

# What is Frontier Youth Trust?

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*In response to many who have asked this question, Jim Punton has written a simple introduction to this new member of the S.U. family.*

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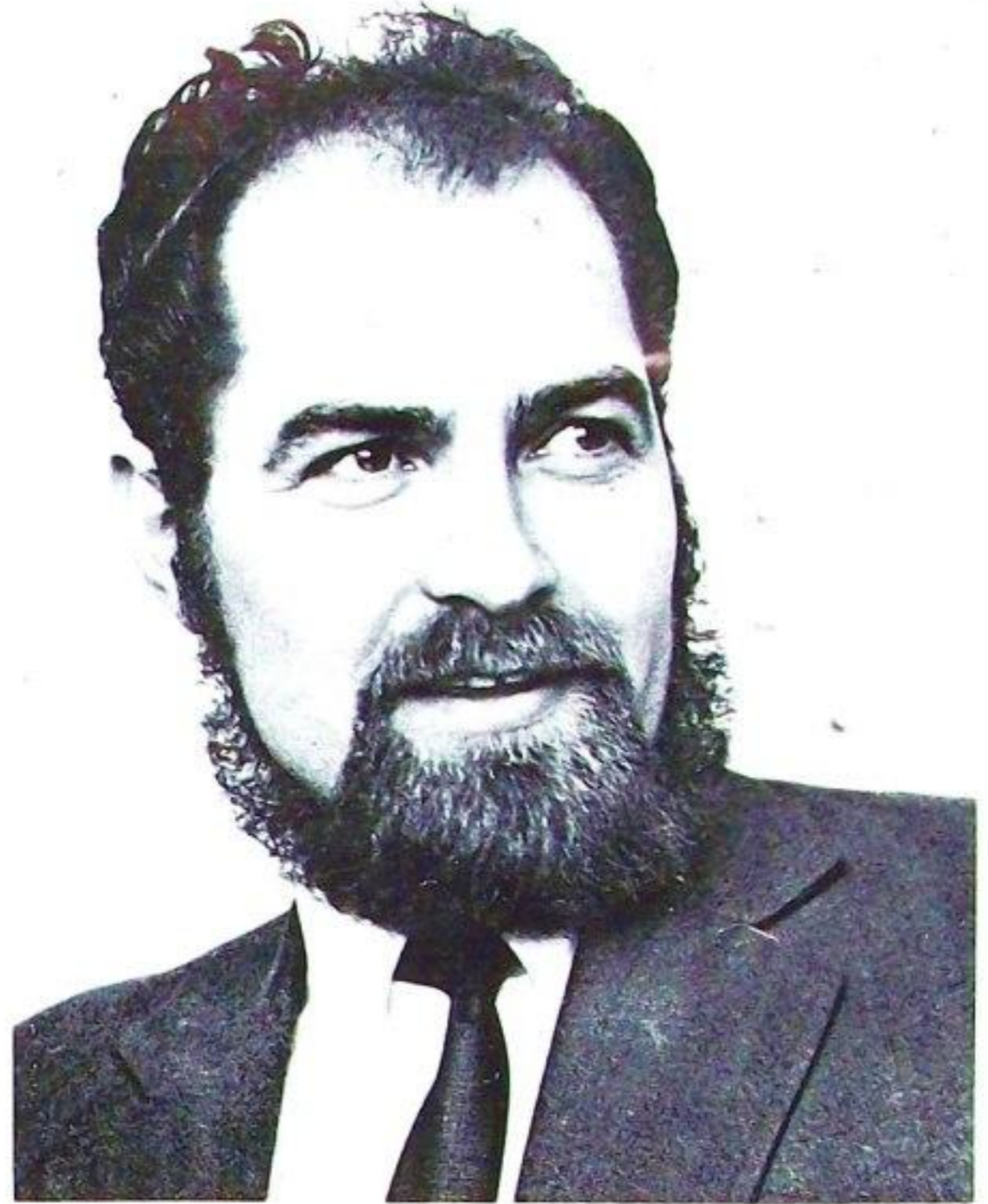
"What exactly is Frontier Youth Trust? I mean—well—what is it exactly?" This question is asked so often when FYT is mentioned that those of us who are part of it run no risk of feeling self-important. But it's also a challenge because we believe that God has given FYT a strategic place in His mission today.

The vision that became FYT was around in the mid-50's when a number of Christian youth workers, in situations demanding new approaches and non-traditional methods, came together for a conference that became an annual event. There was an excitement of a mutual awareness of association in a new thing God was doing in His love for young people. In 1963 a development committee was formed to promote the idea of "open" club work as a sphere of Christian service. In the following year Frontier Youth Trust was constituted; in the next, dialogue began with Scripture Union as a result of which a provisional merger took place in 1966 and was given permanence in 1969. The FYT committee simply continued as a sub-committee of the SU Council.

With Michael Eastman's appointment in 1966 FYT at last had a full-time Director (with the title "Secretary and Development Officer"). It became more possible to co-ordinate the efforts of the voluntary FYT personnel up and down the country and to introduce other services in addition to training. The needs are great and the youth situation complex and ever-changing. Our vision always outstrips human resources. But training was given priority and the necessity to appoint a Training Officer led by joining FYT staff in March 1971. And so on, and so on.

But a word about what FYT is.

First of all it's an association of Christian adults concerned for youngsters at odds with themselves, with society and with God. They are one in seeing their task as assisting young people to develop to that maturity which is the realisation of their capacities for wholeness. They are one in seeing in Jesus Christ the only whole Man through



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whom God wills to bring wholeness to each person and to society. But while FYT members have a common approach, they come from very varied youth-work situations. Most are in clubs, centres and care-units, but many are in community projects, or working with "un-attached" youth, or in social work, or education. Some are professionally trained, but the majority are non-professional, voluntary workers.

As an association FYT finds local expression in FYT groups who meet to support each other, to share success and failure, pool resources, consider needs and how to meet them, plan strategy for local action, to study and to pray. It is of the utmost importance that more and more of these groups be formed throughout the country.

FYT acts as a service agency for Christian youth workers. This is provided through many voluntary personnel at local, regional and national level, and is co-ordinated by an HQ executive staff of two. The provision includes: research-relating Biblical theology and sociology, education and training—courses, conferences, publications, information, referral and consultation, representation on youth service committees, resources for frontier work.

As an association of Christian workers concerned for the wholeness of young people, FYT must increasingly accept its prophetic or political role and address itself to society so that society supports its young people in their development.