YOUTH FOR CHRIST

GOOD NEWS

magazine

Spring 2024



A STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

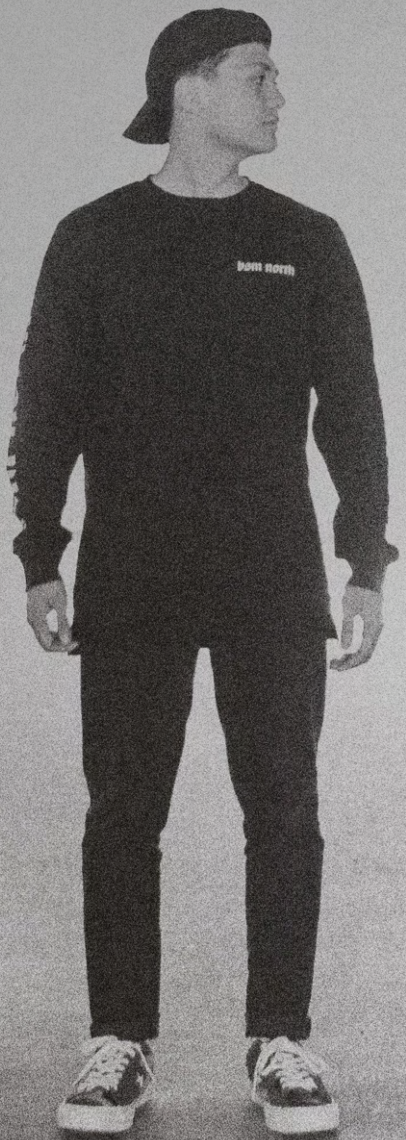
HOW WILL THEY KNOW IF NO ONE TELLS THEM?

ROMANS 10:14

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IT'S TIME FOR CHANGE



Neil O'Boyle, National Director

The world is changing.

Young people are changing.

The Church has faced 70 consistent years of decline.

Knife crime, poor mental health, suicide, sexting, porn, and witchcraft are all on the increase among young people.

The Church in general has lost confidence in knowing how to engage with unchurched young people. How do we know that? Because we asked them and that's what they told us.

Furthermore, young people have lost confidence in the church. Only 8% of young people view the church positively. How do we know that? Again, we asked them.

Change in itself isn't bad; change can be amazing. But when it comes to youth culture and the well-being of faith in this nation, it isn't altogether good change.

There is a youth crisis in this nation.

Youth for Christ is committed to three things:

GOD, YOUNG PEOPLE, THE LOCAL CHURCH!

We love God with all our heart. We are passionate about young people. We are championing the local Church because we believe the Church is the expression of God's mission to the world.

But there is a problem; and it's a big problem!

The vast majority of young people aren't interested in faith. Many are in a heap of pain and embarking on self-destructive habits, numbed by whatever self-soothing antidote they can find.

IT'S TIME FOR CHANGE!

The kind of change that says: **"This generation needs good news"**, but we know that that's not enough...

> **THE GOOD NEWS FOR THIS GENERATION HAS TO INVOLVE JESUS!**

The kind of change that recognises there's a culture war, fighting for the hearts and minds of young people.

> **IT'S TIME FOR US TO ENTER THE ARENA ON A SCALE LIKE NEVER BEFORE, TO POSITIVELY DISRUPT CULTURE.**

That's right, we want to disrupt culture. We don't want to disrupt it just for the sake of change.

We want to disrupt culture so that young people aren't stabbed for the content of their backpacks, teens don't send pictures of themselves nude to paedophiles to be reimbursed with drugs, anxiety is replaced with peace and suicide is no longer an epidemic throughout schools.

We want to put God back on the agenda for young people. We want teens right across this nation to have an opportunity to not only choose Jesus, but encounter Him for themselves.

Q. How can we disrupt anything?

To change culture, **25%** of the demographic need to be positively influenced.

Currently, Youth for Christ reaches roughly **13.9%** of young people across Britain in one way or another, directly or indirectly. That's a big reach - that's more than 1 million young people already!

But it's not big enough - we are hungry and we are ambitious. Therefore, within the next 5 years, we seek to positively influence as many as **33.1%** of all young people. That's enough to disrupt culture - to create ripples of change from cities, to towns, to villages. That's an impact of roughly 2.5 million young people.

A. We have a plan!

Our plan requires going wide and deep.

Firstly, it must involve the **Church.**

There is a church in almost every community across Britain. Some churches are thriving, some are healthy, some have a limp, and some are significantly decreasing. No matter what, it is still God's expression for mission and, in some cases, the church needs encouragement and love. We want to love the church in ways that raise expectations.

We intend to reach out to 10,000 churches over the next 5 years.

Our message is simple: **'Unchurched young people matter'**.

They matter because they were created to know God, they matter because they are making choices that exclude God's best plans for them, they matter because your church needs them! They are tomorrow's leaders, worship pastors, crèche supporters and members of the congregation.

They matter. Before the beginning of time, God knew their name and calls each and every one of them to Himself, but more often than not He asks His church to do the reaching.

Our plan is simple: we want to remind churches where there are few or no young people that the narrative can change, but it needs to start with understanding why unchurched young people are important. Then, we provide the tools for engagement. **Find out more on page 8.**

We then need to empower **schools** to speak well of Jesus.

Our next aim is to equip 5,000 RE teachers with the very best support and material to positively share Jesus. The reports keep making headlines: 'Christianity is not taught well in many schools across Britain'. We already know that after family, the greatest influence on teens are teachers. We also know that for 1 in 5 young people, RE is the only time they hear about God. It's about quality and quantity. **Find out more on page 10.**

Next, we focus on church **youth leaders.** Our plan involves providing 1,500 youth leaders with the very best resources to engage with young people in their community, schools and churches. We believe that lives are most significantly changed through relationships, so our plan must involve helping youth leaders to connect with young people in healthy and powerful ways, with the tools that they need. We have never been more excited about the tools available within our toolbox for youth leaders. We are about to pour an abundance of excellent resources youth leaders' way. **Find out more on page 12.**

If lives are changed through relationships, then mobilising **Gatherings** is the next big focus. We have an ambitious plan to commission 100 Pulse Gatherings across the nation. Pulse Gatherings consist of at least three churches that are passionate about gathering together for three reasons: to pray, to learn and to engage in youth mission within their community. When people get serious about prayer, big things happen. **Find out more on page 16.**

We will continue doing what we have always done in supporting our existing 60 Youth for Christ **Centres.** We believe our Youth for Christ Centres to be our gold star approach to youth outreach. With teams and volunteers working alongside the Church to reach and support young people, lives are already being changed consistently. We love our Centres and we need to do all we can to help them thrive. **Find out more on page 18.**

Finally, our national vision for change has one consistent factor: location! Whether it be churches, schools, gatherings or Centres, they are all locally based. So, if we believe in the local, then British Youth for Christ needs to go local itself.

