

## News from Nick Blanch – March 2024

Well, February has shot by and I feel like I am beginning to have more of a grasp on how things work and what decisions I need to be making - I still make lots of blank faces each week though!

I meet with my team each week on zoom and gradually they are getting used to me. Trust is probably the most important thing in teamwork and unfortunately, this just takes time to build. You can't rush it but nevertheless, as each week goes by, I sense more open and honest conversations happening about the challenges we are facing and how we will overcome them. At the moment, the main thing we are working on together is the process of connecting and building relationships with new churches who want to start youthwork. Recently Youth for Christ have launched a free resource called 'Why Unchurched Young People Matter' which has been advertised on Premier radio as a free resource for churches. When people ask for this, it's my teams job to follow up on this and see how we can further help and promote working with young people. Getting this right will be crucial to long term relationships that are motivated to reach and engage with young people.

Alongside this I have been supporting Liz, the youthworker at East Norfolk Youth for Christ (Great Yarmouth and surrounding areas) as she recruits trustees for their centre. Without trustees for a Youth for Christ centre, there is no governance and legally cannot continue so these volunteers are vitally important! Unfortunately, 2 years ago, for varying reasons, their trustees all stepped down and the centre nearly closed. Thankfully the trustees at Norwich stepped in and took over governance temporarily but we desperately need new trustees to take over. Together, Liz and myself have been making plans, advertising and speaking to people who could help. This has not been easy so please do pray for this and if you think you know someone who could help in some way, please do get in touch!

I am also now overseeing the gap year programme. This is a year out we offer to young people to spend a year with one of the local centres and we provide some support and training. I've met with some of those involved just to check how things are going and we are looking at how we can implement some leadership training in the next few months. It's now prime time to be advertising this for next years cohort, so we've tweaked the website and application process adding in a testimonial from my friend Marcos who completed the gap year last year and is now studying at Moorlands. Here's what he said about it:

*"The last two years have been the most formative years of my life. As I've delved deeper into the word and learnt how to share it effectively with young people, I've grown more confident in my own skills and abilities and know how to use them in order to share the gospel. My time here has massively inspired me to get really into ministry and by God's grace, continue to share the gospel relevantly to anyone who will listen." Marcos Neira.*

He's a great example of why this type of scheme is so significant.

Next week I have a crucial 2 days in Halesowen at the main office. The first is with the whole of the national Staff Team and then the second day is my first face to face with the whole Relational Team. Yes, I know, lots of different teams! Let me introduce you to the six teams that form our National Staff Team:



### **COURAGEOUS TEAM:**

They might sound a little angry, but they are actually really nice people. This team focuses on evangelism, advocacy and research. They are the people who stand on the wall and look out at the horizon to tell us what's coming our way and how we need to position ourselves. That's why we call them courageous!



#### **HELPFUL TEAM:**

It's a big team and they work super hard at keeping everything going, keeping all the wheels turning and well oiled. They work in finance, income, marketing, and we even have someone whose job it is to look after everyone!



#### **RELATIONAL TEAM:**

My team! This is the team that absolutely love people. They love people so much that they are so wonderful Youth for Christ Centres but also visiting churches, speaking at events, working in our inner city deprived communities and pioneering new ministries. They are the face of much of what we do!



#### **INNOVATION TEAM:**

Another big team made up of lots of creatives who write, design, film, edit and record. This is the team who have big ideas but who also get to make them happen. On 20<sup>th</sup> March we will be releasing lots and lots of new resources - these guys worked on most of them. They are all pretty much in need of a rest!



#### **SPIRITUAL TEAM:**

It isn't a big team but it feels like they have a big impact! The National Director and Prayer Co-Ordinator keep us focussed on why we do what we do and who we are doing it for. At the very heart of our strategy is prayer and dependence on Jesus.



#### **TOGETHER TEAM:**

Again, one of our smaller teams that provide our training and educational development, as well as our mission hub gatherings.

Whether you have spotted it or not will depend on just how odd you find some of our team names, but the initial of each one spells out 'CHRIST'. Each team name demonstrates one of our core values. We are committed to sharing Jesus with young people and empowering the local church the best we can, and we seek to do so by being Courageous, Helpful, Relational, Innovative, Spiritual and Together, whilst being united in Christ.

#### **WE HAVE SOME BIG NEWS AND THEN WE HAVE SOME VERY BIG NEWS...**

The big news is that last year we came into contact with **over 1 million young people** either directly or indirectly. That is a lot of young people. In fact,

**1 OUT OF EVERY 8 YOUNG PEOPLE IN BRITAIN HAD SOME FORM OF EXPERIENCE OF YOUTH FOR CHRIST!**

The really big news has everything to do with our new teams, as outlined above. We have restructured the organisation to become single focussed, to help us work as one integrated mission with one primary outcome:

**On 20<sup>th</sup> March, we will be making a national statement of intent that will make**

**A VERY BOLD, IF NOT OUTRAGEOUS, COMMITMENT TO  
THE LOCAL CHURCH AND THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THIS  
NATION.**