Peering into the Future of Youth Ministry: Equipping Students with the Competencies for the Next 15 Years of Youth Ministry Leadership

24th Annual Conference
Hilton Anatole Hotel, Dallas, TX
October 28-30, 2017

www.aymeducators.org
Sunday Dinner Theatre
with Comedian Bob Smiley at
Dallas Theological Seminary

Our Plenary Speakers

Rev. Mark Matlock
WisdomWorks

Mark has been serving youth pastors, students, and parents for more than two decades. Most recently Mark served as President of Youth Specialties, providing leadership for programs and training events. Mark created WisdomWorks in 1996 to help people explore life transformation by acquiring wisdom through teaching, coaching, and curated learning experiences. Mark speaks to hundreds of thousands of students, parents, and youth workers around the world each year. He lives in Texas with his wife and their two children. When he’s not traveling, he volunteers in his church’s youth ministry and amazes family and friends with his culinary skills.

Dr. Nancy Going
Vibrant Faith Ministries

Nancy is a twenty-some year church Youth Ministry veteran. She currently serves as Executive Director of Vibrant Faith Ministries. Before VF, Nancy worked on the Children, Youth and Family team at Luther Seminary. In addition, she has written curriculum, led retreats and workshops. She has a Master of Arts in Counseling from Covenant Seminary and received her Ph.D. from Luther Seminary, in adolescent spiritual development.

Buses depart at 6:00PM
Meet in the Tower Lobby
Welcome from the Conference Director

October 28, 2017

Dear AYME Friends,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to welcome you to our conference in Dallas. We are thankful you have chosen 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 the conference.

AYME unabashedly places a high priority on relationships among colleagues. As a result, this conference has been designed to cultivate a sense of community. These annual gatherings have served as the catalyst for collaborative writing and research projects, initiated partnerships, and inspired new courses and teaching strategies. Take advantage of the Free Time, discussions after Academic Research Presentations, Late Night Conversations and spontaneous opportunities to talk, walk and discover all that God may have in store for you this weekend. We especially encourage building new friendships as you reconnect with old ones.

This year’s conference theme will ask, “What will youth ministry focus on 15 years from now? What skills will youth leaders need to master to navigate their ministry context?” Using “Peering into the Future of Youth Ministry” as our theme, Mark Matlock and Nancy Going will be leading us to consider how we respond to the current state of youth ministry in North America. You will play a key role in this conference through discussions of youth ministry priorities that will be facilitated as a response to each general session. Come ready to engage, think, dream and be open to change what you do in equipping students to be youth leaders.

Our hope is these discussions inform the future of your youth ministry education as you adopt best and emerging practices. We hope you leave the conference reflecting deeply on what all this means to you as a youth ministry educator.

May God richly bless you in this discovery process,

Dave Keehn, Ph.D.
Vice-President and Conference Director

Board of Directors: Brenda Snailum, David Keehn, Steve Bonner, Richelle White, Matt Elofson, Paul Kelly, Dave Rahn, Nancy Going, David Odom, Jay Sedwick, Cheryl Crawford, Mark Cannister

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Peering into the Future of Youth Ministry
Daily Schedule

**Saturday, October 28**
1:00 p.m.  Registration Opens
2:30 p.m.  Plenary Session #1 (Coronado Ballroom)
           Rev. Mark Matlock, *Through the Looking Glass*
3:30 p.m.  Academic Presentation Sessions #1 (Cortez Breakout Rooms)
4:45 p.m.  Academic Presentation Sessions #2 (Cortez Breakout Rooms)
5:30 p.m.  Break & Exhibitors Open
6:00 p.m.  Dinner and Plenary Session #2 (Coronado Ballroom)
           Rev. Mark Matlock, *Future Landscape of Youth Ministry, Part I*
9:00 p.m.  Late Night Conversations

**Sunday, October 29**
7:30 a.m.  Breakfast on your own
8:30 a.m.  Worship (Coronado Ballroom)
           Rick Lawrence, Simply Youth Ministry
9:30 a.m.  AYME Community Meeting (Coronado Ballroom)
10:00 a.m. Affinity Group Mixer
10:45 a.m. Academic Presentation Sessions #3 (Cortez Breakout Rooms)
11:45 a.m. Lunch and Plenary Session #3 (Coronado Ballroom)
           Rev. Mark Matlock, *Future Landscape of Youth Ministry, Part II*
2:15 p.m.  Academic Presentation Sessions #4 (Cortez Breakout Rooms)
3:00 p.m.  Break & Exhibitors Open
3:45 p.m.  Academic Presentation Sessions #5 (Cortez Breakout Rooms)
4:30 p.m.  Break & Exhibitors Open
6:00 p.m.  Depart for Dinner Theatre with Comedian Bob Smiley
           Busses Depart from *Tower Lobby Entrance* at 6:00 p.m. sharp!

