are unreached through regular church channels. Next the history was taken up and an attempt made to unearth from the maze of youth organizations those which had contributed to the final formation of Youth for Christ. It was seen how the movement grew from scattered, unorganized, local youth meetings into the present organization that now exists in 1,450 towns across the United States and 550 rallies in fifty-four other nations.

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1. "Youth Movements Condemned as Shameful Shams by Methodists," The Southwestern Advocate, Vol. XCV, No. 8, (July 22, 1948), p. 5.

The organization of Youth for Christ was seen to be quite loose and serving mainly in an advisory capacity to the local rallies rather than attempting to dictate policy to them. The aims were discussed and the methods that were used in attaining these aims were noted. The program centers around the large, evangelistic mass meeting usually held on Saturday night. The Youth for Christ Magazine was seen to be an important promotional agency of the International organization. Much criticism has been brought forth from both denominational and inter-denominational sources regarding their method and program. Such a consideration has set forth the organization Youth for Christ International and has shown their answer to the problem of the unchurched youth of the world.

CHAPTER III

A COMPARISON OF YOUNG LIFE AND YOUTH FOR CHRIST

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To the average observer, Young Life and Youth for Christ seem to be very similar in their approach to the problem of reaching young people who are untouched by the program of the organized Church. In many aspects they are similar, but in others strikingly different. In this chapter a comparison will be made of these organizations noting their similarities and dissimilarities, and thereby ascertaining the emphases in their programs of evangelization of youth. The comparison will relate to the reasons for existence, histories, organizations, aims, program and methods, publications, and adverse criticisms of each organization.

A. Reasons for Existence

Both Young Life and Youth for Christ arose out of a deep sense of need and conviction. To understand their rise it is necessary to see them in the total religious and social context of the past decade. It was recognized and acknowledged by religious leaders that somewhere along the line the program of the organized Church had failed to attract and hold vast numbers of young people across the nation. The actual number of young people being ministered to by the church was steadily lowering while, at the same time, juvenile delinquency rose alarmingly. Both religious and social leaders were concerned and discussed the remedy for such a situation. Into this dilemma came these two extra-church organizations for youth, Young Life and Youth for Christ, with their answers.

Young Life seems to have arisen without conscious planning of ever organizing the movement into a national organization. Jim Rayburn turned from the spiritual lethargy of adults and began work with teen-agers. There was nothing spectacular in Young Life's appearance but the mere realization that the high schools of America constituted a vast mission field that was relatively untouched by the influence of the gospel. So, without show or ostentation, Young Life was organized to answer the challenge of the high school young people.

The leaders of Youth for Christ seem to have felt more of an eschatological urgency about their work among young people all over the world. They felt that the second World War was the beginning of the decay of the Twentieth Century and that the world is even now witnessing the last days. Therefore, they feel the need of getting the gospel to as many people as possible, and as quickly as possible, for they are working toward the "final, complete evangelism of the entire world."

And so, both Young Life and Youth for Christ arose during the past ten years, both ministering to the same age group, both extra-church and non-denominational, but with Young Life working within the environs of the high schools in America while Youth for Christ is world-wide in scope. Both have arisen that young people might be won for Christ.

B. Histories

In comparing the histories of Young Life and Youth for Christ it might be said to be comparing "the one and the many", for Young Life sprang from the vision of one man, Jim Rayburn, while Youth for Christ had roots in many youth organizations. They seem to have one common

root, however, for both trace some phase of their work back to the British Young Life. Young Life in America seems to be indebted to them for the name only, while Youth for Christ lists this organization as one of their important forerunners and feels that great contribution has been made to youth work in America by this British group.

