

Case study

Onelife

Project profile

Onelife is a new organisation with a vision to raise up a generation of transformational leaders in the UK. Supported by St Andrews, Chorleywood, Onelife is building a network of young leaders through regional Young Leaders' Conferences, ongoing mentoring and learning communities for teenagers, leadership resources, and consultation for Churches who are seeking to release young people more effectively. www.onelifeonline.org.uk

Onelife is developing the work started by the Young Leaders' Conferences, which began in 2005.



Each conference is capped at 120 people to keep a relational focus over the three-days together.

The conferences have run seven times – in London, Manchester and Uganda.



Onelife works predominantly with 14-21 year olds, and their youth leaders.



How it all started...

The Young Leaders' Conference (YLC) officially began in 2005 and has grown out of the youth ministry at St Andrew's, Chorleywood. Having developed positions of leadership for young people in the youth group, it became essential to provide guidance for these young leaders to become as effective as possible, through the development of their character, understanding and skills. During 2004 and 2005, we ran a couple of 'Leaders Retreats', taking a select number of 12-18 young people away for a three-day retreat. However, as the youth group began to expand and a 'leader-rich' group emerged, it became increasingly

difficult to be selective about who we took away. At the same time, a number of other youth leaders were asking what resources we had to help train their young leaders – and so the YLC was born.

From the outset, we held the value that the best leadership is not taught, but caught – primarily through investing in relationships, so each conference has been capped at 120 people. We wanted to provide the best in terms of teaching, but were intent on preserving the relational feel of a 'smaller' event – and to be able to give the delegates full access to speakers and the worship team during the weekends.

YLC Manchester began after a youth leader wanted to make the training accessible for young leaders further north. So, we took a core team from Chorleywood and joined a team from the local area to host a conference at St. Chad's Church in Romiley. We are looking forward to expanding these across other regions too – initially in Glasgow and Cornwall. We wholeheartedly believe that the local church is the key to the transformation of society, so are passionate that each conference is hosted and earthed out of local churches and their contexts.

We have received amazing testimonies about young people who have stepped into leadership roles and established new aspects of ministry through their local church, alongside youth lead-



ers who have entirely changed structures within their ministry to release young leaders to be more effective in their various missions.

Last year also saw the first international YLC. A team of 11 travelled to Kasesse in Uganda, where we hosted a conference for around 400 pastors. The team also visited a church building project which had been funded by a collection held at the YLCs in the UK. Although our primary focus is to see the UK changed, each year we will continue to take young leaders to help run YLCs in Uganda for an experience of cross cultural leadership in the body of Christ.

And so, toward the end of 2008, Onelife was launched – an umbrella organisation for the ongoing work of YLC, but also providing scope to train young leaders through mentoring communities and other year-round discipleship programmes.

For more information on dates and booking: www.onelifeonline.org.uk / info@onelifeonline.org.uk

Pete Wynter is on the Senior Staff team at St Andrew's, Chorleywood and is the leader of Onelife. And yes, it is an unusual surname, and he is married to *Youthwork* Deputy Editor Sarah, who is also a leader of Onelife.

Five keys to spotting young leaders

- Look out for natural leadership among peers. Which young people influence the others? Consider that sometimes it's the young people who influence the group negatively – you just need to get hold of their gift and help them exercise it positively!
- Are they teachable? This is one of the most important qualities in a young leader. If they are open to be taught, they will keep learning, and if they keep learning, they will become a better leader.
- Are they able to inspire others? Leadership doesn't all have to be 'up front'

Obama-style persuasive talks, but there does have to be a sense that people will listen to and respect the young leader.

- Do they have a growing integrity? It's important that young leaders are living the life that they are advocating. God never requires sinless perfection from leaders, but He wants us to be real, recognise our shortcomings and try to have a lifestyle that is increasingly reflecting the character of God.
- Pray! Ask God to highlight the young leaders in your youth group. Sometimes He will highlight unusual candidates, but that shouldn't surprise us – remember the scruffy youngest son of Jesse forgotten in the fields?