



**YMCA MISSION.ORG— HELPING LIFT UP THE “C” IN THE YMCA**

# **How to Start a Christian Emphasis Committee at your Branch**

**Expanded Version**

**[3.0]**



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## How to Start a Christian Emphasis Committee at your branch Outline

So you want to start a Christian Emphasis Committee at your Branch? How do you get started? Listed below is a quick action list of considerations. The rest of this packet expands some of the ideas on this quick list.

### Quick List

- Pray
- Consider your role based on whether you are YMCA staff, volunteer, or part of another Christian Organization.
- Know the cultural environment of your YMCA
- Find a staff advocate
- Pray – George Williams Initiative
- Know the best way to communicate the Mission in your environment
- Look for four other committed volunteers
- Review the Goals and Objectives of a Branch Christian Emphasis Committee
- Talk about practical ways to get started
- Build a core competency
  - *Building Displays*
    - *Signage*
    - *Scripture Bowl*
    - *Scripture Displays*
    - *Character Development signage*
    - *Prayer Request Box*
    - *Other*
  - *Events*
    - *Prayer Breakfast*
    - *Easter Sunrise Service*
    - *National Day of Prayer Event*
    - *Thanksgiving Event*
    - *Christmas Event*
  - *Small Groups*
    - *Bible Study*
    - *Felt Need Seminars – relationships, finance, leadership, parenting etc.*
- Look at the ***Growing Your Impact and Your Committee*** for ideas on how to grow your committee and ideas for next steps.
- Continue to Pray.

## **How to Start a Christian Emphasis Committee at your branch**

### **Descriptions**

#### **Pray**

Any spiritual movement that will have spiritual impact will be grounded in prayer. Seek God to the direction he is leading you and what your motives are for starting a YMCA Christian Emphasis Committee.

#### **Your Role**

Your role will vary based on whether you are a YMCA staff member, a YMCA volunteer or you have a position in another Christian organization that is trying to help the YMCA in the area of mission. If you are a staff member, you may start by speaking to other staff members and some key volunteers whom you may feel would have an interest. If you are a volunteer or a member of another Christian organization, you may meet with a couple of friends first and find out if they would be interested in helping you start the Committee. Then you could also seek out a key staff contact.

You do not have to be a YMCA member to advocate or help with the Christian mission. However, since members can have a lot of influence in setting YMCA direction, it would be good to have some people in the core that are actually members or volunteers.

#### **Know the Cultural Environment of your YMCA Branch or System**

The national YMCA Mission statement is “To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build spirit, mind, and body for all.” Most of the branches in the USA use this mission statement and do not create their own. If you can find this mission displayed somewhere at your branch or on literature, you have a great place to start the dialogue.

It is possible that you will not see this mission displayed, but you might find one of the secondary marketing slogans like “We build strong kids, strong families, and strong communities.” In these cases, you may have to ask a little further, if a branch has a mission committee or a staff person that has a role in working with the YMCA mission.

You might be able to call on the phone or ask at the desk if there is anyone on staff who has looked into Bible study programs or worked with churches in the community in partnership with the YMCA.

#### **Find a staff advocate**

The key to all of this is to find a staff advocate – someone on the staff who God has prepared to really embrace working together in lifting up the “C” in the YMCA. You may be the staff advocate. Or you may be the volunteer or member that is trying to find out who the key staff person may be.

This key staff person may be a full-time staff person, who wears one or many hats at the branch or it could even be a part-time staff person that works a few hours a week on a certain program area. When looking for a staff advocate, do not forget to ask about part-time employees who may have an interest in this area.

#### **Pray – The George Williams Initiative**

The YMCA was birthed when George Williams, 21, and two of his friends felt God led them to a strategy of praying by name for the other 150 members of their drapery firm in London. As he said in his diary; “it had a remarkable effect”. Soon a handful and then dozens of others

began to inquire about spiritual things, commit their lives to Christ, and want to be plugged into a Bible Study.

I would encourage you and the staff advocate to begin to pray for each YMCA staff person by name and that God would sensitize your heart to the right approach to advocate for a Christian Emphasis Committee.

### **Know the best way to communicate the Mission in your environment**

Once the staff advocate is found, you quickly begin to understand how to best approach developing the Christian Mission at your branch. A key to your success will be your willingness take the position of a servant to see the branch succeed at its goals while advocating for the YMCA mission. Too frequently, Christians are known for what they are against, not what they are for. One way to run the process into a ditch quick is to choose the wrong starting place. For sure “*ditch-runners*” are starting with things like – dress in classes – what music is played – whether yoga is a religion or not – what other groups meet at the branch and should they be allowed. Steer clear of such things initially.

A better heart attitude is to ask the question; “ how can we help this branch become successful, while beginning, to work on some Christian Mission goals.”

Here are some ways to start the mission dialogue with other YMCA staff or Board Members.

- Talk about what makes a great organization
- Share parts of the Christian Mission Booklet – The meaning of the Y Logo, George Williams Story
- Use the YMCA Mission Powerpoint as a historical perspective on the Mission (see [ymcamission.com](http://ymcamission.com) for a free copy)
- Share some success stories you have heard from other branches and how those successes really made the branch more successful.

### **Look for 4 -7 others to join the Committee.**

No matter what our enthusiasm is, we can never hope to have long term success if we are working alone. Like a log taken off the fire, our flame is easily blown out, or smolders. As a part of praying and vision casting, you need to be asking... asking other people that God lays on your heart or brings your way to be a part of what you are doing at the YMCA.

## **The Goals and Objectives of a Branch Christian Emphasis Committee (CEC)**

As you think about the role that your committee might play, here are some goals and objectives to consider as you get ready to sit down and get started.

The objective of the Christian Emphasis Committee is to help the branch implement the Christian Mission by:

- Developing and creating programs and initiatives that bring forth the Christian Mission
- Providing signage, scripture verses and other resources in the facility
- Integrating the Character Development initiative and the Christian Mission together
- Incorporating the Christian Mission into existing Y programs
- Helping staff integrate the Christian mission in their responsibility areas
- Helping develop leaders with character to serve more broadly within the YMCA
- Partnering with churches and Christian organizations for greater impact
- Participating in City- Wide Christian emphasis events with other branch CEC committees

## **Talk about practical ways to get started**

As you begin to meet, you need to decide in what ways do you think you can best get started. There are three categories that most ideas fall into at this stage: displays; events; small groups. Here are some ideas (explained in more detail later) that many branches have used to get started. They have sought to choose 1 or 2 things from each category and make it a core competency – that is something that is consistent and done well.

- *Building Displays*
  - *Scripture Bowl*
  - *Scripture Displays*
  - *Character Development signage*
  - *Prayer Request Box*
- *Events*
  - *Prayer Breakfast*
  - *Easter Sunrise Service*
  - *National Day of Prayer Event*
  - *Thanksgiving Event*
  - *Christmas Event*
- *Small Groups*
  - *Bible Study*
  - *Felt Need Seminars – relationships, finance, leadership, parenting etc.*



## **Benchmarks for Growing Your Christian Mission Impact**

*Putting Christian Principles into practice through programs that build spirit, mind and body for all. [www.ymcamission.org](http://www.ymcamission.org)*

In answering the question of how to develop a Christian Emphasis committee at my branch, there can only be one solid beginning point. PRAYER. Prayer is God's powerful mechanism that prepares hearts, opens doors, and releases resources.