Young Life was organized as a non-profit corporation in Texas in 1940. It was at this time that Jack Wyrzten was holding large youth rallies in New York City and receiving much publicity with his Word of Life Hour. It was his meetings that gave impetus to the formation of Youth for Christ. However, Youth for Christ was not organized into an International organization until 1945. During these years between the formations of the two organizations, Youth for Christ had spread very rapidly and colorfully, while Young Life had progressed more slowly and with deeper foundations being laid. When Youth for Christ was organized in 1945, it was reported that rallies were being held in five hundred cities in the United States. Young Life began with five staff members in 1940 and their work was mostly confined to the Southwest. In 1949, Youth for Christ reported groups in 1,450 cities in the United States and an additional 550 rallies in fifty-four other nations. Young Life, by 1949, had enlarged their staff to thirty-four members in addition to one hundred volunteer leaders who had caught the vision of going directly to the high school students in America. Young Life is now operative in seventeen states. And so it is seen that both organizations have grown; Young Life in a quiet and steady growth, and Youth for Christ in a great burst of growth at the first which then slowed down in America but spread to other countries.

C. Organizations

1. Leaders

Within the organization of Young Life a close, personal contact is maintained between the official board and the local club. Each member of the Young Life staff, from the Field Director down to each local leader, is considered an important part of the organization and has a voice in its functioning. The organization of Youth for Christ should probably not be called an "organization" but rather a "fellowship of like minds and faith." It has no jurisdiction over any local rally or any group of rallies anywhere in the world. Instead of a close, personal, directive oversight of its constituent groups, the Executive Council of Youth for Christ functions in an advisory capacity.

a. Official Boards

The Board of Directors of Young Life is composed of Christian business men who function only as the officials of the organization and do not, themselves, lead any of the Young Life clubs. In this way, they can stand aside and view the progress of the whole organization more objectively than were they, themselves, functioning as staff leaders. Because they are recognized leaders in the business world, they are capable of managing the financial affairs of the organization and keep it running smoothly. Many of the men who are now on the Board of Directors were among those who originally aided and encouraged Jim Rayburn to organize the movement. Thus they have grown with the organization and their insight and judgment is much appreciated by the staff.

The Executive Council of Youth for Christ is largely made up of men who are, themselves, leaders in the movement. Therefore, less

objectivity can be maintained than is the case with the Directors of Young Life. It is usually the prominent leaders from the metropolitan areas who are elected to this Council. The mere fact of size and numbers in the Youth for Christ movement negates any close supervision of the local rallies other than when advice is sought of the Executive Council. Policies that are passed upon by this Council are merely by way of suggestion and no effort is made to impose them upon the local groups. The movement has grown so rapidly with local groups springing up, some for a short time only and then dying out, others to become functioning groups, that any close contact between the overhead organization and the local group is practically impossible. However, it is difficult to see how any other condition could exist in the rapid spread of Youth for Christ.

Another important difference in the organizations of Young Life and Youth for Christ is the manner in which a local group becomes a part of the larger group. In Young Life the local club is started only through the official board, while in Youth for Christ some interested person begins a local rally and then applies to the official organization for admittance.

b. Staff Leaders

In both organizations the staff leaders are young people themselves. In Youth for Christ only men are the leaders, while Young Life uses both men and women on their staff. Two characteristics are given of the Young Life leaders; they know Christ and they know young people. The characteristics of Youth for Christ leaders, according to Mel Larson, are more descriptive: a pleasing personality; a happy Christian experience

and life; a sense of humor and courage to try the unique; vision and the faith to do what the vision tells him to do; good organizer, unfettered by denominational ties or insignificant differences between believers; men of prayer; and many times, musicians or leaders in sports.

Young Life leaders are trained for their job by the organization while Youth for Christ leaders are given no specialized training before they enter the organization.

Increasing use is being made in both Young Life and Youth for Christ of local lay leadership. In both organizations it became impossible to provide staff members for all the local groups. Lay leaders in Young Life are trained by staff members and are given specialized training in the methods of Young Life at the summer camp, Star Ranch. Here an intensive leadership training course is taught by Jim Rayburn and other trained leaders. In Youth for Christ, lay leaders are also used, but again, some interested lay leader gets the vision and contacts the organization, rather than the organization choosing and training the leader for the job. In many cases, this has been to the detriment of the movement, for criticisms have arisen because of the bizarre tactics of some of the local leaders. Youth for Christ leaders concede that this criticism is justified in many cases. However, in many cases the local leaders are sincere Christian lay leaders who have caught the vision of the Youth for Christ movement and desire to see the movement in their own localities.

