Hirsch is the author of numerous award-winning books including *The Forgotten Ways; The Shaping of Things to Come; Right Here, Right Now; On the Verge;* and *The Permanent Revolution.* His experience includes leading a local church movement among the marginalized, developing training systems for innovative missional leadership, and heading up the mission and revitalization work of his denomination.

He is a co-founder and adjunct faculty member for the M.A. in Missional Church Movements at Wheaton College as well as being an adjunct faculty member at Fuller Seminary, George Fox Seminary, and Asbury Seminary. He also lectures frequently throughout Australia, Europe, and the United States.

**Our Plenary Speaker**

**Alan Hirsch**  
Forge Mission Training Network/100 Movements

Alan is the founding director of Forge Mission Training Network. Currently, he co-leads Future Travelers, an innovative learning program helping megachurches become missional movements. Known for his innovatative approach to mission, Alan Hirsch is considered to be a thought-leader and key mission strategist for churches across the Western world.

**Sunday Dinner at BJ’s Restaurant and Brewhouse followed by Fellowship at Disney Springs**

Busses depart from the Transportation Lobby at 5:00PM
Welcome from the Conference Director

October 29, 2016

Dear AYME Friends,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Association of Youth Ministry Educators, I want to welcome you to our annual conference in Orlando. We are thankful that you have prioritized your schedules to gather with us and other colleagues committed to youth ministry education. We are especially honored to welcome those of you who are joining us for the first time. If you need any assistance while you are here, please do not hesitate to contact me or any of our board members. We want to serve you in any way we can during your time with us.

AYME unabashedly places a high priority on relationships among colleagues. As a result, this conference has been designed to cultivate a sense of community. We hope you will be both challenged and inspired through the plenary and research presentations, Sunday worship, and the panel discussion on Monday morning. Just as importantly, we want you to take advantage of the opportunity to connect with others face-to-face for encouragement, dialogue, inspiration, and collaboration.

These annual gatherings have served as the catalyst for collaborative writing and research projects, initiated partnerships, and inspired new courses and teaching strategies. This happens through conversations and networking. Whether you are enjoying a meal together, perusing Disney Springs, lounging around a pool, or enjoying the many amenities offered by the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort, we encourage you to take time for meaningful engagement with friends, old and new.

This year’s gathering offers such a rich opportunity to conspire with each other about how we might more intentionally and effectively collaborate with God’s ongoing mission to reach young people. We want to thank you in advance for your presence and the unique contribution each of you will make in enhancing the experiences of your colleagues. We hope you will enjoy your time and leave more committed to assisting students to recognize and come alongside what God is already doing in their lives and communities.

In His service,

Matt Elofson
Matt Elofson, Ph.D.
Vice-President and Conference Director

Board of Directors: Brenda Snailum, Karen Jones, Mike Severe, Steve Bonner, Ron Belsterling, Dave Rahn, Matt Elofson, David Keehn, Nancy Going, Jay Sedwick, Cheryl Crawford, Mark Cannister

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Innovation and Mission in Youth Ministry

Daily Schedule

**Saturday, October 29**

1:30 p.m.  Registration Opens

3:00 p.m.  Welcome Reception and Conference Opening (Panzacola Ballroom)

4:00 p.m.  Academic Presentation Sessions #1 (Suwanee Breakout Rooms)

5:15 p.m.  Academic Presentation Sessions #2 (Suwanee Breakout Rooms)

7:00 p.m.  Dinner and Plenary Session #1 (Panzacola Ballroom)
           Alan Hirsch, *Reactivating Missional Ministry*

**Sunday, October 30**

7:30 a.m.  Breakfast on your own

8:30 a.m.  Worship (Panzacola Ballroom)
           Jay Strack, Student Leadership University

9:30 a.m.  Business Meeting (Panzacola Ballroom)

10:30 a.m. Academic Presentation Sessions #3 (Suwanee Breakout Rooms)

12:00 p.m. Lunch and Plenary Session #2 (Panzacola Ballroom)
           Alan Hirsch, *Embracing a Theology of Risk and Innovation in Ministry*

2:30 p.m.  Academic Presentation Sessions #4 (Suwanee Breakout Rooms)

5:00 p.m.  Depart for Disney Springs, Dinner at BJ’s Restaurant and Brewhouse
           Busses Depart from Transportation Lobby at 5:00 p.m. sharp!

