CELEBRATING

40

YEARS OF THE JUBILEE CONFERENCE

CCO
40 years of Jubilee

When the first Jubilee conference took place in downtown Pittsburgh in 1977, hundreds of college students crowded into the standing-room-only ballroom of the William Penn Hotel to hear the freeing message of the Gospel—and to be inspired to do away with the idea that the Christian faith is a Sunday-only proposition.

Every February since then, generations of college students have gathered in Pittsburgh to be equipped to serve Jesus Christ with their entire lives. For 40 years, we’ve invited more than 70,000 college students to Pittsburgh to talk, learn, think, and dream about the public implications of their personal transformation.

Jubilee is a weekend-long snapshot of what CCO ministry is all about, as our staff people invest in the lives of students on college and university campuses. The focus of the conference has always been about putting legs on the Gospel—helping students recognize that the God they worship is intimately involved in every aspect of their lives, seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

Jubilee is about equipping students to serve Jesus Christ passionately in their vocational lives, in their communities, families, and churches. By God’s grace, that’s exactly what’s happening.

A Jubilee Timeline:


Realizing that many college students are floundering in their faith, a group of parents, pastors, and youth leaders from western Pennsylvania churches join together to sponsor the Revolution + One conference.

The CCO (Coalition for Christian Outreach) is incorporated in Pittsburgh on March 23, 1971 as an interdenominational college ministry. The CCO’s primary mission is to bring various initiatives together with a unified vision to evangelize and disciple college students in cooperation with local churches.

The Chatham Center Weekend, a forerunner of Jubilee, is sponsored by the CCO and area ministries.

Jubilee moves to the Pittsburgh Hilton Hotel, where it stays for 30 years.

The CCO sponsors the first Jubilee conference at the William Penn Hotel, where it stays for 30 years.

Jubilee moves from the Pittsburgh Hilton to the David L. Lawrence Convention Center to accommodate the growing number of participants.

Attracting nearly 3,500 people each year, Jubilee is the largest, longest consecutive running conference in Pittsburgh.

Vincent J. Burens
President & CEO
Coalition for Christian Outreach

The CCO calls college students to serve Jesus Christ with their entire lives.

Our ministry is distinct in three ways:

1. We develop students to be passionate leaders who serve Jesus Christ in their studies, jobs, communities, and families.
2. We serve together with the church, inviting students into the lives of local congregations.
3. We design each ministry to fit the needs of every campus we serve.

To learn more about us, please visit our website: www.ccojubilee.org

There is no higher priority for the church today than to ground our young people in solid doctrine and righteous living. Cheap grace abounds in the Christian church today, but I’m praying God will raise up a generation of strong, tough-minded young people to challenge the false values of the culture.

From what I’ve seen in my own experience speaking to the CCO, that is exactly what they are doing, teaching the faith entrusted to the saints once and for all. Doing this is a huge contribution to the work of the Kingdom.

The late Chuck Colson founded Prison Fellowship and The Colson Center for Christian Worldview. Mr. Colson was a keynote speaker at Jubilee 2008.

The late Chuck Colson
founded Prison Fellowship and The Colson Center for Christian Worldview.

Mr. Colson was a keynote speaker at Jubilee 2008.
Why did the CCO establish the Jubilee conference?

The CCO is committed to helping students on college and university campuses understand the message of the Kingdom of God in all of its fullness. We boldly proclaim the salvation that is found only in Jesus Christ, and we encourage students to know God and to serve God in every area of their lives. We equip college students to participate and anticipate, as Jesus taught his disciples to pray, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

The biblical idea of Jubilee has been around since God created the heavens and the earth. Even before humanity’s response of independence and rebellion, God introduced the concept of a sabbath—a jubilee—into the fabric of the created order. The sabbath was established as a weekly reminder that the people of God must find their rest and peace in God alone.

The sabbath year (every seventh year) was a similar, but more dramatic and demonstrative, reminder. God alone is responsible for life and its maintenance. The sabbath year became more than a reminder; it was a demonstration of the justice and mercy of the sovereign God of all creation.