**Monday, October 30**
7:30 a.m.  Breakfast on your own
8:45 a.m.  Academic Presentation Sessions #6 (Cortez Breakout Rooms)
9:45 a.m.  Plenary Session #4 (Coronado Ballroom)
           Dr. Nancy Going, *Reflection and Response: What does this mean for Youth Ministry Education?*
           **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  See you in St. Louis!!!
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Academic Presentation Sessions

Academic Presentation Session #1  
Saturday, 3:30—4:15PM

**Cortez A:**  
Angela Williams Gorrell, Yale Divinity School — Faith for a Way of Life: Christian Formation and Education in a New Media Culture (Professional Development)  
The future of youth ministry necessitates shaping learning communities that are attentive to the new media landscape by integrating theological media literacy into Christian education and formation: catechesis in churches, Christian education in the academy, and faithful living (engaging in hybrid Christian practices). This session provides pedagogical aids for leading groups in reflecting on, articulating, and embodying faith in a new media milieu with attention to identity formation, relationships, and participation in the common good.

**Cortez B:**  
Lisa Howard, Johnson University — Parental Involvement Factors that Promote Adolescent Faith Formation  
This research considers the broad knowledge base and multidimensional aspect of adolescent faith formation and parental involvement factors that promote faith formation. Parent, grandparent, and peer relationships, along with parental warmth, role modeling and conversations were found to promote adolescent faith formation. By understanding adolescent development and discovering some parental involvement factors that promote adolescent faith formation, it is possible to assist parents and Christian ministers to instill Christian beliefs in the next generation.

**Cortez C:**  
Len Kageler, Cheleste Gonzalez, Faith Argeroplos, Nyack College — Embryonic Gene Editing: The Future Has Arrived: Implications for Youth Ministry and Youth Ministry Education  
After a brief historical recap of the gene editing quest and the current status of embryonic gene editing, this paper explores possible implications for youth ministry programs when “enhanced” young people are old enough to enter church based youth ministry. We see four areas of youth ministry that may be impacted in a brave new world where genetically modified youths are commonplace: programming, faith development, self-image, and parents. We also surveyed and interviewed the youth pastors of the largest churches in America to assess their reactions to these developments.

**Cortez D:**  
Brian Cress, International Justice Mission — Integrating Justice into Transformational Youth Ministry  
Justice is not just what we do, but who we are becoming as transformed Christians in the image of Christ. It begins with the training of the next generation of youth ministry leaders. We will answer the questions; “Why Justice?” and “Why Now?” Looking to Scripture, local church involvement, and current research by the Millennial Impact 2017 Report this paper focuses on social justice causes. For educators, this strives to deepen the youth leaders’ call to justice.
Cortez A:
Amy Jacober, Sonoran Theological Group — *Hesed: How Youth Ministry with Teens with Disabilities Helps Restore an Abundant Community (Will be repeated on Monday)*
The notion of *hesed* grounds this paper, which explores movements from marginalization to inclusion and integration of adolescents with disabilities. This paper draws from evidence in the secular world supporting the benefits of including those with disabilities as well as the biblical precedent of *hesed*. The combination of these elements creates space for the church to live into four aspects of being church that are strengthened by the genuine inclusion of those with disabilities.

Cortez B:
Richard Ross, Southwestern Seminary — *Youth Ministry in Thirds: To Accelerate the Development of Lifetime Faith*
Approximately half of those active in church youth groups leave the church. Movement toward a new paradigm seems essential. Both Scripture and research provide a rationale: 1) For youth ministry leaders to contribute to the spiritual life in homes where teenagers live; 2) For youth ministry leaders to multiply warm relationships and shared ministry between teenagers and the congregation; 3) For age-focused youth ministry. Therefore, youth ministry leaders should view their ministry in thirds. They need to be trained in the competencies such an approach requires.

Cortez C:
Michael Severe, Taylor University — *Empowering Teen Vocation: The Effect of Theological Inquiry on Christian Identity and Vocational Articulation among Urban Youth*
Adolescents have significant capacity to engage in theological inquiry and extended intentional, theological reflection. What is the result on faith, practices and articulateness of under-resourced youth as they engage in theological inquiry? The research population includes all participants of a summer theology institute that engages academic inquiry and practical ministry. This study will explore the relationship between theological inquiry, Christian life practices and articulation of vocation with connections to the National Study of Youth and Religion.