What does that mean? We plan to sell our current Head Office and move into a deprived community, purchasing a building that allows us to engage directly with young people where we can feed them, educate them, pastorally support them, provide as much fun as we can create, and share Jesus. We will also ensure that our new **Youth Ministry Centre** supports the need for training and equipping churches, schools, youth leaders and Centres across the nation. By being embedded in an under-resourced community and seeking to share Jesus, we will be far sharper to help serve our national vision of reaching 33.1% of young people in this nation with the Good News of Jesus and changing culture for the better. **Read more on page 22.**

10,000 CHURCHES

5,000 RE TEACHERS

1,500 PARTNER CHURCHES

100 COMMUNITIES

60 CENTRES

1 NATIONAL CENTRE



So, when will all this start?

It starts now. But we desperately need your **prayers.** This plan is futile without God's leading and anointing. We didn't get to this place over night, we have been praying and seeking God for almost 2 years. During those 2 years, we haven't been as vocal as we might have been in the past; that's because we took seriously the need to plan and pray.

We also need you to consider generously **supporting** this plan. A vision of this scale will never be cheap, but is possible! We need £4.5 million on top of our existing budget over the next 5 years. That is roughly £3 per young person that we are seeking to reach. How many £3's might you be able to give? How many young people can we reach together and with the local church in this nation?

It's time for change.



GOING HIGH AND WIDE

A consultant in education recently shared with us that after doing a tour in Further Education to demonstrate what it would be like to have a chaplain, all of the colleges recognised the importance of it and bought in. Even non-Christian headteachers jumped at the opportunity to have pastoral support provision, prayer spaces, and Gospel-based assemblies in their school.

When the consultant shared the good news of wide-open school doors with local churches, many of them responded by saying they're pouring all of their energy into just keeping the church going. They are dropping their youth work – it is not a priority – their congregation average age is over 50 and they're just going to see it through to old age.

They've put an expiry date on their church. They've signed a DNR and they're seeing out their final days.

It isn't the first time that we've heard these stories, but we have a desire for them to be the last.

We believe that the Church is God's body and expression for mission and worship, and it has life left in it yet. Therefore, we have a desire – nay, a calling – to wake the sleeping giant. Our immediate task is to advocate for unchurched young people, provide compelling cases to the reality that while the unchurched need the church, the reverse is also true. We are seeking to enthuse the church and give it confidence where it lacks it, and a tool-kit of resources to help them effectively engage with young people. There is life left in the Church yet, it only needs awakening.

In 2022, we undertook a significant piece of research which included qualitative and quantitative surveys and interviews, with a sample of over 100 diverse churches across Britain. We asked questions about their reach, engagement, and where their challenges lay. Three common themes quickly arose:

1. **A lack of confidence and an uncertainty in how to engage with unchurched young people.**
2. **A lack of volunteers.**
3. **A lack of good resources to engage with unchurched young people.**

While concerning, our heartbeat grew faster; in all three areas we can significantly help.

A high and wide approach is needed, and we intend to reach out to 10,000 churches over the next 5 years. Whilst this may not see lasting impact in the same way that 'low and deep' may, a high and wide approach enables significant reach and the sowing of seeds.

If all 10,000 churches engaged with one local high school, they could have an average reach of 800 young people; this would equate to a reach of the entire youth population. We recognise that this is an unreasonable expectation, with perhaps three quarters of the churches reached doing nothing and the other quarter being nudged into action. In reality, we anticipate such churches may engage with one or two year groups and a few activities within the community rather than entire schools, landing on an average reach of 250 young people. With a compelling strategy and an average reach of 250 young people, that equates to a sizeable 625,000 young people!

It's a tall order and I hear you asking: "But how?"

The answer: **advocacy**.

Every year for five years, we will write to 2,000 different churches across the nation. Each letter will include a 'Why?' box; a tool-kit that sets the case for why unchurched young people matter, videos compelling them to action, talks for churches, tools to help them connect with young people, and an opportunity to engage with Youth for Christ to help put youth ministry back on the agenda.

We will also reach an excess of 2 million people through assets and paid advertisement across various social media platforms too.

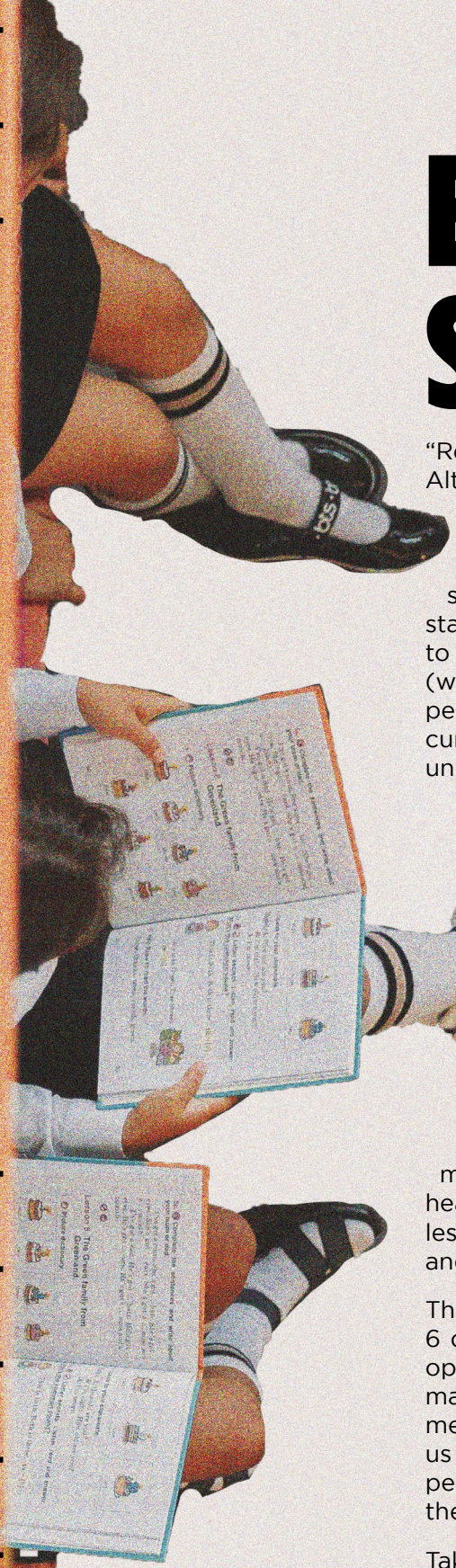
Christians are more likely to watch and read the secular news than they are the Christian press. This is a space that we recognise needs a clear and compelling voice. Therefore, when a young person is involved in knife-crime, when the headlines speak of increasing numbers of young people waiting for mental health referrals, or young people sexting and sending explicit images, Youth for Christ will ask the secular news channels and Christian press for an opportunity to speak into the topic and raise the importance of why young people matter. We will remind the secular world that the Church is the biggest provider of youth work, whilst also encouraging the Church to pick up the mantle within their own setting.