The Year of Jubilee, as described in Leviticus 25, was to be the sabbath year of sabbath years, to be held every fiftieth year. During this special year, God would provide for the release of prisoners, a second chance for the disenfranchised, and hope for those who had lost hope in relying on their own strength.

This is the message of Jubilee to college students—to those who will soon take their places in positions of influence, both locally and globally. The message is this: We cannot be satisfied with the same service as usual. We strive to live out the principles embodied in the year of Jubilee, because the great and forever year of Jubilee has begun with the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.

So why did we create Jubilee?

Because we need a reminder and a sign. We need a reminder that this is God’s world and that God is the source of our salvation and all that is good. We need a sign that God’s Kingdom is here, even though at times it may not appear so, and that someday God will bring the fullness of that Kingdom to the good creation. The workshops and addresses at Jubilee point to the Kingdom mindset that Christian people ought to have at any time in the history of the church.

Our hope and prayer is that this conference will be an encouragement to us, that we might make a difference for the sake of the Kingdom for which we are waiting, expectantly.
Sunday worship, choir, youth group, and Sunday school all brought the Gospel to Theresa Miller as she grew up in a tiny eastern Pennsylvania town.

But at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Theresa’s faith expanded when she read All of Life Redeemed, a book written by four former CCO staff members. Then in 1984, the Gospel exploded when she attended her first Jubilee conference. There, Theresa met the late Robert Lavelle, founder of the former Dwelling House Savings & Loan, created to increase home ownership among Pittsburgh’s low-income residents.

“Bob’s astounding work showed me what Paul meant when he encouraged the Colossians that ‘whatever you do in word or deed, do all to the glory of God the Father,’ ” Theresa says. “Now, the word ‘whatever’ defines how I seek to serve the Lord at work, at home, and in my community.”

Bob Lavelle’s vision for economic justice, transparency, and truth informed Theresa’s own heart to serve the Lord, driven by truth, first as a journalist and later as a public relations executive at Prudential Financial, Inc.

So the Millers bought a broken-down mansion in a tough Easton, Pennsylvania neighborhood. More than a decade later, their neighborhood is changing. The house has been repainted, and it is surrounded by an urban garden. Residents who once lived in isolation have become neighbors. Young men have escaped gang life. The poor have begun to feel empowered. “Folks call what we do ‘ministry,’ ” Theresa says. “We call it life, driven by a transformed vision.”

JUBILEE IMPACT:

“As a journalist, I uncovered some very dark places while reporting crime stories, and as an editor, I coached young writers to develop a sense of fairness while dispelling the myth of journalistic objectivity,” Theresa says. “In public relations, truth has no spin zone, and it is the only product I can offer clients, shareholders, and other stakeholders.”

Y ears later, Theresa shared her Jubilee experiences with her husband, Terrence, and the Millers decided to visit Bob Lavelle in Pittsburgh’s tough Hill District. When Terrence asked why there were no bars on the windows at Dwelling House, Bob answered that Jesus’ strength enabled him to be vulnerable, demonstrating trust to those he served. Terrence asked how he should serve the Lord. Bob’s response? “You know what to do.”

As a journalist, I uncovered some very dark places while covering crime stories, and as an editor, I coached young writers to develop a sense of fairness while dispelling the myth of journalistic objectivity. In public relations, truth has no spin zone, and it is the only product I can offer clients, shareholders, and other stakeholders.

Jon Tyson is Pastor of Trinity Grace Church in New York City. He was a keynote speaker at Jubilee 2015.

The late Robert R. Lavelle, the man whose bank helped thousands of Pittsburgh’s low-income residents buy homes, was a frequent Jubilee speaker.
I was revolutionized by the Jubilee conference

In 1979, I was a student at Norfolk State University, a historically black university in Virginia. My campus minister, Edward Ellis, was slated to speak at Jubilee that year, and he invited me and several other students from the Norfolk State Christian Fellowship/United Christian Campus Ministry to come with him to Pittsburgh.