2. Financial Policies

Both Young Life and Youth for Christ are incorporated as non-

profit organizations and supported entirely by voluntary contributions. In the case of Youth for Christ, the International organization is maintained by contributions from the local rallies, while in Young Life the financial aid comes, not so much from the young people who attend the meetings, as from interested Christian business men throughout America who have heard of this work.

3. Doctrinal Bases

Youth for Christ and Young Life have basically the same statements of faith. All leaders in both organizations must subscribe to their doctrinal platform. In their Doctrinal Bases are found the common points regarding the Scriptures, the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, and the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit. In their statements concerning Jesus Christ they both affirm His Virgin Birth, Deity, substitutionary death, the efficacy of His blood for the redemption of the world, His resurrection, and His Second Coming. To these, Youth for Christ adds the belief in His sinless life, the working of miracles, and His ascension.

In their statement concerning the Holy Spirit, Young Life says, "We believe in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the work of regeneration." Youth for Christ states their doctrine of the Holy Spirit in two points: "We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful men regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential; we believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life." In addition to the points held in common, Youth for Christ lists three more: a statement regarding the Trinity; "the resurrection of both the saved and the lost,

they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation"; and the spiritual unity of all believers.

It is seen that the tenets of Young Life are stated very simply while Youth for Christ is more dogmatic in explaining the meaning of their theological terminology.

D. Aims

The aims of Young Life and Youth for Christ were both drawn up by their official boards. In reversal of the above, where the tenets of faith were explained more fully by Youth for Christ, Young Life states more clearly what their aims are in regard to the young people they seek to reach. Youth for Christ states their aim in regard to the nurture of young Christians thus; "to emphasize radiant, victorious living", but fail to show the means by which this aim is to be realized. The corresponding aim in Young Life is, "to TEACH Christian young people to go on with the Lord and encourage Bible study, prayer, and a consistent Christian testimony." The two organizations have in common the two aims of saving young people and nurturing them in the Christian life. Youth for Christ lists two further objective. Their first objective as listed is "to promote and help Youth for Christ everywhere." Their second and third are the two that correspond to those of Young Life, and their fourth is, "to foster service international of youth through existing agencies." This last aim is rather vague as to meaning but seems to state that Youth for Christ hopes to direct young people who volunteer for missionary service in Youth for Christ meetings to existing missionary

agencies.

Young Life states as their primary purpose, "to present the gospel of Jesus Christ who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, to America's High School students." The Youth for Christ leaders feel that their primary job is "to rescue souls from the world of sin." Both of these are fundamentally the same aim but Young Life states it in a positive presentation of Jesus Christ to the young person, while Youth for Christ states it from the leader's viewpoint of rescuing youth from the world of sin. Both organizations are seen to be definitely evangelistic with their entire program geared to win young people to Christ.

E. Programs and Methods

1. Approaches

The problem of establishing the movements in a new locality is approached similarly by Young Life and Youth for Christ in that both are adult-initiated. Youth for Christ usually springs from someone who has seen its success in other places and wants to start a meeting in his community. He calls together those ministers and laymen whom he feels will be interested, they plan a program, and the youth are invited. If the rallies turn out to be successful, contact is usually established with the International organization. Similarly, Young Life is begun, in the majority of cases, by some interested Christian business men who have seen its effects in other high schools.

After initial steps, the approaches of Young Life and Youth for Christ differ. The Young Life organization is contacted and a

Young Life leader is appointed for the job. No plans are made and no meetings held until this leader has formed a small nucleus of leaders from among the young people themselves. This may take months, but, if so, months are used. While the approach was adult-initiated, the Young Life leader waits for the request for a "club" to come from the young people. Then they are used to plan the meetings and are made to feel that the success of their "club" lies with them. In Youth for Christ, the meeting is planned and all types of young people attend, both saved and unsaved. In Young Life, the approach is to the student body leaders in the high school, whether Christian or not, and through being "friends" with them the Young Life leader tries to win them to Christ and then through them reach the rest of the high school "crowd".

Youth for Christ is begun with young people themselves merely spectators in the audience. Although adult-initiated, Young Life is really begun through the planning of the young people who are "helped" to form a "club" by the Young Life leader who is their "friend."