Cortez D:
Dudley Chancey, Oklahoma Christian University — *How the Church Treats the LGBT Community*
This paper provides a review of literature connecting church with the LGBT community, and a sampling of qualitative interviews with members of the LGBT community discussing their interactions with the church. Much of the literature describes experiences of LGBT persons with the church as not positive. The qualitative interviews in this study revealed some negative views about God and church. There were also interviews that were positive, with the LGBT members being thankful for their church and its response to their orientation. Other interviews began with negative stories, but ended with current positive situations for the LGBT members. Church leaders need to recognize that LGBT lives matter, and that LGBT members can contribute to the mission of the church.
Cortez A:
Kara Powell and Steve Argue, Fuller Theological Seminary — Getting Warmer: What Growing Young Research on the Importance of Relational Warmth Reveals About Churches’ Self-Assessment with Implications for Future Youth Ministry Practitioners
Prominent among the qualities identified in a study of 250 congregations nominated for their effective ministry with 15-29 year-olds was institutional warmth, meaning an accepting, authentic, caring environment that fosters a sense of belonging. We share data revealing the importance of relational warmth, explain the development of the Growing Young Assessment and the Warmth subscale in particular, and illustrate the impact of institutional warmth while highlighting future implications for practitioners in youth and young adult ministry.

Cortez B:
Sam Baker, Corban University — Who’s Shaping Whom? Digital Disruption in the Spiritual Lives of Post-familial Emerging Adults (Will be repeated on Monday)
This paper investigates how late adolescent, emerging adults engage with new media, paying special attention to how digital technology influences their neurological, personal, and spiritual vitalities. Youth ministry practitioners, it will be argued, must be far more attentive to the conforming and transforming properties of digital engagement, which more profoundly impact the spiritual lives of late adolescents. A viable theology of technology is promoted, and suggestions for discipleship and stewardship praxis are encouraged.

Cortez C:
Joyce del Rosario, Fuller Theological Seminary — Cognitive Anthropological Study of Views on Faith and Motherhood Between Adolescent Mothers and their Mentors
This study will analyze the cultural and theological differences between Young Lives mentors and teen moms they serve. Separate focus groups were conducted for teen moms and their mentors where they were asked to respond to various images of Mary mother of Jesus. This study sought to uncover the underlying gaps between both communities using various images of Mary mother of Jesus and their responses to those images.

Cortez D:
Graham D. Stanton, Ridley College — “Thy Firmness Makes My Circle Just”: Centre and Fringe in Productive Partnership
Viewed from the perspective of complexity theory, effective youth ministry in an uncertain future must develop processes of innovation and experimentation, requiring youth ministers and youth ministry educators to learn relational dynamics that foster productive relationships between those in the conservative centre with those on the radical fringe. This paper outlines key relational structures of youth ministry education directed by the relationship between young people and their elders in the New Testament church.
Cortez A:
Chap Clark, Fuller Theological Seminary — Envisioning the Future of Youth Ministry: An Ecclesiological Approach
This seminar explores the question *What does it mean to prepare students for leadership in the church via youth ministry?* versus *What does it mean to prepare students for leadership in youth ministry?* This brief phrase – “in the church” – makes all the difference in how our students see their work and calling as they enter into youth ministry practice. Throughout we will ground the Youth Ministry task theologically and close with specifically applicable implications.

Cortez B:
Megan G. Brown, University of Northwestern — Understanding and Teaching Emerging Adults (Professional Development)
Understanding emerging adulthood has become a rising topic of interest in academic circles. While emerging adulthood is becoming more widely accepted and understood, little research focuses on emerging adults and academics. This seminar will focus on the available research to date and address some key themes that have surfaced: authenticity, credibility, learning environment, and relationships. If we are going to educate well, it is important to understand what our current students value, what they are looking for, and how they learn.

Cortez C:
Chris Clements, McMaster Divinity College — Experience and Christian Nurture in Youth Ministry
To what extent might experiential learning theory find a home in youth groups in post-Christian North America? This paper initially explores what is theological about the experiences of young people at Christian summer camps; a setting where attention to experience is a significant part of ministry practice. Thereafter, a theology of experience is developed. Finally, practical vision is offered, situating experience within theological teaching in church-based youth ministries.