At that point in my journey, I was in what I call a “me and Jesus” mindset. Jubilee gave me some specific biblical principles that opened up what it means to have a vertical relationship with Jesus while also pursuing justice for others in the world. Jubilee was such a complement to what I was learning through the teachings of Edward and also Tom Skinner, Campus Ministry. Through Skinner, I learned that my relationship with Christ meant advancing the Kingdom of God in all spheres of influence—politics, economics, education, media, entertainment, and health—everything. One of the ways to do that was understanding biblical justice, that God wants us to pursue justice because of how it bears on our relationships with each other.

I learned that as a representative of Christ’s Kingdom, I need to be concerned about how all relationships are affected by power. Jubilee opened my eyes to how we are all responsible to open up a Kingdom perspective of justice in our spheres of influence. Jubilee also provided access to cutting-edge information and people who were making authentic change in the world. I had a field day in the exhibit area, picking up materials and talking with representatives at the information tables. I came into contact with men and women who had produced a lot of critical work around biblical justice. This made me feel like I could start doing work like that immediately in my context; I had met leaders who would support me if needed. For many years, I would reach out to Jim Skillen at the Center for Public Justice, by phone or by driving out to his office. Dr. Skillen made time for me, and that access made me feel empowered to represent the Kingdom. Jubilee taught me that how you represent Christ with excellence in the marketplace is important. When people see that you are both a person of consistently good character and excellence, you can have a radical influence on the way they think about God or a relationship with God through Christ.

Finally, Jubilee helped to legitimize and professionalize the direction I found myself going in. In 1980, at the age of 22, I was going into Christian broadcasting, but doors closed there. That same year, I entered the Master of Divinity program at Howard University, was called to licensed ministry, and received a call from Tom Skinner to be the next Chaplain at Howard University. Jubilee helped to prepare me for all three journeys because of how I came to see and understand the relevancy of my faith to the world.

My life had been further revolutionized for the Kingdom at Jubilee. The whole time I was at Howard University, both as a graduate student and a Campus Chaplain, that life was lived out. Jubilee helped bring legitimacy to who I was and what I was doing on campus. The young man who succeeded me at Howard University in 2006 became both an employee of the CCO and the Skinner Leadership Institute. Because of this, a whole new generation of students was exposed to the powerful Kingdom vision and values that had impacted my life years before in 1979.

The CCO and Jubilee have borne incredible fruit because of that one invitation from Elward Ellis. A small group of us who attended then are in some form of ministry today. We still remember and model the impact.

I am not able to divorce my faith from my work or from my family—and it’s all because of the CCO and Jubilee! Jubilee gave us the opportunity as students to look at the public implications of our own personal faith journeys. What does it mean to be faithful to God and to be His witness to the world? Jubilee gave us the opportunity to meet leaders in all walks of life who were working through that question for themselves.

What does it mean to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth? I got to hear people talk about how they were doing that in business, law, education, and government. C. Everett Koop, former Surgeon General of the United States, was there, and he spoke in a small room to a group of college students about how he was living out his Christian faith in service to our country.

What does it mean to be in the world and not of it? How do we obey the great commandment—loving God and others? Those meetings, handouts, and information planted seeds in a lot of our minds. These are the questions that I continue to work out in my life today.

Eight years ago, I was a partner in my law firm feeling like I was living out the plan God had for my life. My wife, Kathi, and I had built a house, and we figured in a few more years, I’d retire and we would look for ways to continue our Christian witness. I was also on the Board of Trustees at my alma mater, Waynesburg University, and I had served as the first president of Waynesburg’s Alumni Council. We had been blessed with an incredible President and First Lady who had transformed the University by leading it back to its original Christian mission. After serving selflessly for 20 years, they were stepping down, precipitating the search for successors.

A search had been ongoing when I received a call asking me and Kathi to consider becoming the next leaders of my beloved alma mater.

It was one of the most frightening and amazing phone calls in my life. Frightening because, as a trustee, I was aware of the immense responsibility and stress that goes with the president’s job. Amazing because it was completely unexpected, but at a very deep level I recognized it as the next journey God had planned for me and Kathi.