**Monday, October 31**

7:30 a.m.  Breakfast on your own

8:30 a.m.  Academic Presentation Sessions #5 (Suwanee Breakout Rooms)

10:00 a.m. Plenary Session #3 (Panzacola Ballroom)
           *Participating in God’s Mission in a Context of Crisis* – A Panel Discussion with Brenda Snailum,
           Daniel White Hodge, Jay Strack, Tommy Carrington, and Margaret English de Alminana

           **Enhance Your Teaching Drawing** (must be present to win): Apple iPad Air,
           Wacom Intuos Pad, Bose Bluetooth Speakers, Seagate Portable Drives,
           Keyspan Presentation Remotes, and Visa Gift Cards.

11:30 a.m. Conference Ends
Academic Presentation Sessions

Academic Presentation Session #1
Saturday, 4:00—5:00PM

Suwannee 11:
Jake Mulder, Fuller Youth Institute—Growing Young: Six Core Commitments of Churches Effectively Engaging Young People
The Fuller Youth Institute has completed a mixed methods study of over 250 congregations with the goal of understanding how and why exemplary churches are effectively engaging teenagers and emerging adults ages 15-29. Findings from the multi-stage project suggest that effective churches consistently share six core commitments that are contextually embodied in the overall congregational culture. This presentation will explain the research journey, unpack critical insights, and invite feedback on the theoretical framework.

Suwannee 12:
Thomas E. Bergler, Huntington University—Mapping the Missional Landscape of Emerging Adulthood
What will it take to make disciples of Jesus among emerging adults in America today? This presentation will map the cultural and religious landscape of emerging adulthood by answering three crucial questions: 1) Are emerging adults today less religious than those of previous generations? 2) What are the religious lives of emerging adults like? 3) What are the causes of these patterns of religion and spirituality among emerging adults? In missiological terms, multiple people groups can be found among emerging adults, and that reality must inform disciple making efforts.

Suwannee 13:
Sarah F. Farmer, Yale Divinity School—Exploring a Pedagogy of Missional Ministry to Youth on Lockdown
Incarceration dislodges youth from society; reentry rituals are needed to help transition young people back. Based on qualitative research with formerly incarcerated women and personal experience teaching in a women's prison, I propose a missional pedagogy that might inform our approach to formerly incarcerated youth. Rather than reinforcing rituals of punishment, youth ministers can be trained to create and conduct rituals of reintegration with symbolic and instrumental functions that promote joy and flourishing in youth who have been incarcerated. Rituals of this sort allow ministries to not only share the content of the gospel message, but also to incarnate the compassion revealed through the gospel message.

Suwannee 19:
Dave Keehn, Biola University—Why we should care: A Call to Help Ministry Students Manage Personal Finances
The “debt as investment” approach to education has increased the school loan rates for undergraduate students. This article looks at the true cost of school debt and calls for Christian institutions of higher education to take an active role in providing financial training for ministry students. A financial management curriculum of three 90-minute sessions is outlined to facilitate financial training for ministry students to make debt choices for an education that will both enable graduation and secure sufficient income within his or her vocation.

Suwannee 20:
Sharon Galgay Ketcham, Gordon College—Best Practices for Navigating the Demands Accompanying Life as Teacher-Scholar
This session will facilitate a discussion about the particular tensions involved for ministry professors who seek to excel both as teacher and scholar. Individuals in such positions work hard to balance pastoral inclinations, educational aims, and academic pursuits. We will work together to define these challenges and pool our collective wisdom to create a set of best practices.
Suwannee 11:  
**Rich McLaughlin, Trinity International University—Missional Praise: Overflowing Worship from Times of Revival**

This session offers a theological foundation and a historical review of missional praise with examples drawn from the First Great Awakening to the present. Worship and praise are central to reorientation toward God. Revival leaves spiritual markers in the form of hymns and songs that deserve to be highlighted as expressions of people freshly connecting with God and His mission.