2. Regular Meetings

Both Youth for Christ and Young Life utilize week-nights which are rarely used by the Church for the denominational youth meetings. Young Life usually uses either Monday or Saturday nights, while Youth for Christ rallies are always held on Saturday night. Realizing that young people are mass-minded, Youth for Christ reaches its young people through the medium of mass evangelistic meetings. Realizing that young people are also socially as well as religiously minded, Young Life works through the medium of the "club." Youth for Christ secures the largest

auditorium possible and plans the evangelistic rally around some dynamic personality. Young Life meets in the informality of a home where the young people are used to going and the speaker is, practically always, the Young Life leader.

a. Methods

The most important difference in Young Life and Youth for Christ lies in their actual methods in reaching young people. The methods of Young Life are those of the missionary. Because the group ministered to is much smaller than that of Youth for Christ, the leader usually knows his young people well. Also, the Young Life leader is trained in the methods of working with teen-age young people. The Youth for Christ leader has the disadvantage of working with large groups of young people where personal contact is practically impossible to maintain. On the whole, Youth for Christ leaders have not been trained for their job by their organization as have the Young Life leaders.

Young Life is aggressive in its methods. It goes to the young people. Youth for Christ plans a colorful program and invites the young people in. The Young Life meeting is short, never more than one hour in length. Youth for Christ meetings usually last two and one-half hours with everything timed to the last minute and all clicking off on schedule. The Young Life meeting is not so tightly planned. It is flexible enough to allow for the young people to inject what they are feeling or thinking. Young Life does not attempt to give the young people everything the first time they come but seeks to make it interesting and keep them coming back for more. The leaders of Youth for Christ are not so sure of the steady attendance of many young people

and feel that they must give the same type of evangelistic meeting each time. The Youth for Christ leaders admit that many of their methods are bizarre but feel that they are justifiably so. Their mass evangelistic meetings are characterized by spectacular numbers, colorful personalities, and lively music. The Young Life meetings are characterized by "unplanned planning". The young people are used in all the program except the twenty minute talk which is given by the leader in a quiet, conversational tone. Young people are used in the Youth for Christ meetings as ushers, and a few of the more outstanding are used each evening for testimonials or special musical numbers.

Young Life speaks the language of the high school youth. Youth for Christ adheres more closely to the trite vocabulary of conservative theology. In Youth for Christ, the invitation is to "come and be saved", while in Young Life it is to "close in with Christ".

Thus, both Young Life and Youth for Christ make use of the accepted appeals to young people. They both realize that young people, either temporarily or permanently, give prime allegiance to persons of their own age. Devotion to their group and desire to conform leads them to meetings where other young people go and where it is popular to go. Both Young Life and Youth for Christ utilize the idea that young people will come to such meetings in homes and public auditoriums on week nights that shy away from the Sunday church services. Youth for Christ recognizes that young people are ecumenically minded and that there is a place for mass meetings with adolescents. Young Life appeals to their social instinct in wanting to belong to a club. Young people are uncomfortable when their numbers are few. All during the

week they are accustomed to moving in large numbers in school, and so, if large numbers of their friends attend a religious meeting, they too can go and feel "one with the crowd".

Perhaps the chief difference in the methods of Young Life and Youth for Christ lies in the fact that Youth for Christ uses the large mass meeting, which is usually strikingly presented and built around a colorful personality, while Young Life works more quietly, eschewing publicity and working largely through personal contact, providing a warm, intense fellowship for those who attend. The one is mass evangelism, and the other is personal evangelism.

b. Message

The invitation to accept Christ as Saviour is central in the program of both Young Life and Youth for Christ and is that to which all else in the meetings leads. Young Life leaders feel that their job is to present the basic doctrines of personal salvation and Christian living in terms that young people can grasp. The message is always direct, simple and true to the Word of God. Youth for Christ stresses the fact that they give young people the "plain, unvarnished Gospel". The leaders are intensely serious about this and feel that the greatest need today is the plain presentation of the way of salvation and a call to repentance given in a message that is free from "modernism" and "higher criticism". Young people are urged to accept Christ and are told that Christ expects them to give up all known sin and to live Spirit-filled lives. In Youth for Christ, practically all messages revolve around getting the young people to accept Christ with little concrete help given as to how to maintain the Christian life, while in Young Life the

messages are divided or inclusive of the way of salvation plus practical helps on how to grow in the Christian faith.