A second key ingredient is WISDOM. The YMCA has a great Christian Heritage. Some locations this feels like a strong component. In other areas, it feels non-existent. As you pray, ask God for the wisdom of what next steps you might take to see the Christian Mission re-vitalized or strengthened at your branch.

You may have a grand vision for what you would like your YMCA to become, but be wise in how you implement the plan that God gives you so that you are successful in the long haul. As has been said, "Rome wasn't built in a day". Likewise you will need to pray and be patient as you take the incremental steps to success.

Below are some helpful thoughts as you think about developing the Christian emphasis at your branch. These categories below might help you get your hands around the process you are undertaking.

### **Level 1**

#### **Committee**

- Form a Christian emphasis committee of 4-7 people
  - Committee head is staff or volunteer
  - Committee works together on various projects
- Character development and Christian emphasis complimenting each other
- An annual plan written up for your committee

#### **Programming**

- Easter Initiative
- Thanksgiving Initiative
- Christmas Initiative
- At least 1 Bible study or recurring outreach a month
- Meet with other Branches in your area quarterly who are working on this.

#### **Facility**

- Christian emphasis signage – could be character related or scripture related
- Scripture verse bowl or cards
- Christian magazines or material provided as additional reading materials in work out area

#### **Staff**

- In gentle fashion build awareness of the importance of Christian mission
- Programming Budget \$500-\$2000

## LEVEL 2

All of Level 1 activities plus.

### Committee

- Christian emphasis committee of 5-7 people
  - Committee head is a volunteer and serves on board
  - Committee members take responsibility for a functional area: singles, professionals, kids,
- Character development and Christian emphasis considered almost the same

### Programming

- Valentine Initiative
- St. Patrick Initiative
- National Day of Prayer Initiative
- 3 Types of Bible Study or Outreaches a month for different groups
- Integrate a Christian emphasis component into 2 programs that are already taking place at the Y.
- 2 social gatherings annually for those who serve as volunteers in CEC at the various branches in your Metro area. January – Dinner & Prayer Kickoff, Fall – BBQ.
- Integrate Christian emphasis into community development
- 2 church or Christian ministry partnerships

### Facility

- Christian emphasis signage – more scripture references
- Character development sign that ties Christian and Character development together
- Christian resources on How to Know God personally, How to Grow in your faith.
- Prayer request box – must have a willing prayer network in place

### Staff

- Integrate more Christian mission emphasis into staff dialogue
- Staff Devotions
- Help staff that desire to provide better devotions
- Help staff assess ways to integrate Christian Mission into their programming areas.
- Work toward a staff having 25-40% of time dedicated toward Christian Emphasis
- Programming Budget \$2000-\$4000

### LEVEL 3

All of Level 1 and Level 2 activities plus.

#### Committee

- ❑ Christian emphasis committee of 8-12 people
  - Committee head is a volunteer and serves on board
  - Committee members take responsibility for a functional area: singles, professionals, kids,
  - New Leaders for the YMCA are constantly being developed
- ❑ Character development and Christian emphasis considered one and the same

#### Programming

- ❑ Mothers Day Initiative
- ❑ Fathers Day Initiative
- ❑ July 4<sup>th</sup> Initiative
- ❑ 5 Types of Bible Study or Outreaches a month for different groups
- ❑ Integrate a Christian emphasis component into 5 programs that are already taking place at the Y.
- ❑ A Christian growth curriculum for staff and members
- ❑ Annual showing of the Jesus Film
- ❑ Hosting a National Day of Prayer event
- ❑ 5 church or Christian ministry partnerships

#### Facility

- ❑ A chapel
- ❑ A resource library with Christian resources
- ❑ Facility Use Guidelines

#### Staff

- ❑ Help develop a ministry mindset amongst the staff
- ❑ Take the Lead in developing leaders on staff and in volunteers – character counts
- ❑ Evaluate staff on ways they integrate Christian Mission into their programming areas.
- ❑ Work toward a staff having 50-75% of time dedicated toward Christian Emphasis
- ❑ Programming budget \$5000+

**[appendix]**



## **MISSION- WHY IT IS IMPORTANT FOR A GREAT ORGANIZATION**

One of the challenges in a society that has become increasingly secular is for organizations that have a sense of Christian purpose or mission to keep their focus. In the books ***Built to Last*** and ***Good to Great***, authors Jim Collins and Jerry Porras emphasize two important concepts that should encourage YMCAs to stay true to their mission.

These books explore the deep reasons behind the long-term success of corporations and organizations. They ask the question, “*What makes the truly exceptional companies different from other companies- ones that have impact long term impact for the long haul?*” A key dynamic that they discovered is that: “***Great organizations know how to Preserve the Core and Stimulate Progress.***” They describe these two attributes in the following ways

### **Preserve the Core– (The Mission, Purpose and Values)**

- Provides continuity and stability
- Is a relatively fixed stake in the ground
- Guides (even limits) the possibilities and directions the company should consider

When an organization is clear on its core, it is taking care of its **unique essence** that makes it distinct from all other similar organizations. When an organization is clear on its **unique product or unique contribution** it is primed to make a big impact.

### **Stimulate Progress – (The goals, innovations, strategies)**

- Generates new directions, new methods, new strategies consistent with the core
- Generates movement toward goals, improvement, long term vision
- Generates new ideas and possibilities for the organization to impact

Having the core in focus in turn, allows goals, innovations, and strategies to be evaluated to see if they are in line with the core. Those things are chosen that strengthen and amplify the core essence. Other things are not chosen that dilute or weaken the core essence.

## **The YMCA Core**

The YMCA mission of: “***Putting Christian principles into practice through programs that build spirit, mind, and body for all***”, is a strong and clear mission statement. However there are actually 3 aspects to the mission statement- the core-

The Core - “To put Christian principles into practice ...”  
 The Action - “through programs that build spirit, mind and body...”  
 The Audience - “for all...”

The YMCA maintains its ability to become a great organization when it understands the core it is trying to nurture. The YMCA gets out of focus and begins to minimize its impact when action and audience become its primary focus and the core becomes secondary.



## **Being Effective in Implementing the Christian Mission**

*Putting Christian Principles into practice through programs that build spirit, mind and body for all. [www.ymcamission.org](http://www.ymcamission.org)*

Members of your committee need to keep several things in mind as they implement the mission of the YMCA.

- 1) The YMCA is a unique outreach environment it is not a church.
- 2) Each committee needs to consider how to be most strategic in seeing the mission implemented.
  - a. Where can you have the greatest impact for the time and financial investment?
  - b. What areas can be win-win areas for the staff, members and Christian emphasis initiatives?
  - c. What initiatives create good will versus ones that create a bad taste in people's mouths?
  - d. What things really make a relationship with Christ interesting to a seeker?
  - e. Think through any initiative and consider
    - i. How can I serve the people that I making the request of?
    - ii. How can I get their ownership?
    - iii. How can this approach be made appealing to them?
    - iv. What are 2 or 3 different ways to accomplish the goal?
    - v. Which would be most effective?
- 3) Character Development – In branches where the Christian Mission is not as enthusiastically embraced, some of the best opportunity comes from taking advantage of the Character Development initiative and rigorously defining the words, Caring, Honesty, Respect, & Responsibility, and how they are understood at your branch.

## **THE GEORGE WILLIAMS PRAYER INITIATIVE**

In 1841, George Williams arrived in London to work as a fabric manufacturer at the firm of Hitchcock and Rogers. Having recently begun to grow in his relationship with God, he was concerned about the spiritual condition of the 140 workers at his company. What he saw did not look good according to this journal entry.

