

Missional Youth Church Network (MYCN) by Andy Milne (Director of MYCN)

A brief description of the initiative with its aims and objectives?

MYCN was founded by the Archbishop of York's Office and Church Army UK in 2019. In keeping with the C of E vision to grow 'A church that is younger and more diverse, a church where mixed ecology is the norm and a church of missionary disciples;' our vision is to start at least 30 missional youth churches (MYC's), enabling 11-18 yr olds to build community and discover faith in Jesus Christ. Local schools, churches and community projects work together in partnership to reimagine church for this generation. Youth leaders and volunteers become part of a wider learning network accessing training, encouragement and support for one another as they build for the future.

The target beneficiaries?

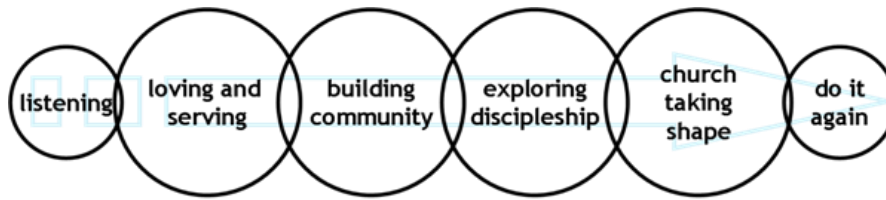
We are particularly seeking to enable churches to reach out beyond the walls of the church and connect with unchurched young people aged 11-18 in secondary schools and/or within the local area. In practice, this means that some projects begin with no young people as they start reaching unchurched young people. Other projects begin with some churched young people but soon discover that their vision is bigger than what currently exists and so they start to discover ways to reach out beyond the existing church community, often through schools work but not always. Sometimes, detached youth work, assisting with a council run youth club or friendship networks bring new young people into a MYC.

By whom?

The MYCN team consists of: a FT Director, 30 hours Strategic Lead, two part time strategic leads, and a part time admin coordinator (admin – 9 hours). The MYCN team are based within the team at Bishopthorpe Palace, York.

How is support delivered?

1. Mentoring a national **Learning Community of youth practitioners and youth leaders** (28 leaders actively engaged) which meets 4 times a year including 2 overnight residentials. We host these Learning Communities both 'in person' and 'online' to make them as accessible as possible to those living far away but also intimate for those attending in person. We use the Fresh Expressions UK learning journey (developed by Mike Moynagh & Andy Freeman in 2008) as a basis for projects to access 'where are we currently on the journey?' of building relationships, forming community and then forming Christian community with young people.



underpinned by prayer, ongoing listening and relationship with the wider church

We also use G.R.O.W (Goal, Reality, Opportunities, Will do) [GROW Model | Sir John Whitmore's GROW Coaching Model Framework \(performanceconsultants.com\)](#) as a tool to help youth leaders identify, explore and tease out what the Spirit might be nudging them to do next with their teams. The 'will do' is short for 'what will you do?' and seeks to encourage concrete actions to be taken and reviewed at the next learning community.

2. **Teaching and training adult leaders and volunteers using the Resource** (a course on how to form a team in order to grow a MYC and evangelise young people; currently being filmed)
This 10 session Resource is based on the learning and training used for new youth pioneering teams at Sorted and TYM (see below) by Andy & Tracy Milne. Its tried and tested over 15 years with different teams and more recently with some of the new MYC's. The Resource draws on examples and teaching from 'The DNA of Pioneer Ministry' (SCM, 2016) by Andy Milne with Mike Moynagh [Amazon.co.uk : the dna of pioneer ministry](#).
3. Offering **bespoke consultancy to youth leaders and church leaders**. As new MYC projects form, we strongly encourage each MYC to be supported by a Local Partners Group (LPG) which will consist of youth leader, local church leaders, senior diocesan staff member, other appropriate local leaders, and a member of the MYCN team acting in a consultancy role. The LPG provides prayer support, accountability, communication between local stakeholders, problem solving and fresh vision. Developing a missional youth church will take several years (2-3 years minimum before a worshipping community will emerge and then it will still be fragile).
4. Launching a **Learning Community for young people** in Christian leadership and mission.
5. Developing a Resource for young people to train as leaders and evangelists
6. Seeking partnerships which can multiply MYCs

Examples: -

In 2005, Sorted youth church began through making contact with young people in North Bradford. Over several years, the initial relationships with young people led to the formation of a community with small groups to explore faith. Soon after, a worshipping community formed, and young people became Christian disciples. To read more of the story, please see 'The DNA of Pioneer Ministry' (SCM, 2016) which tells the story and what can be learnt. One example is of a 13-year-old lad called Carl who got into trouble quite a lot. After 2 years, he decided that the leaders cared about him, causing him to open up to God and faith. After becoming a Christian, he became a young leader before eventually becoming a Christian youth worker.

After Sorted began, TYM youth church began in south London in 2013, followed by Tin Can in 2016. Since then, MYCN has been involved in helping others to start in places like Seacroft, Leeds. Please go to find out more [Missional Youth Church Network : Examples of MYCs \(hubb.church\)](#) The story of

TYM includes an example of two girls named Emma and Abbey whose stories can be heard at [Youth Evangelism - Emma & Abby's story - YouTube](#)

Any collaborations with other agencies/programmes/church and faith communities

MYCN is working regionally with Diocesan Youth Advisors and Missioners, Fresh Expressions UK and the Growing Faith Foundation. We work with church leaders, school chaplains and especially youth leaders and their volunteer teams.

The Growing Faith principle of finding ways to connect church, school and families works within MYCN. In Sorted, we had non-churched parents who fully supported their child's involvement with youth church because they saw the positive effect it had on their child but also because a relationship was built between youth leaders and parents. On one occasion, a parent whose two sons attended Sorted asked me to meet and pray because he was facing big decisions in his personal life. This was a result of school-church-family link working. We want to encourage these links to grow with all projects in our network.

Summary of any evaluation/research that has been undertaken or is being planned, and the outcomes achieved (with references to published/available materials)

There are various Church Army Review reports on Sorted, TYM and Tin Can. For example, George Lings wrote 'Encounters on the Edge - issue 48' [4002 - Encounters on the Edge... \(churcharmy.org\)](#) as a way of researching Sorted.

Building on this foundation but also incorporating insights and learning from Fresh Expressions UK, Church Army and various youth work organisations; MYCN has been enabling new missional youth churches to begin since April 2019. The pandemic has slowed the pace of what has been able to be achieved. However, a major Review of MYCN is underway consisting of interviews and research with new MYC project leaders. It is due to be complete with a public report by mid-2023.

Plans for the future

We are currently in talks with Church House's Vision & Strategy group and Church Army UK in regard to future funding and mission strategy.

Starting a MYC takes approx. 2.5-3 years from beginning pioneering youth work with non-church teens until a worshipping community is established. It's an important 3 years of development, learning and foundation building that we hope will pave the way for a MYC to be kept growing and become sustainable over time. Journeying with, supporting and mentoring new MYCs will continue over the coming years where we also hope there will be significant new learning that can be shared with the wider church.