c. Follow-up

The need for a thorough follow-up is recognized by both Young Life and Youth for Christ. The mere fact of numbers in the meetings makes the job of follow-up simpler for Young Life than for Youth for Christ. Young Life leaders usually know personally all the young people that attend their meetings, while in Youth for Christ many attend who may never be seen or heard from again. Another advantage of Young Life is that the leader can deal personally with each seeking young person and a bond is established between them. Adversely, in the Youth for Christ rallies hundreds may raise their hands signifying their desire for salvation and are ushered into the inquiry room where they are dealt with by selected personal workers. The young person who accepted Christ may have no opportunity to talk personally with the leader whose message was used to win him to Christ.

Young Life leaders feel that it is essential for young Christians to be led into definite habits of personal Bible study, prayer and witnessing, and so after they have accepted Christ the youth are invited to attend the smaller meetings where they are taught how to pray, read their Bibles, and grow in the Christian faith. They share answers to prayer and discoveries they have made in their Bible study and are mutually encouraged in their new life. In Youth for Christ, the leaders also feel the need for a follow-up and letters are sent out to each convert who signed a card at the rally signifying his acceptance of Christ, and also to the pastors of their choice. This contact is main-

tained mainly by correspondence until the convert has joined the church, whereupon he is considered under the care of the church.

Both Young Life and Youth for Christ make use of the Navigator's Bible Study Plan. Young Life has been commended for their excellent job of follow-up while this has been one of the severest criticisms of Youth for Christ. One of the most important developments in Youth for Christ is the attempt to strengthen this weakness through the organization of High School Bible Clubs which the leaders feel are the next frontier in this country. The similarity of this idea to that already utilized by Young Life is too obvious to be overlooked. It is quite safe to say that follow-up is one of Young Life's strongest points and one of the weakest in Youth for Christ.

3. Summer Programs

Youth for Christ has no definite summer program in the form of camps and conferences for their young people other than one that is run in connection with the annual conference for the leaders each summer. Instead, the Youth are encouraged to attend other conferences. The summer program is one of Young Life's strongest points for both young people and leaders alike. All summer long camp sessions are held at Star Ranch which draw young people from all over the States. This is usually the climax of the year's meetings and the spiritual "mountain-top" that carries them into the opening of the new school year full of enthusiasm to win other young people to Christ.

In the Annual Conference each summer, the leaders of Youth for Christ gather to look over the past year and receive training for

the coming year. This training is more in the form of the inspirational than that of actual method. Young Life also meets with its leaders each summer for an intensive leadership training institute held at Star Ranch. Here is a unique opportunity to study Young Life methods at first hand, in fellowship with other youth leaders and potential youth leaders under the guidance of experienced leaders.

4. Relation to the Church

Because Young Life and Youth for Christ are "extra-church" organizations, the criticism of both has been that they are competitors of the Church. They both deny this and constantly affirm that their main concern is young people who are not reached or ministered to by the regular channels of the church. Both organizations have faced the situation and issued statements regarding their relation to the organized church. The fact cannot be ignored that the majority of the leaders in both organizations are young ministers with many of them retaining their places of leadership in their own churches while working with these "extra-church" groups.

Both Young Life and Youth for Christ call themselves "inter-denominational" but the more descriptive term should probably be "non-denominational", for inter-denominational connotes several denominations working together in some common project, while non-denominational connotes an organization that works apart from the regular denominational channels, yet welcomes all denominations into its meetings.

It was seen that while many churches condemn these organizations, others feel that Young Life and Youth for Christ have reclaimed for them

young people that they were unable to reach through their regular church channels.