We will take up space at youth ministry events, on radio stations, in email campaigns and magazines. Our voice will be heard as we promote our conviction that 'unchurched young people matter'. We will lobby groups of influencers, continually seeking exposure and opportunity to present the case of why unchurched young people matter, and why the Church cannot afford to remain relatively inactive by on large.

Youth for Christ has been around for over 70 years and in that time we've grown a strong, wide network of Christian organisations. We will pursue these relationships, asking for exposure within these circles, using up years of banked credibility until we are given the opportunity to enthuse the gatekeepers to think wider than entertaining church-based young people.

In these 70+ years, we've also seen thousands of staff, volunteers, and young adults on The Year Out – all of whom have given heart, time, energy and soul to the mission of Youth for Christ. During their time, they shared the Good News relevantly and saw young people's lives changed by Jesus. Youth for Christ has been a part of their story, and their story is written in Youth for Christs'. Many alumni are continuing in their faith, and our role must be to stir them to speak out for unchurched young people to the church community, inviting them into the mission like army reservists.

We are mobilising the church to turn survival mode off, scrub out the expiry date, shred the DNR, and wake up to the hundreds of thousands of unchurched young people that matter in their communities.



EMPOWERING SCHOOLS

"Religious Education in schools is generally of poor quality. Although it is a statutory subject, schools often consider RE as an afterthought. As a subject on the curriculum, it is under-valued. RE is a complex subject, and the lack of clarity and support from government makes schools' job harder. Many schools do not meet the statutory requirement to teach RE at all stages. Pupils are rarely taught enough substance to prepare them to engage in a complex, multi-religious and multi-secular society (where religion and non-religion play different parts in different people's lives). Too often, schools do not teach topics in the RE curriculum deeply enough for pupils to develop a substantial understanding of the subject matter."

"Inspectors judged pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity to be good or outstanding in only five of the schools. It was judged to be inadequate in 10 of them, making teaching about Christianity one of the weakest aspects of RE provision."

These quotes were taken directly from OFSTED reports and make for a gloomy read. Perhaps what makes it even gloomier is that our own research shows the opportunity that is missed through "inadequate" teaching of Christianity.

Our 'Gen Z: Rethinking Culture' research showed us that for as many as 1 in 5 young people, RE lessons are the **only** time they hear about God. And yet, OFSTED reports are telling us that RE lessons are of poor quality, with not enough depth or substance, and Christianity is one of the weaker aspects of the curriculum.

The average teacher has a classroom of 30 students and teaches 6 different classes a week in RE. That teacher has a tremendous opportunity to engage with those young people. However, in many cases young people are receiving a confused and disjointed message on what Christians believe and why. Our research showed us that after family, teachers have the greatest influence on young people; not social media influencers, not the government, not even their best friends; teachers.

Taking all of this into account, we see opportunity. Education should never be sole theory-based, but it should provoke the learner to consider the application. Jesus' message throughout the Gospels is clear and simple: believe and follow. Therefore, if Christianity is

taught well and teachers are equipped with the right tools, then hundreds of thousands of young people should reach the end of the syllabus and consider, "If this is true, then what should I do about it?"

Change is needed.

Our aim is to increase our reach and therefore increase our impact and, in many ways, providing well-resourced curriculum-based lessons and support-based material for RE is our bread and butter.

One of the ways we will do this is through **RE:QUEST**, our educational website that is available to teachers and pupils whether following the England, Wales, and Northern Ireland curriculum, or the Scottish curriculum. Our focus is specifically and only Christian-based, and our intent is to provide teachers with valuable resources through videos and lesson plans.

We also provide hundreds of videos for students who may be studying theological aspects such as atonement, or practical matters such as racism, from a Christian perspective. We believe that presenting God, the Bible and faith in an easily digestible way that students can comprehend and busy RE teachers can use is significant to how young people will feel about the Christian faith.

Our research 'Z-A of Faith and Spirituality' informed us that young people are not thinking about God. However, when given an opportunity to do so, they are just as likely to respond favourably as any generation before them. Again, we see opportunity.

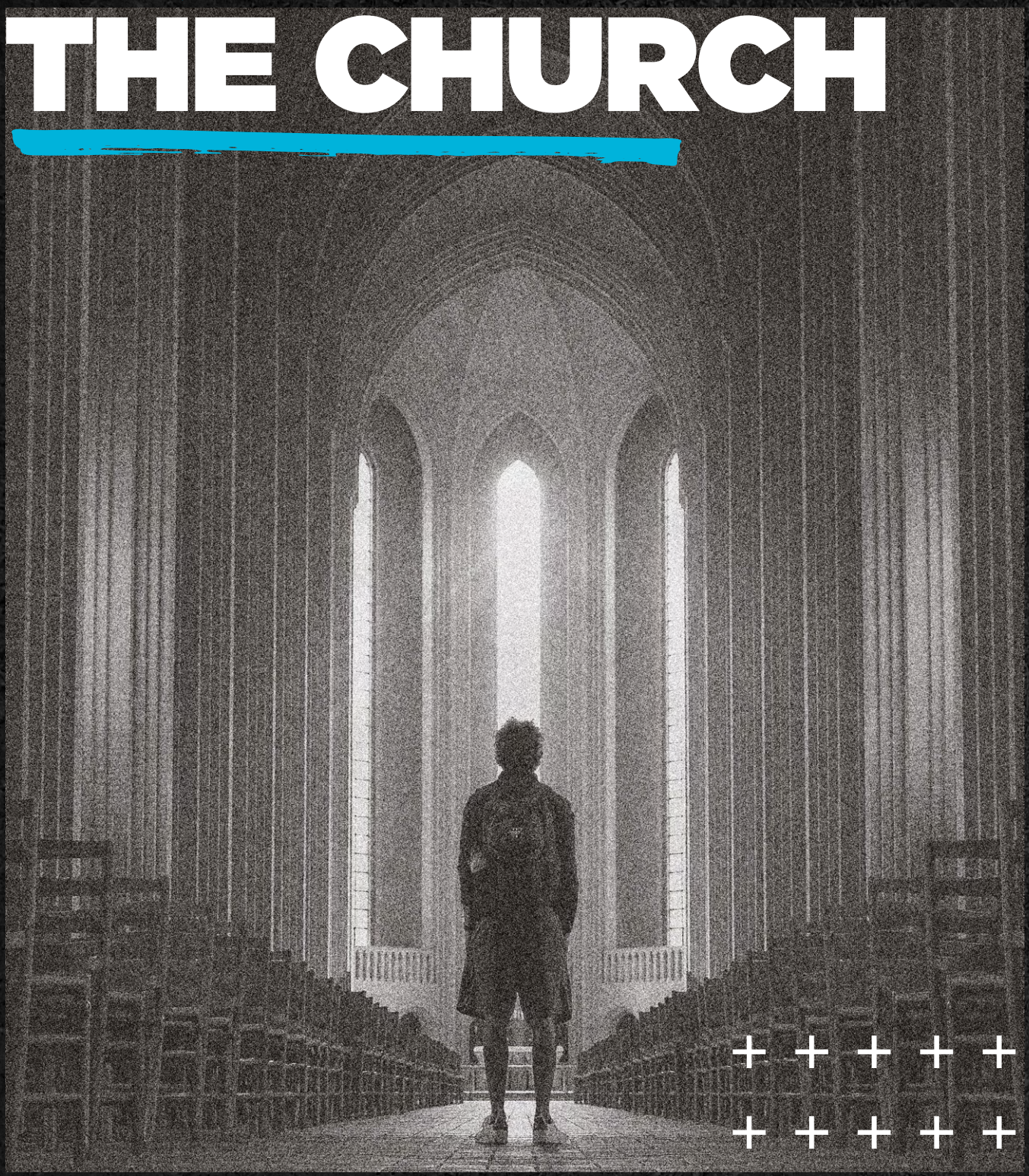
We currently support and resource just over 3,000 teachers on a regular basis, and we are seeking to raise that figure to 5,000 teachers who would have an average of 180 pupils that they continually teach and have exposure to over the course of a year. That equates to roughly 900,000 students who could be positively impacted by the Christian faith in the classroom.