After a lot of prayer and discussion that focused on discerning whether this was a call, I came on board as Executive Vice President in 2009. In 2013, I was named President of the University. The biggest thing that Jubilee taught me back when I was an undergraduate student was to follow the greatest commandment in all things—to love God and how does that translate to the world? It’s about serving others.

My work as president of a university founded on Christian values means that we seek to educate students to live a life of purpose to the glory of God. We equip them to live into that great commandment, serving others in a way that doesn’t seek our own glorification, but is selfless and looks to the needs of those we’re serving.

—Douglas G. Lee is a 1981 graduate of Waynesburg University. Prior to becoming President of his alma mater, he was a partner in the law firm of Steptoe and Johnson. He first attended Jubilee in 1978.
JUBILEE INSPIRED ME TO...

WORK OUT MY FAITH IN THE MARKETPLACE

I came to college with the idea that faith was a feeling and you didn’t need to engage your mind too deeply. The CCO and Jubilee taught me that I didn’t have to throw away the intellectual in order to follow God. For the first time, I was able to make a distinction between Christianity as an activity and as a relationship. I had created a distinction in my mind between “Christian work” and “secular work,” and Jubilee helped to heal those divisions for me and give me a more holistic worldview. It was powerful to go to Jubilee and see something that was a concept become concrete. It was exciting to hear from people who were trying to work out their faith in the marketplace.

Robin Ross Smith, Chatham University 1989, is now Senior Research Director with the DeBruce Foundation.

WORK AS A SCIENTIST FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

I’ve known I wanted to be a scientist since I was 11, but I felt that I had to go into full-time pastoral or missions ministry to truly serve God. CCO staff and the Jubilee conference taught me that ministry can happen wherever you do—it can happen in science, business, or wherever Christ calls us. I remember hearing how Christ’s calling to be salt in this world was a call to being a preservative in the world, as much as anything. That had a big impact on my life, as it was a call for me to take Christ’s news of redemption to a scientific community that put their trust in logical discovery and proven facts. Here was an opportunity to join with others in exploring the created world and marvel at its wonder and beauty while probing deeper to the inevitable questions of faith.

Dave Oopa, Geneva College 1998, now serves as Associate Director of the Analytical Development Team in the Global Vaccines and Biologics Department for Merck & Co., Inc.

PROVIDE CLEAN DRINKING WATER IN SUDAN

For four years I partnered with the South Sudanese staff of the local water office to increase access to safe drinking water. We repaired broken boreholes, increased the capacity of existing boreholes by replacing hand pumps with solar-powered pumps, and worked towards a reliable supply chain of replacement parts, among other things. If it were not for Jubilee and the impact of the CCO throughout my years at Penn State, I don’t believe I would have considered myself someone who could be a missionary water engineer. Jubilee and the CCO helped me look at the world differently; it changed how I view people and different situations, and I have been able to carry that into everything I do.

Gabrielle Ingram, Kent State University 2012, is now an eighth grade science teacher, soccer coach, and girls’ soccer coach.

BE A TEACHER FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

My first time at Jubilee was amazing. It was like a slap in the face, but in a good way. It woke me up and instilled in me a yearning that I don’t think I would have found anywhere else. My junior year was also the time I was really trying to come back to my faith and Jubilee was the last push I needed to becoming all in. Jubilee helped me look at the world differently; it changed how I view people and different situations, and I have been able to carry that into everything I do.

Christine Olmeda, Penn State University 2006, most recently served as a Missionary Water Engineer and Community Development Practitioner with Serge (formerly World Harvest Mission) on the South Sudan Team.

BE AN ATTORNEY FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

I attended Jubilee conferences more than 30 years ago. At Jubilee, I learned to years with creation for the redemption of all things. That yearning influenced the way I entered into my college and law school studies. Seeing to be a redeeming influence has made a lifetime of difference at home, at work, and in my community. Jubilee planted seeds of concern for the city, racial relations, and justice that have bloomed into things like living in the inner city, reforming mortgage foreclosure laws, and delighting in my bi-racial grandchildren. I am grateful for the richness of my experiences of the Kingdom that I trace, in large part, to the impact of Jubilee and the CCO.

