

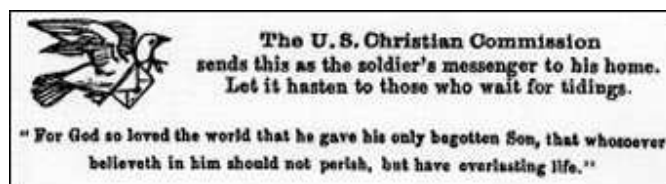


The U.S. Christian Commission was organized in New York City on the 14th of November, 1861 by the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). The idea was suggested by Vincent Coyler, an influential artist who would become the president of the YMCA.



As it expanded throughout the North in the early years of the war, the Christian Commission worked in conjunction with the U.S. Sanitary Commission for the relief of soldiers at the front. Free box lunches and coffee wagons were sent to compete with sutlers selling whiskey and special diet kitchens were provided for the sick and wounded. Ladies affiliated with the Commission volunteered their nursing skills in the hospitals.

Commission member's felt it their duty to provide more than physical comforts, consequently, they attempted to uplift soldiers' morals and religious spirit. In the more permanent camps, reading rooms were established and stocked with bibles, magazines, and newspapers from home. The Commission encouraged men to write their families, believing that the more soldiers focused on their wives, mothers and sisters at home, the less liable they would be to fall into temptations. To that end the Commission provide free writing materials and stamps for the soldiers use.



The U.S. government was grateful for all the benefits provide by the U.S. Christian Commission and estimated that over 6 million was raised and spent for the soldiers' aid.