The second way we will increase reach, and therefore our impact, is through **myLife**. myLife is a course designed for young people at risk or on the margins who are unlikely to gain any formal education within school - it was originally created for young offenders to help them reorientate once they had left prison. The course proved to be so successful that it is now used in schools and with local authorities where young people are out of school. myLife is OCR accredited, so all young people will receive a Level 2 qualification upon completion. The course addresses and explores key issues including managing emotions, independent living, navigating society, managing money, communicating differently, relating to others, and the world of work. When a school or local authority chooses to place a young person through myLife, Youth for Christ then partners with either a local church or Centre to provide the delivery of the course. The young person is not only gaining positive development but is also building a healthy relationship with the Christian community. We created myLife because we believe that every young person should have opportunities to grow, develop and understand their value.

We believe the teaching of faith, and especially Christianity, deserves the very best teaching representation and delivery standards. Will you dare to dream with us about what positive representation of faith in Jesus could look like for 900,000 young people?

"FOR AS MANY AS 1 IN 5 YOUNG PEOPLE, RE LESSONS ARE THE ONLY TIME THEY HEAR ABOUT GOD."

EQUIPPING THE CHURCH



By Laura Hancock

"MY PEOPLE, HEAR MY TEACHING; LISTEN TO THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH. I WILL OPEN MY MOUTH WITH A PARABLE; I WILL UTTER HIDDEN THINGS, THINGS FROM OF OLD - THINGS WE HAVE HEARD AND KNOWN, THINGS OUR ANCESTORS HAVE TOLD US. WE WILL NOT HIDE THEM FROM THEIR DESCENDANTS; WE WILL TELL THE NEXT GENERATION THE PRAISEWORTHY DEEDS OF THE LORD, HIS POWER, AND THE WONDERS HE HAS DONE."

PSALM 78: 1-4 NIV

From the opening pages of the Bible, God made it clear that He longs to know and be known by each generation, and that it is the mission of the community of His people to join Him in this venture. The question that we must ask ourselves is: 'How might we do this most effectively'?

In the Autumn of 2022, we gathered many groups of youth leaders from churches across Britain to investigate the question: how might Youth for Christ best serve you, as we - Gods community - seek to make Jesus known in the next generation?

After months of praying and listening, our heart was stirred again to serve the local Church. We were stirred to help communicate Jesus to young people in their communities and enable those young people to find home in the local Church. But, in order to call this often-hurting generation home, we must go to where they are and equip the Church to meaningfully and passionately engage in those spaces.

Our heart as Youth for Christ is that we would be able to partner with 1,500 churches who recognise this call and make the brave but deeply necessary step of confidently engaging with young people where they are, both physically and spiritually, that Jesus might be known. But, of course, the question is 'how?'.

Through our conversations, it didn't take long to realise that often local church youth workers are stretched for time, for volunteers in their team and for resources. This Spring, Youth for Christ are launching a brand new portfolio of resources to serve local youth work on the ground because it is in those contexts that Jesus becomes known most effectively.

When young people are out of their homes, there are three places that they spend their time; at school, in their own community – either in person or online - or engaging in some sort of local church or centre provision.

We hope to partner with 1,500 local churches to impact these spaces in a more meaningful way. Through a subscription package, we want to offer tools to enter into each of these spaces regardless of the experience of the youth worker using them. Each of our new termly resources can be used as they are or edited to suit the youth worker's context, and they can be stored, saved and then shared with the team so that everyone is in the picture! Alongside this, we are providing a youth work tool-kit so that no matter the context in which they're engaging with young people, youth workers can feel confident and equipped, and at least some of the hard work is done for them! So, how might we as the Church begin to make this impact in a young person's world?



SCHOOLS

Lessons

From this Spring, each term we will provide lesson plans that can be used in your local secondary schools, fulfilling the RE curriculum and giving the local Church an opportunity for meaningful contact - not only with the young people in those lessons, but also serving and building relationships with local schools. The lessons include lesson plans and accompanying slides for each lesson, and will cover core topics such as salvation and worship, alongside apologetics such as evil and suffering.

Assemblies

We will also be providing assemblies each term. Whilst many schools don't have a religious aspect to their assemblies, they will often have a theme connected to character or attributes, or themes that coincide with specific dates of note in the calendar. Consequently, we have created assemblies that represent typical themes and topics that schools will often use, with accompanying slides and the ability to customise the session to the school's needs, adding your own content where desired. They cover themes such as respect, resilience and caring for the environment.

Connecting with Schools Pack

One of the most difficult aspects of schools' work is actually getting into a school! This pack is designed to bring together all the things that a complete beginner will need, including: key terminology, the best way to approach a school, exemplar letter/email templates, useful proformas to be used when planning lessons/ assemblies, and much more!