Mark Greenlee, Allegheny College 1980, is now Legal Counsel for Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland.

PROVIDE HEALTH CARE IN INNER-CITY PHILADELPHIA

Although I was a CCO student, I didn’t go to Jubilee until after graduating from college. I was working in a hospital as a management engineer, and hearing people talk about redemption in their various career areas was extremely helpful for me. I began to see the idea of God’s redemption touching all of life. For five days, I was so excited about this that I was unable to sleep because of the joy of that. This began a different journey for me, integrating my faith with everything, and seeing God’s redemption in all areas of life.

Sixteen years ago, I believe God called me to live among the poor, and I moved to an impoverished African American and Puerto Rican community in North Philadelphia. I purchased a house in close proximity to my church so I could participate in what God is doing there. I am very blessed to watch God at work in my community.

Susan Post, Grove City College 1981, is now Executive Director of Esperanza Health Center, a faith-based health center serving Latino and other low-income residents of North Philadelphia.
I am a CCO fan! My times at the Jubilee conference over the years—I was there almost at the beginning!—have been memorable. The Jubilee folks know how to put together an exciting blend of inspiring worship and the kind of biblically grounded “world and life view” content that is so much needed for equipping a new generation for faithful discipleship under the cosmic Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Richard J. Mouw, PhD
Author, President Emeritus and Professor of Faith and Public Life, Fuller Theological Seminary

MEET THE LEADERS OF THE FUTURE

ARCHITECTURE
“I hope to love God and love people and be a good architect. I am finding out many exciting areas where architecture is relevant with the healing and restoration of the world.”

Timothy Ong
CCO Student Leader, Kent State University, Architecture Major

PHARMACY
“I see pharmacy as a work of redemption. Through optimizing drug therapy, counseling patients, and preventing potentially deadly medication misuse, I will battle the sickness that was never meant to be part of our world.”

Julia Stone
CCO Student Leader, Purdue University, Pharmacy Major

SOCIAL WORK
“I desire to serve Jesus Christ with integrity and excellence as a social worker. I want to steward the relationships He entrusts to me by supporting others to be resilient in the direction of hope.”

Jose Ferran, Jr.
CCO Student Leader, Esperanza College of Eastern University, Community & Human Services Major

ACCOUNTING
“I want to offer my services as a financial advisor to people who cannot afford to pay back in my home country of Vietnam.”

Ngoc-bich Thi Tran
CCO Student Leader, Geneva College, Accounting and Business Finance Major

BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING
“I dream of being a missionary doctor, taking care of God’s people all over the world while sharing His amazing love.”

Mukui Mutunga
CCO Student Leader, Robert Morris University, Biomedical Engineering Major

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
“I hope to use my language skills and cultural knowledge to welcome immigrants and refugees into the Church in the German-speaking world and to help them adapt to German society.”

Nicholas Bersin
CCO Student Leader, University of Pittsburgh, East European Studies & German Major
SERVING JESUS CHRIST IN PSYCHOLOGY

“My dream is to open up a private psychology firm where I specialize in treating young individuals who are dealing with addictions. Rooting my practice in the truths of the Bible, I hope to bring spiritual healing to those who seek my professional help.”

ROSE SO
CCO STUDENT LEADER
Allegheny College, Psychology

SERVING JESUS CHRIST IN URBAN STUDIES

“I hope to pursue a career that combines my passions for community, the arts, and social justice, in a way that makes manifest Jesus’s resurrection in our cities.”

MADELEINE WATENBARGER
CCO STUDENT LEADER
University of Pennsylvania, Urban Studies

SERVING JESUS CHRIST IN BUSINESS & POLITICS

“I want to invest time and resources to help build churches and grow community in remote areas of the world.”

BAROUK GARI
CCO STUDENT LEADER
Ashland University, International Business & International Political Studies