“I found no means of spiritual interest of any kind,” He then quickly thought to himself ‘  
“What can I do for these young men? And he began to pray.

Shortly thereafter, he discovered that a fellow worker was an active Christian. They began to discuss something that God had put on George’s heart to help introduce the other staff to a relationship with God in Jesus Christ.

### **Praying for staff by name**

Their plan was simple. They prayed by name for each of their fellow employees and confidently expected them to become Christians.

Williams soon made this matter-of-fact entry in his diary:

“We met, our numbers grew, and the room was soon crammed. In answer to prayer, the Spirit of God was present, and we had conversion after conversion. Scores of employees and even the firm’s president, George Hitchcock, professed faith in Christ.

An observer of the spiritual activity at Hitchcock and Rogers commented that when Williams came to the firm in 1841, it was almost impossible for a young man there to be a Christian. By contrast, three years later, it was almost impossible to be anything else!

### **A spiritual movement is born**

Others became aware of the spiritual fervor at the fabric company and wondered why something like this should not be tried in other firms. In 1844, 12 men met in a small room and an organization was formed that would impact the world. The YMCA..

The YMCA as it initially grew, was a workplace prayer and outreach ministry that lovingly shared the message of Christ. It spread to several countries around the world and did not even have a building until 15 years after it’s initial founding- and this was to house a library and allow for Christian education.

### **George Williams Initiative**

The George Williams initiative is a call back to prayer– specifically praying for staff by name at least one time a month, beginning on the first Monday of the month.

### **How to get started**

Find one or two others who will meet with you for at least 30 minutes on the first Monday of every month to pray for staff by name. Register your prayer cell to be part of the nation-wide George Williams initiative at [www.ymcamission.org](http://www.ymcamission.org). Print off copies of this brochure and share with others to give them vision.

### **Commitment to First Mondays**

There are several ways you can approach this initiative. At a minimum, it is our desire to set aside the first Monday of every month to pray for staff by name. We believe there will be spiritual power and encouragement when YMCAs across the country are interceding on the

same day in this way. God may lead and guide you to pray more frequently than that or to other prayer ideas that you might carry on throughout the month.

### **What To Do**

There are several ways to approach praying for staff by name. The key to each of these approaches is to make sure that the staff persons name is spoken out loud in prayer. Not “Lord, please bless our staff”, but “Oh Lord, here are the staff we bring before you by name...”.

- Read out loud the list of names—This is simple and the least time consuming approach. Say Lord, here is our staff—read names—you know their needs today and we pray.....
- Pray for groups of names—Pray for groups of staff who have similar responsibilities and challenges. Again read out the names in that group and then pray for that needs that those staff members face.
- Pray for individual staff needs—This can be an informal process at first, praying for special needs you are aware of as they become known to the YMCA staff family. However, as God leads, you can let staff know a team is praying for them once a month by name, and if they have a particular prayer need to let you know.

If you have a prayer team, you can break into 3 teams of two people and each team can pray for 10-15 staff. Using this approach, you can pray for everyone and still be able to finish praying in 30 minutes if you have time constraints. Remember, you need to treat all prayer requests confidentially, that you know are private, and your team needs to be mature enough to know and understand this as well.



## **Christian Emphasis Committee Responsibilities**

Putting Christian Principles into practice through programs that build spirit, mind and body for all. [www.ymcamission.org](http://www.ymcamission.org)

The goal of the Christian Emphasis Committee is to continually renew and strengthen our Christian mission through programs and events that help build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

### **Specific Responsibilities of the Christian Emphasis Committee will include:**

1. *Praying and caring for YMCA staff, board members, and volunteers*
2. *Helping staff integrate the Christian mission in their responsibility areas.*
3. *Planning, developing, and organizing Christian Mission related events and programs*
4. *Integrating the Character Development initiative and the Christian Mission together.*
5. *Partnering with churches and Christian organizations for greater impact*
6. *Committing to attend one hour long meeting per month for one year.*
7. *Participating in two activities and functions that are planned by the committee.*
8. *Keeping the mission before the staff and the board*

### **General Responsibilities of ALL YMCA Standing Committees include:**

1. *Set goals consistent with the mission statement.*
2. *Make policy recommendations to the Board to achieve these goals.*
3. *Evaluate progress in meeting goals and implementing long range plans.*
4. *Develop familiarity with YMCA operations.*
5. *Utilize staff and community resources.*
6. *Recommend priorities to the Board.*
7. *Apprise Board of special needs.*
8. *Respond to staff proposals regarding the operation of the University City YMCA.*
9. *Monitor policy implementation.*
10. *Review pertinent budget provisions.*

### **General Responsibilities of all Committee Chairman**

1. *Sustain full and active committee membership with skills or interest in the assigned area.*
2. *Recommend potential members to the Board Chair for approval and appointment.*
3. *Report regularly to the Board of Managers.*
4. *Seek direction and policy approval from the Board.*
5. *Set meeting dates to assure timely reporting to the Board.*
6. *Prepare committee meeting agendas with appropriate staff.*
7. *Coordinate efforts with other committees.*
8. *Review and approve committee minutes before they are submitted to the Board.*
9. *Run committee meetings with the support of staff.*
10. *Amend the chart of work as necessary.*



## How to Have an Effective Planning Time

*Putting Christian Principles into practice through programs that build spirit, mind and body for all. [www.ymcamission.org](http://www.ymcamission.org)*

- 1) Compile a list of all on-going activities/events that you plan on doing in upcoming year
- 2) Add to the bottom new ideas being considered. (see Ideas & On-going events example)
- 3) Email out the list to members and ask for their comments or other ideas they would like to explore
- 4) Receive & Review feedback from members
- 5) Prepare for the planning meeting, by reviewing the pool of new ideas. Evaluate them by
  - which ones give most bang for the buck?
  - which would enhance a current event/activity?
  - which would be pioneering in a new area - usually this takes more effort, but is worth it for good ideas?
- 6) Convert Goals & Ideas into a Chart of work. This keeps you actively engaged in completing your goals.

## **IDEAS AND INNOVATIONS**

### **GENERAL AUDIENCE –**

- **MARTIN LUTHER KING BREAKFAST** - Annual MLK Jr. Prayer Breakfast on January 20, 2003. Over 800 people were in attendance, however the highlight of the morning came when we had two teens share briefly on the impact of MLK Jr. on their lives. It was clear that even though neither teen was born during that time, they were able to see the difference people can make by taking a stand in a non-violent manner. Partner with area churches to host an event.
- **MEANING OF EASTER** – Using “Resurrection Eggs” the meaning of Easter can be explained to individuals and groups of all ages. You can find this resource in most Christian bookstores or from [www.familylife.com](http://www.familylife.com) – go to on-line store.
- **NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER** - Every first Thursday in May, the National Day of prayer is celebrated across the country. Visit [www.nationaldayofprayer.org](http://www.nationaldayofprayer.org) for ideas and resources.
- **ANNUAL THANKSGIVING DINNER** - Our annual Thanksgiving Dinner. We partner with area churches and businesses to supply a meal for those in need. Create a partnership with your local organizations.
- **ANGEL TREE** - Branch Angel Tree: A Christmas tree will be placed in the lobby of the branch with Angel ornaments on for members to take and purchase as gift for the child identified on the ornament. Info- Prison Fellowship. [www.pfm.org](http://www.pfm.org)
- **OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD** - A special international Christmas outreach where U.S. citizens pack shoeboxes of love for children in needy countries across the world. Info [www.samaritanaspurse.org](http://www.samaritanaspurse.org) – click on Operation Christmas Child
- **HABITAT OUTREACH** - We started a new ministry called Habitat Outreach. Our branch built a habitat house; the Christian Emphasis Committee coordinated volunteers to go out the house everyday that they were working to share a devotion with the group and give them some questions to ponder and discuss over lunch. We also have volunteers who are going to continue to follow up with the family, build a relationship and share Christ's love with them.
- **LIFE HELP DISPLAY** - We purchased the Personal Development Display and Brochures. We have already received several compliments. These brochures deal with the topics of: Stress, Worry, Love, Relationships, Loneliness, Leadership. To learn more – visit [www.ymcamission.org](http://www.ymcamission.org) and [www.lifehelp.org](http://www.lifehelp.org).
- **YOGA – CHRISTIAN STYLE** – This unique approach to the stretching style of yoga, provides a Christian framework for considering the inner life. This is truly a revolutionary program. For more info. [vickih@duncan-parnell.com](mailto:vickih@duncan-parnell.com)
- **I'M GLAD YOU ASKED** – a series on tough questions people ask about faith and God. Learn more [www.searchnational.org](http://www.searchnational.org)