COMMUNITY

Under_Ground

Under_Ground consists of weekly rap workshops to be run by a youth worker, using an interactive programme of music, videos, games and discussion. These workshops inspire creativity and positive decision-making through discussion and activity around a theme like money, love and forgiveness. As well as encountering Jesus, we want to develop young people's confidence and gifting by providing opportunities for them to perform live, share their hard work and be celebrated. This is all underpinned and enhanced by a Christian ethos.

Heat and Eat

Heat and Eat is a resource aimed at youth groups in areas of higher deprivation or places where young people need to gather and community be built. Each week there will be a hot meal (with the recipe to create it), a short video to watch and a session template that introduces the young people to the Gospel, and a chance to pray for each other at whatever level the young person is comfortable.





CHURCHES

Lumen and Rock Solid

Where Lumen is discipleship-based and encourages young people to go deeper in their faith, Rock Solid is all about helping young people understand Christianity and take a step toward Jesus, no matter where they're at in their faith journey. Through a considered curriculum, both resources are created to either be run as they are, or to be tailored to specific needs and contexts; youth workers can pick and mix, save and share. Each session includes a mixture of learning styles, from games and activities, to discussion, role-play and craft. Furthermore, we always record a video in-house for every session, have an alternative for when a video isn't practical, and provide social media assets to accompany each session.

Pulse

Pulse is a youth leaders network, designed to encourage local mission to young people. It is split into two areas: Pulse Gatherings and Pulse Learning Communities.

Pulse Gatherings are a framework for local youth leaders from different churches to gather each month. They always eat, chat and pray, with the content focussed on deepening local relationships and gaining a greater shared understanding of the mission that is happening between the group.

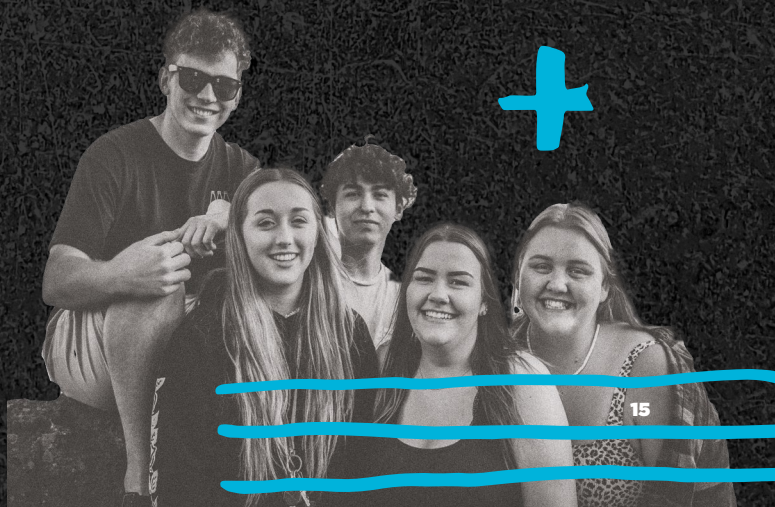
Pulse Learning Communities bring together the members of the Pulse Gathering along with their youth teams. They meet 3 times a year to strategically and missionally consider their local youth ministries, and for each team to learn from the experiences of the others. They are structured around Youth for Christ's 4D model of mission (demonstrate, declare, decision, disciple) and encourage teams to constantly look at what they're doing and how they can improve.

YOUTH WORK TOOL KIT

Alongside the termly resources that we are creating, we have a 'tool-kit' to equip practitioners in effective youth work and mission. This includes:

- A Training Wall where bespoke playlists can be built of our bite-sized videos to meet the individual training needs of your team.
- A volunteer pack to recruit and manage your hard-working volunteer team.
- An admin pack to save time on risk assessments, consent forms and evaluations of your youth ministry.
- A prayer resource to mobilise the local church into prayer for the young people in its community, whether they currently have a youth ministry or not.
- A New to Faith pack to support young people and help them to process as they make a decision to follow Jesus for the first time.
- We are continuing our Youth Updates podcast, where youth workers from any background can engage and be kept up to date with the latest trends in youth culture.

We are passionate about the local Church and its future in our nation as it communicates hope and life to a new generation. We want to do all that we can to equip, support and encourage local youth work because it is here that we see young people's lives being changed by Jesus.





LESS HIGH AND WIDE, MORE LOW AND DEEP

OUR HEART HAS ALWAYS BEAT TO THE RHYTHM OF SEEING YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIVES CHANGED BY JESUS. IT WAS THAT WAY 75 YEARS AGO, AND IT IS THAT WAY TODAY. CAN YOU HEAR IT?

Through large-scale events with thousands of young people attending, through resourcing websites with thousands of traffic per day – the focus has always been high and wide for British Youth for Christ. However, when your tagline reminds the organisation every day how it measures success: "seeing young people's lives changed by Jesus", high and wide doesn't work as well as it once did. Seeing lives being changed requires us to go low and deep, as well as high and wide. We don't just long to see young people's lives changed for a moment, perhaps in a response time sat under a large, LED smoke-lit gazebo; we long for lives to be changed for a lifetime.

> **"THE LORD GOD SAID, "IT IS NOT GOOD FOR THE MAN TO BE ALONE".**
>
> **GENESIS 2:18**

Youth workers know this. Whether they work alone or they're a team of tens, youth leaders know it is not good to be alone. It's why, in our research, one of the main responses from youth workers is that they do not have enough volunteers – it isn't just about workload and capacity, it comes from a desire for teamwork and community. It's why many youth workers gather in little groups in various towns and cities; they hold each other up and cheer each other on as they attempt to join in with Jesus in bringing people back into relationship with their heavenly Father. Could this model be the key to the success of a local youth ministry? A small group of people who are together regularly, asking difficult questions about God, having some food and praying for one another before they get out there and go again?

We don't know if it's key. But we think it's a sure factor.

Our desire is to establish 100 mission hubs called 'Pulse Gatherings', which belong to the Pulse Network. Each gathering has a minimum of three local churches who are actively interested in long-term local ministry to unchurched young people through the Church, schools and in the community.

These local churches will meet regularly for 12 months, and in this time, they will discuss what is and isn't going well, and how they can work together to see the Kingdom come in their community. They will encourage each other, ask questions, and pray together.

It doesn't stop there. The next step of the journey is for each of the local churches to gather their teams and meet as a Learning Community. In this space, they will map out the needs of the community, explore its history, and navigate the path ahead, grounding much of what is to come in prayer. Learning Communities will be a space for vulnerability, where leaders and volunteers can ask questions such as, "why did you do it that way?", or comment, "we had the exact same issue 15 months ago, this is what we did...".

With the resources and support of Youth for Christ, the outcome is to establish the foundation and outworking of local and continual outreach to young people through the churches.