Suwannee 12:  
**Steven Argue, Fuller Seminary—Undergraduate Spiritual Struggle: Perceptions of Spirituality and the Quest to Remain Faithful**

Undergraduates who encounter spiritual struggle need academic and religious leaders who can understand their experiences to effectively support them. This study extends the research on undergraduate spiritual struggle by capturing and interpreting Evangelical Christian undergraduates’ descriptions of their spiritual struggle experiences. Beyond classic categories, this study proposes a separating-integrating continuum as a lens for understanding how students’ perspectives influence the kinds of spiritual struggles they encounter and the resources they access to work through that struggle.

Suwannee 13:  
**Glenn Russell, Andrews University—Fame, Shame and Social Media: Missional Insights for Youth Ministry**

Social media shapes and saturates youth and adult identities. A thoughtless status update or an ill-conceived tweet may precipitate an avalanche of shaming. A single click can begin to destroy a person’s reputation. America is morphing into a “fame-shame” culture. A conceptual understanding of traditional “honor-shame” societies provides insights for youth ministry. This presentation analyzes our “fame-shame” culture through the lenses of social media, scripture and missional analysis.

Suwannee 19:  
**Jacob Sorensen, Sacred Playgrounds—Christian Camping Ministry: Impacts and Significance to the Church**

An inadequate scholarly foundation has allowed for misinformation and unsubstantiated claims related to Christian camping ministry. The Effective Camp Research Project used a grounded theory approach to characterize a particular form of camping ministry, in hopes of providing a firm foundation for future research. The potential impacts of the camp experience are revealed, along with a distinct camp model, which has important implications for ministry in multiple settings and particular relevance to outreach ministries.

Suwannee 20:  
**Montague R. Williams, Eastern Nazarene College—Practicing Hope in a Divided Neighborhood: The Call for Narrative Ecclesiology in an Urban Congregation’s Ministry Among Youth and Families**

This paper offers a practical theological analysis of one congregation’s evangelism among young people in an urban neighborhood that is divided along racial, cultural, and economic lines. Leaning upon findings in on-the-ground research, this paper makes the case for a missional youth ministry framework rooted in narrative ecclesiology. Participants will be guided to explore the significance of creatively engaging geographical and social borders in discerning and living out the *missio Dei* in contemporary contexts.
Suwannee 11:
Ben Espinoza, Michigan State University—When Darwin Comes to Youth Group: Faith, Science, and Missional Youth Ministry
This session asks “how can we use scientific engagement as a missional strategy in youth ministry?” The paper will briefly situate this question in the context of the ongoing dialogue between faith and science, and explore some of the cutting-edge work being done in science and youth ministry. The paper will then prescribe practices for how scientific engagement can enable our youth ministries to appeal to scientifically-minded students.

Suwannee 12:
Jason Lief, Northwestern College—Mission as Icon: Taking Jean Luc Marion to Winnebago, Nebraska
Every summer I lead a week long project called Prairie Serve that introduces high school kids to the Native people living in Winnebago, Nebraska. The week long experience is a combination of worship, work, recreation, and personal reflection—a typical high school mission trip. As youth ministry becomes more missionally focused, the serve project is a central part of the youth ministry experience. This paper will constructively engage the recent critiques of serve projects by connecting the work of Prairie Serve with Marion’s work. More specifically, this paper will explore how Marion’s theological and philosophical work provides a basis for a practical theology of youth ministry.

Suwannee 19:
Chap Clark, Fuller Theological Seminary and Duffy Robbins, Eastern University—Missional Church and Youth Ministry: Integrating the Conversation
Youth Ministry Education should assist our students in adapting innovative and missional approaches. This session explores what it means to integrate current youth ministry conversations and the “innovation/missional” church movement. The session will provide:

• An overview of the “missional/innovative” ecclesial conversation,
• An overview of 5 Views and other perspectives experienced in the church and taught in classrooms,
• A dialogue regarding the integration of the missional conversation with current practices, and
• Suggestions for bringing this integration into the classroom.