### **STAFF**

- **GEORGE WILLIAMS PRAYER INITIATIVE** – A national initiative, to pray for YMCA staff and board members by name the first Monday of every month. To participate and get more information, visit [www.ymcamission.org](http://www.ymcamission.org).

- LOVING OTHERS WELL – A monthly training curriculum that takes the life of Jesus and shows how he loved others. It is an interactive discussion on biblical truth. Based on Paul Millers Book, Love Walked Among Us.

## YOUTH

- MIDDLE SCHOOL MADNESS – A teen event put on in partnership with local church youth ministries. In collaboration with a local radio station and the YMCA we held an event which featured an outdoor music video presentation of the "Prodigal Son", guest speaker Derwin Gray (former Carolina Panther and founder of One Heart Ministries) gave a message. [Laurel.zitney@ymcacharlotte.org](mailto:Laurel.zitney@ymcacharlotte.org).
- COURAGEOUS KIDS OF CHARACTER - The Courageous Kids of Character was a partnership with a local church and provided a summer Bible school series for YMCA children. [tricia.griffin@ymcacharlotte.org](mailto:tricia.griffin@ymcacharlotte.org).
- BACK TO SCHOOL BACK PACKS - We had the "Backpack To School" bookbag drive. We collected 600 bookbags filled with supplies from members and local vendors. Work in partnership with local business.

## FAMILY

- A WEEKEND TO REMEMBER COUPLES CONFERENCE – For married and engaged couples this conference has been life changing. It is hosted around the country each year by Campus Crusades Family Ministry. Info – [www.familylife.com](http://www.familylife.com).
- PARENTING CONFERENCE – Speakers Ed and Gwen Diaz – share their expertise on how to survive and succeed in parenting teenagers well. Particular emphasis is answering the tough questions kids face about life and God. Info Gwen Diaz. Info - [zmbj@aol.com](mailto:zmbj@aol.com)
- HANNAHS HEART – This program particularly works with couples who are struggling with infertility issues. For more info on how to have this type of ministry contact [laurel.zitney@ymcacharlotte.org](mailto:laurel.zitney@ymcacharlotte.org)

## WORKING PROFESSIONALS

- PONDERA MAGAZINE DISPLAY – This outreach oriented magazine, points people to a relationship with God through interviews and conversations with leaders. They come out quarterly and are a great addition to YMCA magazine racks or in a separate display. For info [www.ponderalife.com](http://www.ponderalife.com)
- YMCA LEADERSHIP FORUM - The YMCA Leadership Forum is held monthly during breakfast and lunch. A local leader discusses the lessons he has learned about leadership and life. You can learn more about how to host such an event through [www.ymcamission.org](http://www.ymcamission.org), [impact@ymcacharlotte.org](mailto:impact@ymcacharlotte.org);
- LIFE FOCUS SERIES – A set of 7 packaged studies that deal with workplace themes of success, priorities, professionalism, balance. Can be done in a series. More info and order product [www.priorityassociates.org](http://www.priorityassociates.org).
- LIFE AT WORK – A two time a month gathering for believers in the workplace that want to integrate faith and work. Deals with 7 Key Areas of Professional Growth ® - Purpose, Character, Balance, Influence, Professionalism, Calling, Cultural Change. For more info [cseibert@priorityassociates.org](mailto:cseibert@priorityassociates.org).
- PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT - In collaboration with a local Community College we will be starting Pathways to Employment, a job training program. This is a program

designed to prepare students to enter the workforce as skilled employees. Partner with a local college. Info [tricia.griffin@ymcacharlotte.org](mailto:tricia.griffin@ymcacharlotte.org)

### **SPECIAL AUDIENCES**

- **SINGLES EVENTS** – There are a variety of singles events and activities that have been developed over time and packaged into a “How to” manual. For information on how to get this resource [impact@ymcacharlotte.org](mailto:impact@ymcacharlotte.org)
- **WOMEN UNDER CONSTRUCTION** - We have started a new Women's Bible Study on Tuesday evenings entitled Women Under Construction. 25 individuals attending the first night.
- **PASTOR PACKAGE** - We are working on a pastor package that would include some free stuff and incentives to come to our YMCA. The idea is that a YMCA patron that is a member of a church would get the "Pastor Package" and then give it to their pastor as a gift. The intent of the package is to get a member of a church in front of their pastor to build a stronger relationship between pastor and church goer (or non church goer). Brainstorm with local church member or churches.
- **WILLOW CREEK LEADERS SUMMIT** – Take key leaders from your association to the Christian Leadership Summit in Chicago, Illinois. This has been a great catalyst for vision and growth.
- **LEADERSHIP TRAINING SERIES**- Always a positive, there are different approaches to doing 3-4 week leadership series. Contact [impact@ymcacharlotte.org](mailto:impact@ymcacharlotte.org) for more info.

## **SAMPLE - CHRISTIAN EMPHASIS COMMITTEE PLANNING TIME**

Prayer

Review of Mission

Interactive Discussion

    Role of Christian Emphasis Committee

    Current activities

    Benchmark Document

    Organizing our committee

Action steps

## **REFLECTIONS SHEET**

What words or phrases most resonate with you in regards to the Y Mission ?

What area of CEC responsibility most resonates with you ?

What new or existing event or activity most captures your imagination and passion ?

What do we want to add – see calendar planning sheet

Who will be the primary person responsible ?



## **Christian Emphasis Committee – Chart of Work New Ideas**

*Putting Christian Principles into practice through programs that build spirit, mind and body for all. [www.ymcamission.org](http://www.ymcamission.org)*

### **Christian Emphasis Committee – Chart of Work New Ideas**

This is a very simple example of a way to be organized at annual planning time as a Chart of Work is created for an upcoming year. The top part of this sample document lists the items that are on-going and that the committee would want to maintain or improve going forward.

The New Idea area is a sample list of new ideas that the committee would want to discuss during their annual planning time as items they may want to incorporate into their plans and chart of work in the year ahead.