Furthermore, members of Pulse will receive online support and online specialised training on topics such as 'how to set up a drop in' or 'how to run a school's mission'. Pulse Gatherings will be coached and championed by a Youth for Christ staff worker who is available at any point to provide assistance.

Pulse seeks to mobilise, equip and resource mission led youth work that is owned by the local community. The reach of each Pulse Gathering is set at an average of 2000 young people, through schools, community activity and church-based outreach. Within 5 years, our aim is to have reached 200,000 young people meaningfully through 100 communities.



L O C A L

Whilst there are many aspects to what we do at British Youth for Christ, it's our local centres that we feel are our 'gold star' approach. Why do we hold them in such high esteem? Because this is where we see the most long-lasting fruit and where we want to see more growth in the future. Each centre is rooted in their locality, engaging in community work, running projects in schools or partnering with churches; all ultimately and unashamedly working to communicate Jesus and His message of forgiveness and hope to each young person they work with. Currently, 60 communities across Britain have a Youth for Christ Centre, each registered as a charity, each with their own trustees and the vast majority have paid full time staff as well as volunteers. However, we recognise that the challenge has always been the length of time and the number of hoops involved in setting up a Centre from scratch: chasing the charity commissioners, banks, funding for staff and finding willing trustees. For this reason, we are pursuing a more flexible approach through Pulse Gatherings. Our desire is to see a number of Pulse Gatherings continue on the path with us long term and evolve into Centres.



Having spent the past 11 years as the Centre Director for Norwich Youth for Christ, I know first-hand both the joys and the challenges of leading a Centre. Thankfully, our newly formed National team of Relational Pioneers are on hand to support each Centre, whether for general advice and guidance or helping to navigate crisis and change. As we step into the future, each Pioneer will be proactively looking for more opportunities to increase this local presence and see more Centres spring up around the country. This won't be easy and it may take some time to see this come to fruition, but as you read the following stories, you'll understand exactly why we feel it's worth pursuing and why we hold them up as our gold star approach to youth ministry.

– Nick Blanch



North East Scotland

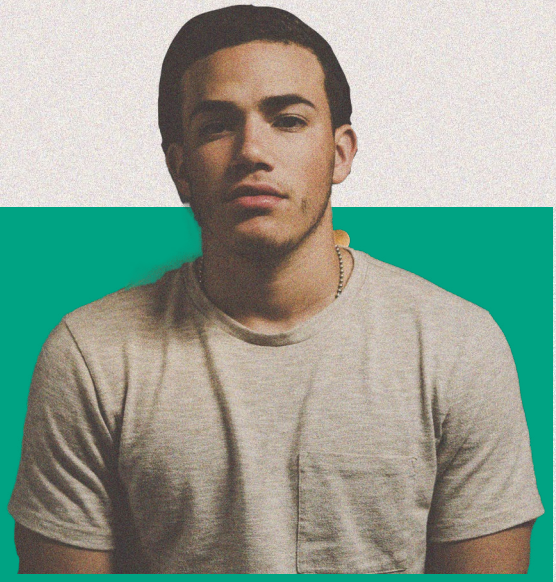
At the end of September, 11 young people headed off to the Compass Christian Centre at Glenshee for our annual Youth Weekend Away. This weekend holds two days for the young people to enjoy space, activities, fun and friendship away from, at times, difficult and dysfunctional home environments. For some it was their first time away from Tillydrone for any period of time and their first activity weekend. Everyone participated in the various activities put on by the Compass Centre team, as well as the sessions around the topic of 'What is the Gospel?', which led to some deep questions and discussions. The weekend was a huge success and already the young people are talking about Youth Weekend Away 2024!

Aylesbury

For the past two years we have been heavily involved in all the local schools, running a steady stream of missions and events where the Christian worldview is on display. Last April we ran an Easter event for 1300 students at a large school. I was given the chance to defend the Resurrection of Jesus as a historical event for 20 minutes. Afterwards the headteacher thanked me and another member of staff asked if I was free afterwards, which became a one-hour discussion. Over the Easter holiday, I received a series of emails from the headteacher stating how it had made him think, and that he was not sure what to do with the fact that Jesus rose from the dead. In September, I met them both independently, with one informing me that he was now a Christian, and the other saying he now attends church every week and his faith in Christ is growing every week.



CENTRES



Cambridge

Two years ago, we began mentoring a young person at a local secondary school - she was referred to us because of her social anxiety. She grew in confidence during her time with us and she now attends a church youth club we support. Recently she signed up to join us at a Christian festival this year! It is amazing to see God answering prayers!



Tunbridge Wells

After many years of prayer, we have been invited into a local academy secondary school to run a Rock Solid club. We have around eight Year 7 students full of questions for us each week – one has also started coming to our monthly youth gathering!

BRAND NEW RESOURCES

FOR YOU AND YOUR TEAM

ALL AVAILABLE IN ONE SUBSCRIPTION:

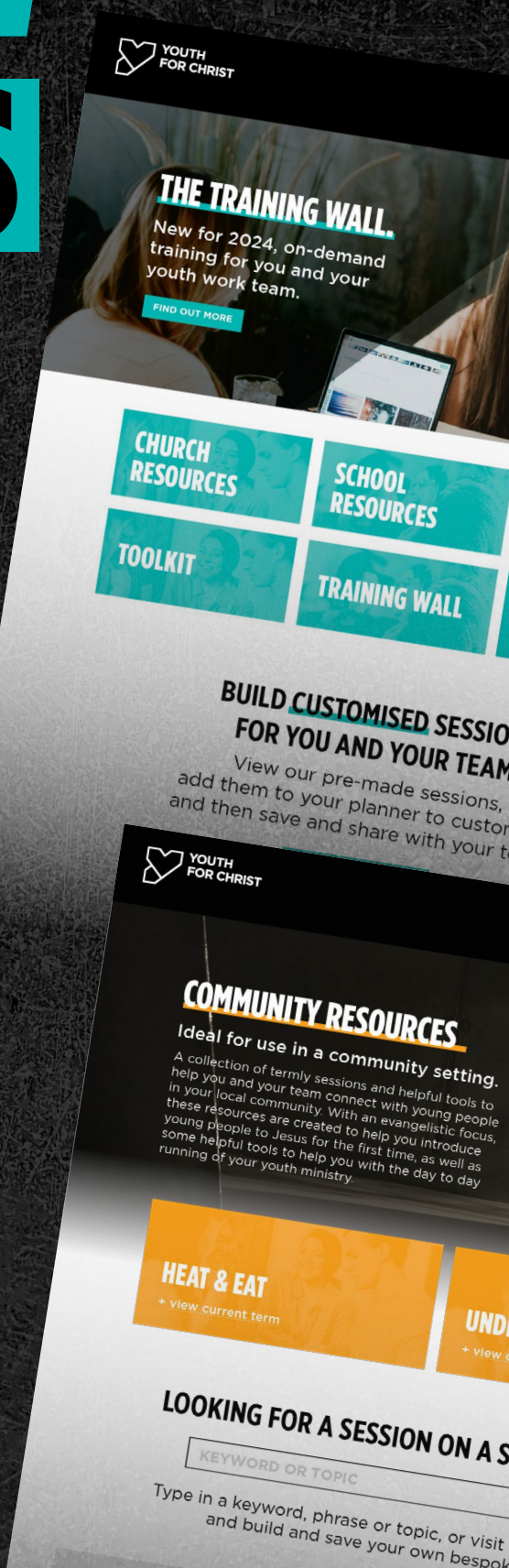
Six weekly resources
Built of sessions, lessons and assemblies for use in your church, school & wider community