F. Publications

1. Descriptions

Both Young Life and Youth for Christ publish a monthly magazine. The titles utilize the organizational names, "Youth for Christ Magazine", and "Young Life Magazine". They were begun exactly one year apart, "Young Life" in March, 1944, and "Youth for Christ" in March, 1945. Youth for Christ had the advantage of taking over a magazine that had been published for a year previously. They thus began with a fair sized subscription list and an organized magazine. Young Life began their own magazine and the issues at first were approximately eight pages in length, and now average approximately twenty-six pages. Youth for Christ began with an average eighteen page magazine which now averages seventy pages in length. Were the titles removed, it would be difficult to distinguish between the two magazines from the outside, for they are approximately the same size and the cover pages similarly feature young people engaged in sports and obviously having a good time. Both are set up in two column print and the issues are sprinkled throughout with pictures which heighten the appeal.

2. Contents

The content is very similar in both magazines. The common features are: the reader's reactions, an editorial chat with the young people, a poet's page submitted by the young people, a section devoted

to jokes, news from the various groups, question and answer page, and news items about various leaders. Both include several articles each month and fiction, many of the stories being written by the young subscribers. In addition, Young Life features "Down to Business", daily Bible readings and comments, while Youth for Christ has the additional features of a "Photographic News Section", pictures of local rallies around the world, and "Pen Pals", where the young people write in seeking correspondents. Each magazine averages about four articles included in each issue. Comparatively speaking, little is written about the Young Life Campaign as such, but much space is taken up with meeting the problems that face young people today, while the majority of articles included in the "Youth for Christ Magazine" are written concerning some phase of Youth for Christ.

3. Appeals

The aims of the "Youth for Christ Magazine" are primarily to serve as a clearing house of information concerning the Youth for Christ movement and secondly, to meet the needs and interest of Christian young people. Most emphasis is given the first objective for practically everything in the magazine relates directly to the Youth for Christ movement. Little space is given to achieving their second objective other than as the interest of the young person is centered in Youth for Christ. "Youth for Christ Magazine" fulfills its purpose of disseminating the news of Youth for Christ throughout the world.

The "Young Life Magazine" has two aims also: to point unsaved young people to Christ, and to nurture young Christians in the faith.

Both of these are stressed each month through the editorials and the daily Bible readings. The articles, also, are all slanted to these aims and cover all phases of the young person's life. In the "Young Life Magazine" the Christian life is upheld as the successful life and the only true success for any young person. This is also upheld in the "Youth for Christ Magazine" but it is minimized by the promotional angle of Youth for Christ.

G. The Adverse Criticisms

On the whole, Young Life has received very little criticism, while Youth for Christ has received a great deal. The Young Life leaders were aware of only two articles that had been written in adverse criticism of their organization. However, there are a few others where Young Life is considered under the general subject of "extra-church organizations for youth" and where all such organizations are lumped together with little effort made to see their distinguishing characteristics. Their common criticisms are these: they are adult dominated and program centered; there is almost total absence of any awareness of the social implications of the message of Jesus Christ; there is lack of any definite tie-up with the churches of the community; there is much use of sensationalism to attract young people; and they do not reach unchurched young people but draw their constituents from the church youth.

In addition, Youth for Christ has received deeper criticisms such as being fascist in character and a shameful sham. They are also criticized as being extremely revivalistic, yet lacking in sinner contact, and of holding forth an "outdated" theology. It is felt by many

of their critics that Christianity is cheapened by their methods.

These criticisms of Young Life and Youth for Christ have arisen from both denominational and inter-denominational sources, from those who have studied the organizations carefully, and also from those who have observed it operating in one locality and have formed hasty conclusions that one local situation must be typical of the whole.

H. Summary

Because of the fact that Young Life and Youth for Christ are extra-church organizations for youth that appeared on the religious horizon at practically the same time, many people link them together in their thought and evaluation. In this chapter a comparison was made of the two organizations, noting their similarities and dissimilarities, and thereby ascertaining the emphases in their programs for the evangelization of young people.

It was seen that both Young Life and Youth for Christ arose during the past decade in answer to a deep sense of need and conviction. The need was seen in the great number of young people who were slipping through the fingers of the organized Church and the conviction was that something could be done about it. In their histories, it was noted that both arose around 1940 with Young Life being incorporated in that year, while Youth for Christ was not officially organized until 1945. Both have shown growth, but with Young Life it has been a slow and steady progress, while Youth for Christ began in a great burst of growth and later slowed down considerably. Young Life is confined to seventeen states in America while Youth for Christ is world-wide.