#### **On Going**

- Signage
- Scripture Bowl
- Staff Bible Study
- Marketplace Bible Study
- Women's Bible Study
- Daily Devotional (Utmost for His Highest)
- Prayer Request Box/Signage

#### **New Ideas/Projects** – to be placed in Chart of Work

- Improve staff relations/Invite Program Directors to CEC Meetings
- Put literature in fitness areas and locker rooms (Focus on Family, Christian Woman, FCA Mag., New Man, Bibles, Dunamis, Jesus Video for adults and youth)--Harris Y a good resource
- Improve Chapel resources/Check-out system
- Develop partnership with churches
- Improve Communications to churches/email database (Refer to Magazine listing & National Day of Prayer contacts)
- CEC Members as a resource for staff/programs
- New Member Orientation concept--how to actively live the "C"
- Evening Women's Bible Study
- Weekly early-A.M.. Community Bible Study
- Leadership Forum--4-6 times per year
- Back to School Prayer Event
- Christian Concert Series



## **Christian Emphasis Committee – Sample Chart of Work**

This sample chart of work is helpful to get a good sense of the planning required to execute the ideas of the Branch Christian Emphasis Committee during the year. You can see both the forward looking aspect of the chart, where things are being planned for 3 to 6 months in advance. You can also see that time is left for review on events or initiatives that had been recently completed.

### **January**

- Prepare for St. Valentine's Day Project
- Easter Project Tentative Planning
- Workplace Bibles Study Update –
- Women's Bible Study Update
- Metro CEC Kickoff Prayer Event Review
- Operation Christmas Child Evaluation
- Angel Tree Evaluation
- 

### **February**

- St. Valentine's Day Project
- Draft Plan for Easter Project (April)
- Workplace Bibles Study Update –
- Women's Bible Study Update
- National Day of Prayer Tentative Planning (May)
- Community Prayer Breakfast Plans Update (April)

### **March**

- St. Valentine's Day Evaluation
- Community Prayer Breakfast Plans Update (April)
- National Day of Prayer Update (May)
- Workplace Bibles Study Update –
- Women's Bible Study Update

### **April**

- Finalize Easter Project Plans
- Community Prayer Breakfast Update
- Association CEC Meeting
- Religious Event Planning
- Workplace Bibles Study Update
- Women's Bible Study Update

### **May**

- National Day of Prayer (May 4, 2000)
- Workplace Bibles Study Update
- Women's Bible Study Update
- *Mother's Day Project*

## **June**

- Begin Promotions for Backpack Program
- National Day of Prayer Evaluation
- Women's Monthly Bible Study Update
- Association CEC Meeting
- Workplace Bibles Study Update
- Women's Bible Study Update
- *Mother's Day Evaluation*
- *Father's Day Project*

## **July**

- Continue Promotions for Backpack Program
- Workplace Bibles Study Update
- Women's Bible Study Update
- *Father's Day Evaluation*

## **August**

- Collect and Distribute Backpacks
- Workplace Bibles Study Update
- Women's Monthly Bible Study Update

## **September**

- Thanksgiving Project Planning
- Backpack Program Evaluation
- Workplace Bibles Study Update
- Women's Monthly Bible Study Update

## **October**

- Angel Tree Planning
- Operation Christmas Child Planning
- Thanksgiving Project Planning
- Workplace Bibles Study Update

## **November**

- Thanksgiving Project Final Planning
- Angel Tree Update
- Operation Christmas Child Update
- Workplace Bibles Study Update
- Women's Monthly Bible Study Update
- Committee Recruitment
- *Annual Committee Planning Session*

## **December**

- Thanksgiving Project Evaluation
- Operation Christmas Child Update
- Angel Tree Update
- Metro CEC Kickoff Prayer 2002 Planning
- Workplace Bibles Study Update



## **Christian Emphasis Committee Members - Roles and Responsibilities**

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### **Christian Emphasis Committee Leadership**

The role of the Chairman and Staff Representative are critical for the overall success of the Christian Emphasis Committee. In many ways, the two roles resemble the relationship of a “hands- on” CEO and COO working together as servant leaders for their company. They are both servants and champions of the cause.

#### **NOTE:**

- 1) The Chairman and staff representative have similar skills needed for their positions, but their responsibilities require different levels of strength in those skill sets.
- 2) Because the Chairman and Branch Rep should work as a team some of the responsibilities might be able to be shared or shifted to the other person. If this is done, it needs to be clearly understood and communicated who is responsible for what.

### **Chairman – Volunteer – Where The Buck Starts**

**Skills Needed** – (1) Leadership, (2) Exhortation, (3) Administration

#### **Responsibilities:**

- Clearly articulate the YMCA Christian Mission
- Lead the CMT to define vision and goals annually
- Exercise wisdom and guidance on timing of goals and implementation
- Advise the YMCA staff representative on how to implement the goals
- Review CMT progress on goals
- Advocate for CMT Initiatives with the YMCA Board (ideally serves on the Board)
- Build relationship with branch leadership
- Recruit other volunteers to serve on the CMT
- Encourage all CMT members to attend Metro-wide CMT initiatives

### **YMCA Staff Representatives – Where The Buck Stops**

**Skills Needed** – (1) Administration, (2) Exhortation, (3) Leadership

**Responsibilities:** - One staff Leader and one staff administrator

- Record and publish the Annual Goals
- Create a chart of work using the goals and a calendar
- Manage the process of quarterly goal review
- Establish the annual meeting calendar
- Manage the contact information that comes from CMT events
- Oversees the cultivation of those who express interest in serving on the CMT
- Build good relationship with branch staff; particularly branch leadership
- Create Win-Win opportunities with other branch areas
- Advise the CMT where Christian Emphasis might be added to already existing YMCA events.
- Work with the METRO Christian Focus Coordinator on coordination of larger events

### **Chairman – Retired**

- Advise the CMT as required
- Advocate for the CMT with board members

## **CHRISTIAN MISSION TEAM**

### **Prayer**

Skills: heart for prayer, heart for people, administration, sharing the gospel

Responsibilities:

- Coordinate prayer for staff
- Coordinate prayer for member requests
- Host prayer events or seminars
- Administrate prayer network

### **Character Development**

Skills: communication, teaching, creativity

Responsibilities:

- Develop ways to synthesize character development with the Christian Mission
- Work with the Facility Signage person
- Work with other team leaders
- Work with Character Development and Communication coordinator

### **Facility / Signage**

Skills: creativity, people skills, wisdom

Responsibilities:

- Maintain the Christian Mission statement area
- Maintain the Christian Mission Bulletin Board
- Maintain Christian Literature distribution
- Develop and Maintain the chapel and library area.
- Coordinate the scripture bowls
- Coordinate the development and rotation of scripture verse displays
- Work with Character Development and Communication coordinator

### **Communication / Marketing**

Skills: creativity, marketing, people skills, wisdom

Responsibilities:

- Communicate to Y staff and members of CMT events & programs
- Communicate to the community about YMCA events
- Coordinate seasonal displays at Easter, Mothers Day, Fathers Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas.
- Work closely with Facility / Signage coordinator

### **Large Group Events**

Skills: Administration, Leadership, Communication

Responsibilities:

- Coordinate Large Group Events
- Develop a team and responsibility areas to help facilitate the event
- Work closely with the follow-up coordinator to have effective response with those who attend

### **Follow-Up**

Skills: wisdom, knowledge of basic follow-up, heart for people, administration, mercy, exhortation

Responsibilities:

- Coordinate follow-up contact with members who attend events
- Lead small group discussions on basic biblical beliefs
- Meet one on one with people where needed
- Manage the follow-up process

### **Specialty Areas**

Skills: creativity, people skills, wisdom, administration, time management

- *Business Professionals*
- *Men*
- *Women*
- *Singles*
- *Seniors*
- *Teenagers*
- *Children*



## **Character Development – Word Definitions**

Putting Christian Principles into practice through programs that build spirit, mind and body for all. [www.ymcamission.org](http://www.ymcamission.org)

### **CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT WORD DEFINITIONS**

#### **SHORT DEFINITIONS**

- **Caring** – to put others before yourself
- **Honesty** – to tell the truth
- **Respect** – to treat others as you would have them treat you
- **Responsibility** – to do what you should
- **Faith** – to trust God

#### **LONG DEFINITIONS**

- **Caring** – to put others before yourself, to love others, to be sensitive to the well-being of others, to help others.
- **Honesty** – to tell the truth, to act in such a way that you are worthy of trust, to have integrity, to make sure your choices match up with your values
- **Respect** – to treat others as you would have them treat you, to value the worth of every person including yourself, to be cordial even if you disagree with someone
- **Responsibility** – to do what you should, to do what is right, to be accountable for your behavior and obligations.
- **Faith** – to develop your relationship with God, to be a seeker of truth, to trust God with your life, to be sure of what you hope for and certain of what you do not see.