Suwannee 20:
Mike Langford, Seattle Pacific University—Eutheology: Youth Ministry as Contextual Theology
If we understand “youth” not merely as a developmental stage, but also as a distinct culture, then the segregation of adolescents from the rest of the church takes on overtones of prejudicial exclusion. Viewing youth ministry through the lens of missional theology exposes the dangers of youth ministry as colonialism, and instead suggests our interaction with youth as an opportunity to discover the gospel together, taking seriously the theological activity of youth as legitimately (and necessary) contextual theology (“eutheology,” or “new theology”), no less than the theology of other cultures.
Suwannee 11:
Ron Belsterling, Lancaster Bible College; James Hampton, Asbury Seminary; and Brenda Snailum, Denver Seminary—The Future of Youth Ministry Theological Education: Looking at the Past to Inform Future Practice
The Survey of Youth Ministry Degrees in Higher Education (SYMD) is an inquiry into the prevalence and recent changes in academic youth ministry degrees in North America. Anecdotal data suggests that youth ministry degree programs may be declining in prevalence and attendance. Is this true? How have youth ministry degree programs changed? Collected records from accrediting agencies combined with survey responses from AYME members provides important preliminary findings about changes and current trends in youth ministry education that can assist faculty as they consider future directions of their degree programs.

Suwannee 12:
Dave Sanders, Judson University—SCREENERS: Youth Ministry from Now Until 2036
For the next twenty years, youth ministry will be primarily about “Screeners” (“Homelanders” by Strauss & Howe), a distinctive generation following the enormous generational cohort of Millennials. Educators, youth workers and churches have barely glanced at this generation, but the lens of Generational Theory can offer a beneficial approach to identifying and strategizing our engagement with Screeners. While in its infancy, research on Screeners indicates marked differences from Millennials in almost every way. Let’s prepare!

Suwannee 19:
Len Kageler, Nyack College; co-authored by Amy Jacober and Evan Usher—Human Error in Christian Youth Work: A Cross-National Study of Youth Worker Mistakes
This paper looks at human error as it applies to church based youth ministry. Over 500 youth workers in ten countries filled out our survey instrument. The heuristic value of our research especially for educators is that if we can have a research based understanding of human error in youth work we can, in our curriculum and pedagogy, both preemptively and redemptively address key issues in the classroom.

Suwannee 20:
Ricardo Gonzalez, St. Thomas University—Building Young Disciples for the 21st Century: Communities of Practice as a Model of Youth Ministry
What are some best practices that can lead to greater youth involvement in the life of the Christian community? The answer to this question lies in the community itself. How can a “communities of practice” vision reinvigorate current youth ministry programs and make church the “third place.” The presentation will lay out fundamental elements of a working theology of youth ministry based on this community model and will propose best practices for effective programs and innovative ways of engaging younger millennial and generation Z students.
Suwannee 11:
Elizabeth Bjorling Poest, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School—Chickens and Eggs: Which Comes First: Belonging or Believing? A Study of Belonging and Belief in the Local Church Youth Ministry"
Which comes first belonging or belief. What is belonging and how does it connect to our beliefs? What implications does that order have for youth ministries and their educational and pedagogical impact? This study will explore the literature on belonging and belief in the local church context allowing us to gain insights into a critical component and often claimed distinctive of youth ministry and education.

Suwannee 12:
Brian Hull, Asbury University—The Networks of God: Evangelizing Youth Peer Clusters
Peer clusters are gender specific groups of 4-10 mid-adolescents gathered around a shared value(s) and a shared narrative. The peer cluster becomes the formative influence for most teenagers. How do we reach peer clusters with the good news of Jesus Christ when our dominant models of evangelism focus on the individual? This paper examines two previous models of evangelizing people groups, Donald McGavran (20th century) and Saint Patrick (5th century), to see what can be learned to reach the peer clusters of today. Possibilities grounded in social networking theory arise.

Suwannee 20:
Steven Tighe, Anglican Church in North America—Parents as Missioners: The Surprising Strategies and Challenges of Growing Faith in the Family
Contrary to popular belief and much current literature, the faith of adolescents brought up as Christians in Christian homes is not a foregone conclusion. Successful parents see their role as a missional one, carefully contextualizing the Gospel for the particular characteristics of each child. This paper reports on the results of a qualitative study of eight unusual families, all of whose children are now active evangelical Christians, and examines the specific efforts of the parents to shape their children’s faith, as well as the children’s reports about what really mattered to the development of their faith.
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