On-Demand Training
For you and your team, to equip you in whatever your role is with young people

Connecting with Schools Pack
Helping you to connect with schools in your local area, and other helpful tools and templates

Volunteer Recruitment & Development Tools
A set of tools designed to help you recruit, manage and grow your volunteers

Admin Pack
Helping you with the day-to-day tasks of youth ministry, freeing you up to do what you love most



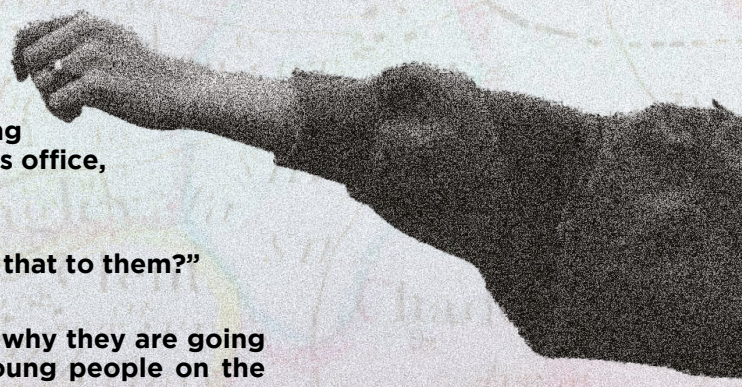
LAUNCHING 20TH MARCH 2024

YFC.CO.UK

A LOCAL PRESENCE, A NATIONAL MISSION

- Neil O'Boyle, National Director

I have always had a dream for the National Team.



It was sparked from a meeting with the National Director of Lebanon Youth for Christ, even before I took up my current post. As his team left the building to engage with young people he would shout from his office, "Remember why!"

After hearing it a few times, I asked "why do you say that to them?"

His answer was immediate: "they need to remember why they are going to school or to the drop-in club or to meet with young people on the streets. They need to remember it isn't just about the fun, or the teaching, or the food: it's ultimately about sharing Jesus!"

For me, it isn't only about remembering the 'why', it is connecting the why to everything we do. Many of the team at National hold support roles, such as finance, HR, design or media. While it's important that the 'why' is reminded throughout, there is nothing more powerful than being surrounded by the 'why' every day in your place of work.

"I THINK WHAT GETS ME EXCITED IS THE POSSIBILITY OF USING A WIDER VARIETY OF SKILLS AND THERE BEING A CONTINUAL MOTIVATION EACH DAY. IT'S HARD TO FORGET WHAT YOU'RE ABOUT WHEN YOU'RE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE DAY IN AND OUT!"
- NATIONAL STAFF MEMBER

My dream has always been for the National Office to be more than a resourcing centre, but also a Youth Ministry Centre of Excellence. Furthermore, a Centre that is based in a highly deprived community that lacks some of the most basic of resources.

We have held an internal phrase for almost two years regarding our new direction of travel: "love the local". Everything we do now needs to empower local mission through local contexts. However, if we are to love the local then we also need to be local and we need to experience local, beyond our 60 Centres.



"THE CREDIBILITY OF THE NATIONAL OFFICE/TEAM BEING A PLACE FOR PRACTICE AND OF PRACTITIONERS EXCITES ME. WE SHOULD BE able TO MODEL MINISTRY WHEN WE ARE IN POSITIONS OF ADVISING, INFLUENCING AND SUPPORTING OTHER PRACTITIONERS."
- NATIONAL STAFF MEMBER

We currently have an amazing resource building that hosts the National team. It took previous leaders' courage and vision to raise the funds to create a permanent and consistent home for the ministry. On a daily occurrence I am grateful to God for the legacy we have been given, in particular the National Director at the time, Roy Crowne.

The building sits in a gated industrial estate with no young people in sight. The dream I have for the national team is 4-fold:

1. We are lead practitioners, we set the example and raise the bar on evangelistic youth ministry within local community.

2. We create and we learn. As we design new material, we immediately put it into practice within our own location. Before it is distributed, we will have trialled it and received live feedback from the young people we work with.

3. We are first-person storytellers. We don't rely on other people's stories to relate, we can relate because we have our own experiences and carry the scratches from being in the weeds.

4. We are intrinsically connected to the mission. Loving the local requires every member of the team to be absorbed in the local: for an hour a day the finance team stop what they are doing to help run the drop-in club, the media team will run media workshops, the education team will teach myLife with the young people who have been excluded from school and are instead hanging around street corners, and so it goes. Every member of the National Team helps to run the centre while maintaining their existing roles.

“I’M EXCITED TO HAVE A SPACE WHERE WE CAN LEARN FROM BOTH YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUTH LEADERS FIRST-HAND AND GAIN A PROPHETIC SENSE ABOUT WHAT MIGHT BE NEEDED NEXT IN YOUTH EVANGELISM IN BRITAIN. ALSO, TO HAVE A SPACE FOR THE CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE NEEDS OF THE NATIONAL TEAM AND BE A GATHERING PLACE FOR LOCAL YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUTH PRACTITIONERS.”
- NATIONAL STAFF MEMBER



My predecessors created a haven for us to breathe and recover from a bumpy past, and I am inspired whenever the journey is retold on how we came to have our home today. The building has provided us with safety and security. It has allowed us to resource a national mission, but we sense God is calling us to move one more time - to sell our home and purchase a new home in a community where the young people are overlooked, undervalued, and need to be shown Jesus.

To have a local focus requires a local presence, and from a local presence we will coordinate a national mission.