## **Character Development – What the Words Mean Display**

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### **CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT – POSSIBLE WALL DISPLAY**

#### **CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT- WHAT DOES IT MEAN ?**

**CARING – Represented by the color RED for love and the heart.**

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and love (**CARE** for) your neighbor as yourself. - Luke 10:27.

–

**HONESTY - Represented by the color BLUE for true blue truthfulness.**

Better to be poor and **HONEST** than rich and dishonest. No one believes a liar, but everyone respects the words of an **HONEST** man. - Proverbs 19:1, 21:28.

–

**RESPECT – Represented by GOLD for the golden rule.**

Treat people the same way you want them to treat you. Show proper **RESPECT** to everyone. - Matthew 7:12, 1 Peter 2:17.

–

**RESPONSIBILITY - Represented by GREEN for our fiscal and environmental responsibilities.**

Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, for each one should carry (be **RESPONSIBLE** for) his own load. - Galatians 6:4-5.

–

**FAITH – Represented by the color PURPLE for the Kingdom of God.**

And without **FAITH** it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. – Hebrews 11:6.



## **Character Development – Scripture Verses**

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**Verses to integrate into monthly & quarterly Character Development themes to support the permanent verses on the “Character Development – What does it Mean?” Board.**

### **CARING**

- Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. – Philippians 2:3
- "Anyone who takes care of a little child like this is caring for me! And whoever cares for me is caring for God who sent me. Your care for others is the measure of your greatness. - Luke 9:48
- It is good when you truly obey our Lord's command, "You must love and help your neighbors just as much as you love and take care of yourself. - James 2:8
- Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. – Ephesians 4:32.

### **HONESTY**

- It is a wonderful heritage to have an honest father. - Proverbs 20:7
- Better to be poor and honest than rich and a cheater. – Proverbs 28:6
- An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips – Proverbs 24:26
- As God's messenger I give each of you God's warning: Be honest in your estimate of yourselves, measuring your value by how much faith God has given you. - Romans 12:3
- Love delights in the truth. – 1 Corinthians 13:6
- Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-think about such things. - Philippians 4:8-9
- The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful – Proverbs 12:22

### **RESPECT**

- Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.- Romans 12:10

- Have two goals: wisdom-that is, knowing and doing right-and common sense. Don't let them slip away, for they fill you with living energy and bring you honor and respect. - Proverbs 3:21-22
- Do to others as you would have them do to you – Luke 6:31.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

- Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and does not do it sins. - James 4:17
- If a man will not work, he shall not eat. - 2 Thessalonians 3:10
- The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. - 1 Corinthians 3:8
- This is what the Lord says: “Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed.” Isaiah 56:1

### **FAITH**

- Do not lean on your own understanding, but in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight. – Proverbs 3:4-5
- For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever shall believe in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. – John 3:16
- Since we have such a huge crowd of men of faith watching us from the grandstands, let us strip off anything that slows us down or holds us back, and especially those sins that wrap themselves so tightly around our feet and trip us up; and let us run with patience the particular race that God has set before us. - Hebrews 12:1



## **Reflections on keeping Character Values Strong**

*Putting Christian Principles into practice through programs that build spirit, mind and body for all. [www.ymcamission.org](http://www.ymcamission.org)*

The Character Values of Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility are made strong when they are anchored in a biblical framework and Christian understanding. By detaching the four Character Values from the Christian Mission that brings them meaning opens them up to be interpreted in different ways.

This is particularly true when the new highest value of society is the “new tolerance” and when the philosophy of the “new” tolerance has become the highest value of an organization. The “new” tolerance can sometimes be rather intolerant and demand that all other values submit to it. This in turn has the effect of either formally or informally changing the meaning of the YMCA character development values. To keep the mission strong and the Character Values robust we must at least be aware of this potential. Consider these examples.

- Example – Biblical Respect means – to be kind or pleasant even if you disagree with the person or their choices. Respect redefined means – you must accept me, my lifestyle and my choices as equally as valid as yours.
- Example – Biblical Caring means - to show compassion on others and to care for them and confront them when needed. Caring redefined means – accept me, care for me, but don't tell me anything I do not want to hear. In other words keep it to yourself if you do not agree with my moral choices that may have gotten me into this mess.
- Example – Biblical Responsibility means – to live up to an objective standard or moral code like hard work, sacrifice, moral purity, honor, etc.. Responsibility redefined means- to live up to my own moral code on what I define as hard work, sacrifice, moral purity, honor, etc..
- Example – Biblical Honesty means – to be honest in our dealings, to have an honest assessment of ourselves, to speak the truth to others in love. Honesty redefined means – to be honest as best I can but if the cause is worthy the rules can be bent or broken, I will define what honesty means to me, and since there is no objective standard don't you pretend to have any truth for my life.

Frequently, people will say that each of these attributes are common among all the worlds religions and that is what will define them. Yes these themes are there in most world religions, but they are not necessarily defined with the same rigor in each case. So just be aware of this.

We hope that the four character values (the 5<sup>th</sup> being Faith in some associations) are inspiring and give people a standard to strive for and live up to. We maintain this possibility by constantly defining them and challenging people to live up to them. And we need to confidently know they are indeed rooted in Christian principles that when they are put into practice build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

## **PHILOSOPHY BEHIND YMCA LIBRARY RESOURCES**

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The YMCA is in a unique position to provide Christian materials and resources to members that would not normally have exposure to such materials and resources.

In order to be most effective the following considerations should be thought through:

- Some of the resources should be free to maximize a members access to the message of Christ.
  - There would be enough titles and variety that the resources would be appealing to a wide variety of people, but not so many titles that we dilute the impact that the library can have.
  - Might want to highlight a book of the week on a special stand.
  - Might want to have an area that the book can be looked over a sitting area.
  - Might want to devise some self serve check out system for resources.
  - Someone should be designated as the point person to weekly straighten up the bookshelf and the resources and to remove any books that have been added.
  - Remember goal is not to have tons of books, but ones that will help bring the greatest impact. Occasionally, members may suggest a book to be added which a point person might want to consider and add the title to the library list. There also be times that people will put books on the shelf that are either old, outdated or contrary to the gospel of Christ. It would seem prudent to keep a list of the resources that should be in the library and make sure that inappropriate material is not finding its way in.
-

## **RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR A YMCA CHAPEL**

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### **Give Away Resources**

#### Books

- (25) More Than a Carpenter
- (25) Mere Christianity
- (25) Most Important Investment and/or The Search
- (25) Life Skills Magazine
- (20) The Message of Hope – Gospel of John
- (Unlimited) Life Action Sheets – To be designed.