The organizations of the two movements were next discussed. It was noted that the organization of Young Life maintains a close, personal contact with all of its members, while Youth for Christ functions mainly in an advisory capacity. Both groups are entirely supported by voluntary contributions. Young Life and Youth for Christ have similar doctrinal bases to which all leaders must assent. They are both seen to be based on a conservative view of theology. The aims of both organizations were drawn up by their local boards. They share the common aims of evangelization and nurture of young people, while Youth for Christ has additional aims relating to the promotional angle of their movement and a statement of missionary purpose.

As to methods, both were seen to utilize week-nights for their meetings. Their messages are primarily evangelistic and presented quite differently. In Youth for Christ the medium is the large mass rally, while in Young Life the medium is a small "club". Youth for Christ has no planned summer program, while Young Life has a well-developed summer program for both leaders and young people. It has been said that because these are "extra-church" they are also "anti-church". But while both function aside from the church, the leaders assert that their primary aim is to reach those young people who are untouched by the ordinary channels of the church.

Next the magazines of the two organizations were discussed. They were seen to be quite similar in appearance and content, but the "Young Life Magazine" more geared to meeting the everyday needs of young people today, and "Youth for Christ Magazine" stressing the promotion of their organization. In noting their adverse criticisms it was seen

that they had many criticisms in common, but that Youth for Christ has been much more severely criticized than has Young Life.

Thus were the two organizations compared, and the striking difference in their method was discovered to be the method of personal evangelism, as seen in Young Life, as over against mass evangelism, as typified in Youth for Christ.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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A. Summary

It is felt by religious leaders that never before in history has there existed a more urgent need for an effective ministry among young people as in these past few years. If America is to remain a Christian nation, her young people must be Christianized. Religious and social leaders were awakened and alarmed as the wave of juvenile delinquency mounted steadily higher. At the same time, the number of young people being reached by the Church was lowering. Answers to the problem were sought and this study discussed one answer that was proffered, the organization of "extra-church" movements for youth. Two of these, Young Life and Youth for Christ, were studied as representative of such groups. The study was based upon a survey and comparison of their reasons for existence, histories, organizations, aims, programs and methods, publications, and adverse criticisms.

In the first chapter Young Life was discussed. It was noted that it originated from the vision of Jim Rayburn and is a mission to America's high school students. Young Life was incorporated in Texas in 1940, with a group of Christian business men as the Board of Directors. The organization was seen to be a closely knit unit with all members taking an active part in its functioning. All members must assent to the Statement of Faith as presented in the Constitution. Through informal, week-night clubs, in week-end conferences, and the

summer camps, it was seen that their program is geared to realize their aims of evangelization and nurture of the youth to whom they minister. The leaders were of the opinion that pagan young people were under no obligation to come to the church, but that they, as Christians, were obligated to take the gospel to them. They seek to do this through an aggressive campaign. They have capitalized on the social hunger of adolescents and work through the medium of "clubs." Thus was seen Young Life's answer to the challenge of the high school mission field.

The second chapter dealt with another extra-church organization, Youth for Christ. It was seen that the roots of Youth for Christ go back into many youth organizations that have worked outside the regular church channels. Starting with no central planning or coordination, Youth for Christ was seen to have sprung up simultaneously all over America. The various groups were organized into an international movement in 1945. However, it was noted that this organization exists mainly in an advisory capacity. Youth for Christ makes use of the fact that young people are mass-minded and so their entire evangelistic program hinges around the large Saturday evening rally where a colorful program is presented, followed by a straight gospel message, and an invitation to accept Christ as Saviour. It was seen that their follow-up with those who are converted in their meetings is weak and that much criticism has been given them by churches and pastors who feel that they are cutting across sounder programs of Christian Education.