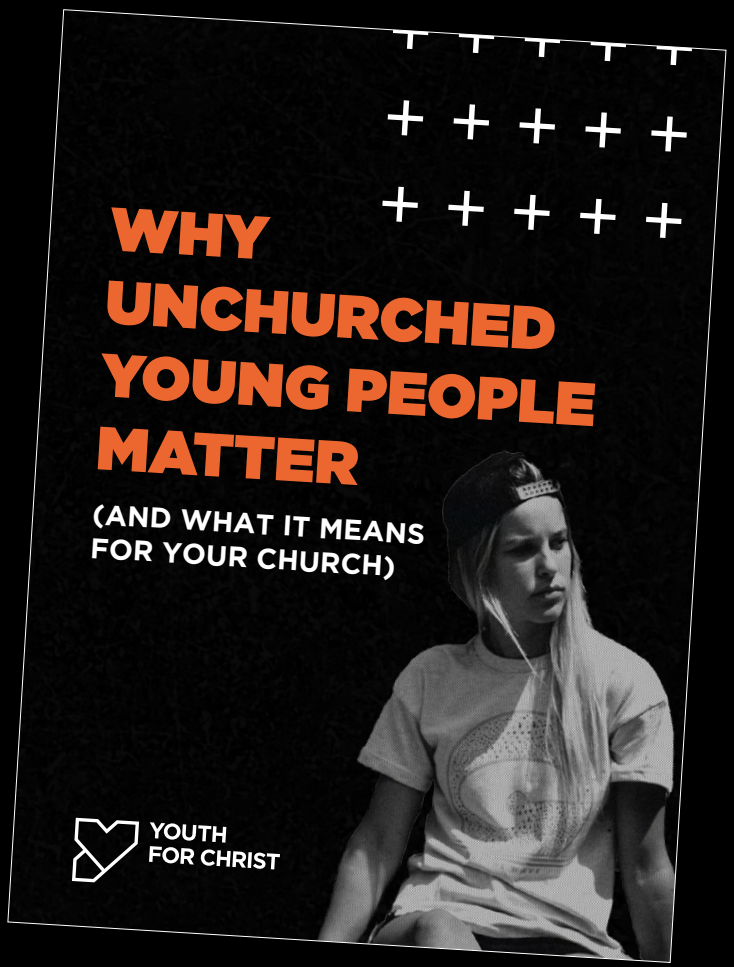
It is early days and in time we will have so much more to share. Please pray with us that every step of the way, it is in keeping with God’s plans.

KICK START A PASSION FOR YOUTH MINISTRY IN YOUR CHURCH

We're very excited that over the next few months, Youth for Christ will be launching a number of new resources and opportunities for your church to share Jesus with young people in local communities across the nation. But we know that for many churches, it will mean starting youth outreach from scratch.

Whether your church currently engages with youth outreach or hopes to do so in the future, we would love to send you a small pack that contains an assessment tool and key information about young people, and why we believe they should be placed at the centre of your church's strategy for local mission.

To receive a free pack, please send an email to **yfc@yfc.co.uk** or scan the link below



HOW MUCH IS A YOUNG PERSON COMING TO KNOW JESUS WORTH?

This generation's faith is at stake. Only 4% of young people are engaged with a church and only 8% view the Church as an institution positively. The ripple effect of this will be life-ending for the Church if we sit back and do nothing.

No longer is change coming, it is here and it's time to act.

You are reading this because you have an invested desire to see young people's lives change and may be asking yourself how you can help. There are three things you can actively do to partner further with us:

1. Pray for the young people of this nation and for Youth for Christ as we move forward.
2. Speak to us about how we can serve you and your community.
3. Donate to us. Our vision is a mountain that I know will be moved by our shared faith.

6 EXAMPLES OF HOW YOUR DONATIONS ARE USED TO CHANGE LIVES DAILY.

£3 A MONTH
could allow us to tell another young person about Jesus.

£25 A MONTH
could pay for a subscription to our new innovative resources and support from a Regional Pioneer to help your church reach unchurched young people in your community.

£100 A MONTH
could allow us to offer counselling to young people struggling with their mental health.

£350 A MONTH
could launch and resource a Pulse Gathering to reach unchurched young people in a local community.

£3000 ONE-OFF DONATION
could equip a church to run myLife with up to 45 at-risk young people for a year.

£30,000 ONE-OFF DONATION
could equip 2,000 Churches with a 'Why?' box, full of helpful tools and resources.



Your donation is pivotal. We are no longer dreamers - together, we are an army disrupting the disengaged culture and changing a nation. You are the biggest part of this vision, without your faithful giving we cease. Thank you for everything you do! Every £3 gives us the chance to change a life.

God has called us all into this new vision and this new space. So much so that, unlike Peter, we are getting out of the boat and fully trusting Jesus.

HELP US LOVE THE LOCAL

THANK YOU

I would like to give a: ☐ **monthly** ☐ **one off**
gift of £_____ to transform the lives of young people.

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Landline:

Mobile:

Email:

Please send acknowledgement of my gift
and any future communication:
☐ by post ☐ by email ☐ no acknowledgement necessary

To give an extra 25% to Youth for Christ at no extra cost, please complete the Gift Aid form below.

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE?

☐ **Enclosed cash or cheque**
(please make cheques payable to British Youth for Christ)

☐ **Give by standing order**

TO: The Manager, bank/building society:

ACCOUNT NO.: SORT CODE:

Please pay British Youth for Christ, account Number 03837696, Sort Code 09-07-20, Santander Bridle Rd, Bootle, Merseyside L30 4GB, the above sum at the frequency stated. Quoting reference number:

TO BE COMPLETED BY YFC commencing on / /

SIGNED DATE SIGNED / /

☐ **Give using your debit or credit card**

Please charge my ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Maestro ☐ Electron ☐ Solo

Name on card: _____

Card Number:

Start Date: / Expiry: / CVC: (found on signature strip)

If giving monthly, which day of the month would you prefer payment to be taken?

SIGNED DATE SIGNED / /

INCREASE YOUR GIFT BY 25% WITH GIFT AID

By ticking below I confirm that I am a UK tax payer and that I have read the Gift Aid information below. (Please tick all relevant boxes for your giving to Youth for Christ).

Please claim Gift Aid on all my applicable gifts
☐ from today **AND/OR** ☐ in the past 4 years

SIGNED DATE SIGNED / /

Please ensure that you inform Youth for Christ if you:
1) want to cancel this declaration; 2) change your home address or name; or 3) no longer pay enough tax to cover all of your Gift Aid claims. By ticking the box above I confirm that I have paid / will pay enough Income Tax and / or Capital Gains Tax each tax year (6th April - 5th April) to cover the tax claimed back by ALL the charities (not just Youth for Christ) I financially support each tax year. I am aware that no other taxes (VAT, council tax, etc.) contribute to this figure, and that Youth for Christ will claim 25p for every £1 donated by myself from today onwards.

You can also give online at yfc.co.uk/donate or phone 0121 502 9620 to give by card.

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