#### Other Magazines

These can be used in the workout areas and then retired for use in the library or to be given away as free resources after the new month comes.

- Brio, Break Away, Plugged In, Citizen, Success Factors

### **Permanent Resources**

#### Videos

- (5) Jesus Film
- (2) Knowing Jesus

#### Devotional Books

- God's Little Devotional Book
- Life Walk – By Bruce Wilkinson
- Streams in the Desert – L.B. Cowan
- My Utmost for His Highest – Oswald Chambers

#### Books on God & Bible

- Letters to a Skeptic – Greg Boyd
- Answers to Tough Questions – Josh McDowell
- The God You Are Looking For - Bill Hybels
- The Case for Christ - Lee Strobel
- Guide to God by Bruce and Stan
- Guide to Bible by Bruce and Stan
- I'm Glad You Asked – Ken Boa
- 30 Days to Understand the Bible– Max Anders
- 25 Questions Skeptics Ask

#### Bibles

- Life Application Bible – NIV
- One Year Bible – TLB
- The Message

#### Books on Life Issues

- Boundaries – Henry Cloud & John Townsend
- Triumphant Marriage – Niel Clark Warren
- Language of Love – Gary Smalley
- Finding the Love of Your Life – Neil Clark Warren
- Do Not Lose Hope - Dave & Ann Dravecky's
- Jesus I Never Knew – Phillip Yancey
- What's So Amazing About Grace- Phillip Yancey;
- Grace Awakening – Chuck Swindoll
- Parenting isn't for Cowards – James Dobson
- Too Busy to Pray – Bill Hybels
- Why you Do What you Do – Bobb Biehl
- HalfTime – Bob Buford
- Beauty and the Best – Debra Evans
- The Ragamuffin Gospel- Brennan Manning
- Chronicles of Narnia – C.S.Lewis
- Christian Workers Handbook – Billy Graham
- The Heritage – Otis Ledbetter
- Your Finances in Changing Times – Larry Burkett

# ***A Brief History of the Mission of the YMCA***



## **Dedication**

*This booklet is dedicated to the men and women that serve on the Christian Emphasis Committees of the local branches of the YMCA.*

*Thank you for helping strengthen the mission of the YMCA.*

[www.ymcamission.org](http://www.ymcamission.org)

## **The YMCA's Stated Mission**

*To put Christian Principles into practice through programs that build Spirit, Mind, and Body for all.*

## **The Christian Emphasis Committee's Co-Mission**

*Acknowledging the Christian Principles upon which the YMCA was founded,*

*The Branch Christian Emphasis Committee helps create opportunities for members, volunteers and staff to reach their potential as children of God through the lifting up of Jesus Christ and our Christian Mission.*

# The History of the YMCA's Mission

A great place to start when getting involved with any organization or corporation is to find out why the organization was begun. This is particularly true in regards to service and ministry organizations because they are born out of a sense of meeting peoples' needs. In this area of meeting needs, the YMCA has a rich history and a clear sense of purpose.

## How the YMCA was founded

Sir George Williams was born in a farmhouse in southern England in 1821. He was brought up in the Church of England. However, when young George arrived in the city to become an assistant drapers apprentice, he found his faith lacking. He managed to find a few young workers who, by their example, encouraged him to give his own life more completely to Jesus Christ. On June 4, 1844, twelve men, led by George Williams, founded the Young Men's Christian Association, and thus the YMCA was born.

## The original Mission Statement

*"The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) seeks to unite those young men, who regarding Jesus Christ as their God and Savior, according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to be His disciples in their faith and in their life, and to associate their efforts for the extension of His Kingdom amongst young men.*

It was also decreed at this time that differences of opinion on other matters, however important, should not interfere.

## How the YMCA came to the United States

Around 1850, Thomas Sullivan of Boston was organizing groups to pass out pamphlets that explained the message of God's love in Jesus Christ. From his journal in 1851 we read this,

*“In October of 1851, I read this newspaper account of this new organization in London that had been formed for young men who had pledged their lives to Jesus Christ and needed a wholesome alternative to life on the street. I thought this would fit my young men just fine. So I traveled to London to visit the YMCA, and upon my return summoned together other concerned Christian leaders to consider establishing a YMCA in order that these young men be nurtured in their Christian faith. We agreed to start the first YMCA in the United States.”*

By 1855, there were 24 YMCAs across the United States from New York to San Francisco and from New Orleans to Detroit and Washington DC. The first national meeting was held in New York, forming a voluntary association of YMCA's in the U.S. and Canada.

None of these YMCAs had buildings at the time- they were simply organized groups that reached out and disciplined young men. It was not until 1859 that the first YMCA building was built in Baltimore, Maryland.

### How the Y has always tried to reach out to specific needs

Each local organization tailored the programs to the needs of the communities it served.

- *To Soldiers In the Civil War, they ministered near the lines, in camps, hospitals and prisons.*
- *To miners in Pennsylvania*
- *To lumberjacks in Wisconsin*
- *To railroad workers and passengers in train stations*
- *To soldiers in WWI and WWII, they provided physical, emotional and spiritual care*
- *To High Risk kids, they developed a National mini-bike program.*

## How strong leadership helped continue the Mission into the mid 1900s

John Mott was one of the most effective National Presidents of the YMCA and oversaw the YMCA-USA during the early to mid 1900s. His leadership role began in the U.S. in 1915 and continued both in the U.S. and internationally through the mid 1940s. He was such a Christian statesman for the YMCA that he was asked to serve as the Secretary of State for a U.S. President. He declined this position saying, "I feel like I could do more good through the YMCA." His work through the YMCA eventually led him to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

Through John Mott's vision for reaching out to people with the love and message of Jesus Christ, the YMCA was greatly strengthened. Much of the international expansion of the YMCA occurred as a result of his vision as President of the YMCA-USA . Here are his thoughts on how to keep the YMCA a vital organization:

*"If the Young Men's Christian Association is to increase its spiritual vitality and fruitfulness, it must maintain at all costs its distinctively Christian, pronouncedly evangelistic, and aggressively missionary character. This is tantamount to saying that it must preserve its clear Christian aim, its unshakable Christian foundation, and its genuinely Christian control; that it must hold in proper prominence its Christian program and be animated by a genuinely Christian spirit.*

*The Association must steadfastly resist the danger of becoming a mere human institution - in a general sense religious but not emphatically, pervasively, and contagiously Christian. This essential must never be compromised, obscured, or abandoned for the sake of any plausible outward success or worldly advantage for such a course would mark the beginning of the end. Wherever an Association lacks world-conquering power, it is because it has to some extent been conquered by the world."*

## Original Mission re-affirmed over 100 years later

*“The Paris Basis expresses that Christ is the center of the Movement, which is conceived as a worldwide fellowship uniting Christians of all confessions. It is consistent with an open membership policy involving people irrespective of faith as well as age, sex, race and social conditions.” - Kampala Principles, 1973*

### The Mission of the Branch Christian Emphasis Committees today

*“Acknowledging the Christian Principles upon which the YMCA was founded, the Branch Christian Emphasis Committees help create opportunities for members, volunteers and staff to reach their potential as children of God through the lifting up of Jesus Christ and our Christian Mission.” - YMCAs of Greater Charlotte 1999.*

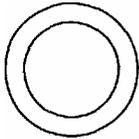


## The Meaning of the YMCA John 1721 Logo

Putting Christian Principles into practice through programs that build spirit, mind and body for all. [www.ymcamission.org](http://www.ymcamission.org)



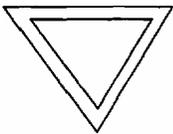
With that great history in mind and ministry outreach focus, lets take a look at how the YMCA emblem represents this organization's history and purpose. Few organizations have as meaningful and rich an emblem as the YMCA. These are all of the parts:



THERE IS A DOUBLE CIRCLE: One circle symbolizes the completeness and unity of the total of life and God's created order. The other symbolizes a wedding ring, friendship and love without end, among individuals. Within these circles or rings, the rest of the emblem is placed.