Cortez D:
Leslie Long, Morgan Mitchell, Oklahoma City University — Stained Glass to Screens: How Modern Technology Influences an Ancient Faith
In an undergraduate course, Theology in Ministry, students discussed the implications of social media on the Church. Reading the book *Networked Theology*, they then created a survey to collect data about online community and church practices. The study provides a preliminary look at a variety of perceptions and encourages the Church to continue its discussion as they move forward with the use of social media, asking, “Is there a place on the screen for all?”
Cortez A:
Art Canales, Marian University — Models and Methods for Youth and Young Adult Ministry (Professional Development)
This paper is a synopsis of my forthcoming book *Models and Methods for Youth and Young Adult Ministry: Ecumenical Examples and Pastoral Approaches for the Christian Church* (Cascade, 2018). All four models are distinct yet complementary. Each model acts as a reference point or accountability factor for the manner in which a youth and young adult ministry operates. The four models are as follows: (1) biblical-hermeneutic model, (2) the servant-leadership model, (3) liberation model, and (4) the Christian discipleship model. Each of these models will correspond with a chapter in the book. Each of these models will be considered individually and objectively. Therefore, no one model is better or worse than the other. It is solely up to the discretion of the congregational youth minister, campus minister, and/or young adult minister to adopt an appropriate model.

Cortez B:
Elizabeth Bjorling Poest, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School — A Living Library: A Venue for the Future of Testimonies, Storytelling and Transmitted Faith through Dialogue (2017 AYME Emerging Scholar Award Recipient)
We live in a world shaped by stories and filled with lived libraries of plots. When stewarded well, stories aid us in interpreting lived experience. This completed research explores the application of narrative learning theory, living library strategies, and digital storytelling in local youth ministries, examining the use of narrative through digital storytelling and living library learning strategies as well as the implications and risks.

Cortez C:
Virginia Ward, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary — Holistic Youth Development in the Urban Church Context
Urban youth workers encounter complex systems surrounding the multi-ethnic urban family and church. This study used the Search Institutes’ 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents as a measuring rod for multi-ethnic urban families to assess their churches and family holistic youth development approaches. Best practices were identified that youth leaders utilized to build “authoritative communities” to support urban youth and their families. This will be a presentation of the early findings from an ongoing research project.

Cortez D:
Steven Argue, Fuller Theological Seminary — Beyond “New and Improved”: Guiding Young People’s Entrepreneurial Expressions of Faith
Today’s youth ministry needs a new brand of entrepreneurial fuel. Young people’s most innovative and faithful expressions will get co-opted by established, youth ministry narratives unless youth ministry educators and leaders scaffold their approaches with entrepreneurial hermeneutics, pedagogy, and metrics. These elements take youth ministry beyond “new and improved” frames that limit entrepreneurialism and become the necessary fuel for interpreting, supporting, and guiding young peoples’ spiritual trajectories.
Cortez A:
Data for this study were collected from 15 full-time youth ministers in Churches of Christ from throughout the United States. The qualitative, phenomenological study utilized a 12-question semi-structured interview format to gather the lived experience of subjects. Key study findings identified 70 themes that answered four research questions. Subject responses from research question one, “What leadership strategies and practices are employed by long tenured youth ministers in Churches of Christ?” are discussed in this paper. Study findings have substantive implications for men and women considering youth ministry as a career or calling, and for institutions of learning that train those preparing for the youth ministry profession.

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Who are we? The Association of Youth Ministry Educators (AYME) is a Community of Christ-Centered Scholars—a Christian faith-based organization and collegial gathering of professionals committed to developing the next generation of youth ministers.
• We affirm the tenets of the Christian faith as articulated in the Apostle’s Creed, and pursue unity while honoring the broad expressions of our faith.
• Our membership includes teachers, scholars, researchers, and graduate students in the field of youth ministry. This includes those affiliated with institutions of higher education as well as organizations involved in non-formal education such as denominational and para-church organizations.

What do we do? We gather in order to further the field of youth ministry education through cooperative networking, scholarly contributions, and critical engagement with the varied practices of youth ministry and other disciplines.

What core values govern our work?
• Service to Christ’s church
• Critical thinking and scholarship
• Collegial and collaborative relationships
• Dialogue with people from distinct backgrounds and contexts
If you are in seminary, you will want to add this to your canon of must-reads. If you are a youth worker, this volume offers you both fresh inspiration and a prescriptive way forward to a ministry that truly transforms.

—SKIP MASBACK, director, Yale Youth Ministry Institute

This book has reignited my zeal for ministry preparation that has a curricular core of Christian education.

—KAREN E. JONES, Huntington University

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—CHAP CLARK, author of Adoptive Youth Ministry; Fuller Theological Seminary

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WE ARE COMMITTED TO TRAINING THOSE WHO TRAIN. Whether you are educating others through a church ministry or in a seminary classroom, we have degrees designed to equip you for excellence. Our M.Div., MACE, D.Min. and Ph.D. degrees are accessible, academically rigorous, and thoroughly biblical.

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