



MISSION IN ACTION

Spiritual Legacy Series Poster Version

Original Articles by Rev. Tom Welch
from YMCA of Central Florida
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GEORGE WILLIAMS | YMCA FOUNDER

George Williams was born in a farmhouse in southern England in 1821. When he arrived in London in 1840 to become a drapers apprentice, his faith was challenged by the worldliness of the city. 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 6, 1844,

twelve men, led by George Williams who was 22, founded the Young Men's Christian Association. The YMCA was born. The original mission read:

"The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) seeks to unite those young, 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."

For his service to the well being of the nation, Queen Victoria knighted him. He has been commemorated by a stained glass window in Westminster Abbey and is buried in St. Paul's Cathedral, both among the highest honors given to English national heroes.



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THOMAS SULLIVAN

Around 1850, Thomas Sullivan of Boston was organizing groups to pass out pamphlets that explained the message of God's love in Jesus Christ. Sullivan, a retired Canadian sea whaling captain and lay missionary for the Baptist Church, also worried about the temptations facing young men in large cities. He sought to provide a "home away from home" for young sailors on shore leave. From his journal in

sailors on shore leave. From his journal in 1851, he states:

"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."

On December 15, Sullivan and six others drafted a constitution that was reviewed at a second meeting a week later. On December 29, in the chapel fo the Old South Church in Spring Lane, they approved the constitution and began their work to improve "the spiritual and mental condition of young men. Thus the YMCA in America began at the Old South Church in Boston. By 1855, there were 24 YMCAs across the United States for East Coast to West Coast.



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ANTHONY BOWEN

The first YMCA in the world established to serve African American people came into being in 1853, seven years before the Civil War and ten years before slavery was officially ended in the United States. The principal founder was a former slave, Anthony Bowen, who with the help of a group of friends, organized the YMCA for Colored

Men and Boys in Washington D.C. It started just nine years after the world's first YMCA was founded in London, England and less than two years after the first North American YMCAs were organized in Boston and Montreal.

Born a slave in 1809 in Maryland, Bowen moved to Washington in 1826 and became legally free within four years. Remarkably, Bowen was the first black man to become a clerk in the U.S. Patent Office. He heard of the YMCA from a white co-worker, William Chauncy Langdon, a member of the YMCA Washington board. With black men barred from memberships, Bowen decided that a "Black YMCA" was needed.

The YMCA was not the first institution Bowen founded. He served as a local preacher for forty years, and under his guidance the St. Paul AME Church was founded in 1856. Bowen also established a Sunday Evening School for children and adults. Both met in his home.



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D.L. MOODY

Active in the 1859 prayer revival in Chicago, Moody helped establish Chicago's YMCA and became the first full-time employee. IN 1861 he became a city missionary for the YMCA. Moody rose to presidency from 1866-1869. He had a part in erecting the first YMCA building in America when he supervised the construction of Farwell Hall in 1867.

It was during the first visit to Britain that Moody heard the words which set him hungering and thirsting after a deeper Christian experience and which marked a new era in his life. The words were spoken to him by Mr. Henry Varley, the well known evangelist, as they sat together on a seat in a park in Dublin:

"The world has yet to see what God will do with and for and through and in and by the man who is fully consecrated to Him."

"He said 'a man,'" thought Moody. "He did not say a great man, nor a learned man, nor a 'smart' man, but simply a man. I am a man, and it lies with the man himself whether he will or will not make that entire and full consecration. I will try my utmost to be that man."



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**JAMES NAISMITH
INVENTOR OF BASKETBALL**

When James Naismith applied on May 27, 1889 to be a student at the YMCA Training School, he answered this question:

“What is the work of a YMCA Physical Director?” He answered, “To win men for the Master through the gym.”



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OSWALD CHAMBERS | YMCA CHAPLAIN

Oswald was born July 24, 1874 in Aberdeen Scotland, where he became a Christian during his teen years under the ministry of Charles Spurgeon. God used many things to shape and mold Chambers, one of which was his acceptance into the University of Edinburgh. Rapid spiritual development followed as Chambers became intently interested in the

things of God. From 1906–1910, he conducted itinerant bible teaching ministries in the United States, United Kingdom, and Japan.

In 1915, Chambers was commissioned by the YMCA to go to Zeitoun, Egypt where he ministered to Australian and New Zealand troops during World War I. Many of Chambers' devotional lectures make up a large portion of *My Utmost for His Highest*, now considered a classic and his best-known book. His death from a ruptured appendix came as a shock to all who knew him.

After his death, a fellow worker remarked: "It is a mighty thing to see even once in a lifetime a man the self-expression of whose being is the redemption of Jesus Christ manifested in daily hourly living. He would have [simply] called himself 'a believer in Jesus.' The fact is, God made this man a refuge from the storm for many down-cast souls. Through his written words, God continues to touch and change lives for Christ's sake."

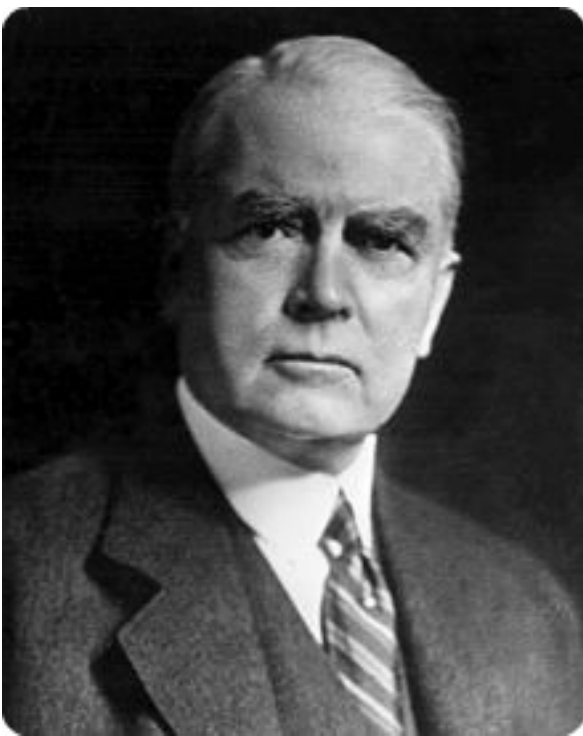


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JOHN R. MOTT

From 1915–1928, Mott was general-secretary of the International Committee of the YMCA. From 1926–1937 he served as president. During World War I, when the YMCA offered its services to President Wilson, Mott became secretary of the National War Work Council, receiving the Distinguished Service Medal for his work. At 81, the Nobel committee

awarded him one of the highest honors given –the Nobel Peace Prize. In his own words:

“If the Young Men’s Christian Association is to increase its spiritual vitality and fruitfulness, it must maintain at all costs its distinctively Christian Character... This is tantamount to saying that it must preserve it’s clear Christian aim, its unshakeable Christian foundation. The association must steadfastly resist the danger of becoming a mere human institution.

The 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 end. Wherever an Association lacks world-conquering power, it is because it has to some extent been conquered by the world.”