To many people, and especially in the mind of those who are critical of the movements, Young Life and Youth for Christ are con-

sidered as similar and are evaluated as such. In the third chapter a comparison was made of Young Life and Youth for Christ noting their similarities and dissimilarities and ascertaining the peculiar emphases in each program. Both arose at practically the same time and included in their heritage at least one mutual youth movement, the British Young Life Campaign. It was seen that Young Life spread more slowly and sank deeper roots, while Youth for Christ exhibited a mushroom growth that is considered shallow by many critics. Their answers to the problem of unchurched youth were seen to be similar in so far as both organizations arose as evangelistic agencies. While they share common aims, general features, similar doctrinal statements based on a conservative theology, and have received many similar criticisms, their programs and methods were seen to be quite different. Young Life is based on the idea of a small "club" where close, personal contact is maintained between leader and young people, while Youth for Christ was seen to utilize the large evangelistic mass rally to convert the youth. Perhaps the chief difference lies in their philosophies of evangelism. Young Life emphasizes evangelism in its broader context of conversion and nurture, while Youth for Christ seems to limit it to the conversion experience.

B. Conclusions

It is too early in the histories of these organizations to evaluate properly their effectiveness, but they have now survived their infancy and are still growing. Young people today are seeking sympathetic response, recognition, and new experiences. This is one reason for the apparent success of these movements. They furnish an answer to

the strong desire for fellowship that is part of the very heart of youth. They present their clear-cut answer to man's need. Color, drama, and modern technological resources are effectively utilized by them. The search, by young people, for unity and close fellowship is partially met by such meetings as these where they go with their friends and no denominational barriers exist. Interest in large mass meetings seems to be growing, and it is increasingly clear that there is a place in the Christian nurture of youth for large gatherings if they are handled in accordance with sound Christian education principles.

No movement can survive apart from the good will and active cooperation of the Church. The most severe criticism made of extra-church organizations is that they fail to reach unchurched young people. This was seen to be more true of Youth for Christ than Young Life. However, the fact remains that this is their aim, to reach unchurched young people, and sometimes it is felt that much of this criticism comes from churches who themselves have tried for years to reach these same young people and have also failed.

Nevertheless, the fact is recognized that if extra-church organizations are to have lasting values, they must re-examine their relationship to the Church. They must make sure that they do not usurp the work of the Church but supplement it. Youth for Christ needs to take this under serious consideration, for this, and insufficient follow-up, seem to be their weakest points. It is felt that the latest move of Youth for Christ, that of sending teams of college students to Europe this coming summer to conduct open-air evangelistic meetings, shows great promise. Young people are being chosen with great care

and the project laid out in lines which indicate hope. Another favorable sign for Youth for Christ is their new emphasis on the establishment of High School Bible Clubs to supplement the work of the large rallies. Young Life continues their steady growth with new emphasis on trained leadership for the "clubs" in each community. Their summer program is being enlarged so that more youth may participate in their excellent camp program.

From the objective study of these extra-church organizations for youth, certain problems were presented that would be interesting bases for further study. One of these concerns the problem that is receiving much attention today, the separation of Church and State. In face of this, how are Young Life and Youth for Christ able to work through the high schools in their programs? Another question that presented itself is the possibility of incorporating the aims and enthusiasm of these organizations into regular church groups and challenging the young people of the church to reach those of their own age that are uninterested in the church. What is the possibility of using regular church channels to attain the same objectives? A third problem is the relation that a church and pastor should bear to these extra-church groups. Each pastor must face the issue and decide what the relation of his church is to be to these groups and to what extent he can encourage his youth to support them. It was not possible to pursue these problems at this time but such questions have been raised and would form a profitable study in the future.

As one looks at these two organizations and allows the gaze to penetrate through the apparent weaknesses and see them in the light

of what they are accomplishing for eternity, one senses the feeling of thankfulness overshadowing that of criticism, for if one young person has been brought to Christ, and all must admit that many have been, then there is cause for rejoicing. Peter made use of mass evangelism as he preached on the Day of Pentecost and three thousand responded.¹ Philip was driven by the Spirit to the desert to enlighten one man.² The spirit of Paul, the first great evangelist, is a fitting conclusion to this study, "I am become all things to all men, that I may be all means save some."³

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1. Acts 2.
2. Acts 8.
3. I Corinthians 9:22.

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