# XP

THERE ARE THE GREEK LETTERS CHI & RHO (XP): The first two letters of the word Christos – meaning Christ - and in themselves the emblem of early Christianity.



THERE ARE TWO TRIANGLES: One standing for the trinity within the Godhead: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The other, the trinity within man, that of the spirit, the mind and the body.



THERE IS THE BIBLE: It is opened to Jesus' intercessory prayer for his followers in the Gospel of John, chapter 17, verse 21. This text was set forth as the foundation for the YMCA.:

“That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” - John 17:21.

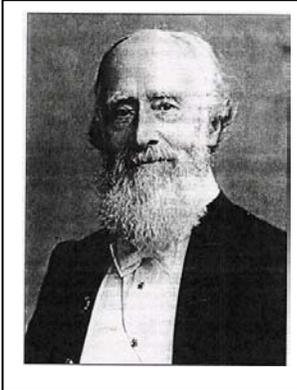
The context of this passage was emphasizing that followers of Christ should have such love and care for one another and for those around them that the rest of the world would believe, because of this genuine love. .

Therefore the complete assembly of all these component parts gives this great organization its emblem

# George Williams

## Founder of the YMCA

*by Leslie K. Tarr*



Twelve young men met in the inner-city bedroom of George Williams in London, England, on the evening of June 4, 1844. They came to develop strategies to evangelize the hordes of young men who were flocking to seek employment in the British metropolis, and that modest bedroom became known as “an upper room”—the birthplace of the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA).

Three years earlier Williams had arrived in London to work as one of 140 draper’s assistants at the firm of Hitchcock and Rogers. A devout Christian, Williams was concerned about the spiritual condition in his new environment. What he saw did not look good. “I found no means of grace of any kind,” he wrote in his diary. “I asked myself, ‘What can I do for these young men?’”

### **A Simple Plan**

The newcomer was elated to discover that a fellow worker in an adjacent bedroom was an active Christian. The two met to consider Williams’ proposal to reach the entire staff for Christ. The physical conditions for accomplishing that goal were far from ideal. Like all assistants, Williams shared a bedroom with as many as five other men. The cramped, Spartan quarters offered no privacy, and at first Williams had to ask his roommates to leave for a short time while he and his newfound Christian ally engaged in prayer.

Their plan was simple. They prayed by name for each of their fellow employees and confidently expected them to become Christians. Williams soon made this matter-of-fact entry in his diary: “We met, our numbers grew, and the room was soon crammed. In answer to prayer, the Spirit of God was present, and we had conversion after conversion.” Soon the young men requisitioned other rooms in which the new believers could meet for prayer. Scores of employees and even the firm’s president, George Hitchcock, professed faith in Christ.

An observer of the spiritual activity at Hitchcock and Rogers commented that when Williams came to the firm in 1841, it was almost impossible for a young man there to be a

Christian. By contrast, three years later, it was almost impossible to be anything else!

Others became aware of the spiritual fervor at the drapery establishment. Why, wondered Williams and others, should such evangelistic enterprise not be attempted on a wider front—in other drapery firms and in business houses? That conviction led to that historic meeting 150 years ago in that “upper room.” At that memorable gathering, 11 of the 12 participants, including Williams, were from the drapery firm of Hitchcock and Rogers, and the 12th was from another drapery firm. More than half of those attending had been converted through George Williams’ witness.

His family background and early upbringing, however, would seem to provide an unlikely seedbed for such spiritual intensity.

### **The Early Years**

Born October 11, 1821, at Dulverton, Somerset, George Williams was the youngest in a family of eight sons. Although the family tree of the Williamses lists generations of farmers, it quickly became obvious that the youngest member of the family had neither the aptitude nor the desire for country life.

At age 13 his schooling ended, and after a brief period on the farm, he was apprenticed to a draper in Bridgewater. George’s employer insisted that all employees attend the morning service of his church, Zion Congregational Chapel. This was a radical change for the new apprentice, whose family seldom attended church.

Williams’ recollection of his own spiritual state at that time was blunt: “I entered Bridgewater a careless, thoughtless, godless, swearing young fellow”, he wrote in his diary.

That soon changed. On a winter Sunday evening in 1837, the 16-year-old apprentice attended church and was deeply moved by the Gospel. He returned to the shop, where he knelt in prayer and submission. He later recalled, “I cannot describe to you the joy and peace which flowed into my soul when first I saw that the Lord Jesus had died for my sins, and that they were all forgiven.”

In the remaining years of his apprenticeship, Williams devoted himself to personal witness to Christ.

### **The Challenge of the City**

With the formation of the YMCA, Williams and his associates recognized that the influx of young people to urban centers offered an unequalled missionary challenge.

The scope of the YMCA's ministry expanded over time to include lecture courses, libraries, reading rooms and sports facilities. Still, Williams and the other pioneers of the movement regarded reaching others for Christ as foundational and indispensable.

### **Triumph and Disaster**

Although Williams was deeply involved in YMCA activities, he did not neglect business. He distinguished himself in the Hitchcock and Rogers firm and eventually was made a partner.

In 1853, Williams married Helen Hitchcock, daughter of the firm's president. They became parents of five sons and a daughter. By age 65 Williams had amassed a fortune in business. He also had given a fortune to charity. He contributed generously to the foreign missions endeavors of many denominations; his only stipulation was that the mission must uphold and zealously proclaim the Gospel.

In June, 1884, Queen Victoria took advantage of YMCA's 50th anniversary to offer to George Williams the honor of knighthood in recognition of his "distinguished service to the cause of humanity." He was now Sir George Williams.

To all appearances, he could look back on an uninterrupted series of triumphs—a dazzling business career, leadership in an interdenominational Christian movement, personal recognition, a happy and harmonious family circle, and esteem as an exemplary Christian.

Just at the climax to that life, however, he experienced a devastating blow. Nellie, his youngest child and only daughter, died suddenly at the age of 19. Family and friends recognized the shattering impact on the grieving father. For Sir George, her death "almost blotted out the sunshine of 70 years." But with the healing passage of time and the Spirit's ministry, he emerged with an even greater compassion and empathy for those who suffered.

### **To the Glory of God**

In the remaining 11 years of his life, George Williams entrusted the daily concerns of business to his sons, while he intensified his support of Christian endeavors.

The passage of time had taken its toll, and he grew progressively weaker. With his 84th birthday, it was evident to those around him that the end was near. Sir George Williams died less than a month later, on November 6, 1905.

On November 14, downtown London seemed to come to a halt. Despite a steady rain, crowds lined the streets in silence, as the funeral procession made its way to St. Paul's

Cathedral, where George Williams was be buried. The refrain of George Williams' life, according to his biographer, is expressed in these words: "He lived not unto himself, but to the glory of God in the service of men."

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