Before becoming enmeshed in the development of youth ministry education, one clarification needs to be made. No substantive change in youth ministry has come out of academia. Yes, academics have tweaked around the edges of changes made at the grass roots of youth ministry, but this has only been fine tuning what already exists. Youth ministry has always been a transaction between caring Christian adults and young people they perceive to be in need.

With that sobering realization, the question must be asked, What is the role of the academic in youth ministry? Thus, what role has youth ministry education played in the two century development of Christian youth ministry? The answer is both profound and simple. Youth ministry education exists to provide a theoretical and theological basis for the practice of youth ministry and to equip novice youth workers to enable the young people with whom they come in contact to live their lives more Christianly.

To illustrate, the author would like to take the liberty to draw from his own experience. After four years of youth ministry in a church located in a socially changing neighborhood, the author paused to reflect on the effectiveness of what he had been doing. The approach to youth ministry that he had used was eclectic but based on an adaptation of the Youth Fellowship strategy initiated thirty years before. Dissatisfied with the impact the ministry was having on the youth in his church, he began looking for something new.

A professor at the state university the author attended used a textbook he wrote on group dynamics as a class text. In that book the professor built a case for human activities being goal oriented. The author was intrigued with this idea and began asking how that idea could be applied to his youth ministry. One a slip of paper, that remains in the fly leaf of the book, the author sketched an idea that he would later call the Project Approach to Youth Ministry.

The following August, the author met with his student leaders and suggested a series of goals oriented activities that allow students to explore their spiritual gifts culminating in a variety of ministries to the church and community. Task oriented activities in preparation for the final act of service would replace the existing youth group meetings. A musical performance, a play along with the building of props and costumes, a Thanksgiving dinner served to less fortunate people in our community, and a tutoring program in a nearby urban area, all coached by Christian adults generated an enthusiasm and intensity for Christian service that the church had never seen from its youth.

When the author began researching the idea in order to write his master’s thesis, he discovered a whole body of literature developed by educator, William Heard Kilpatrick and his colleagues at the Teachers College of Columbia University in New York. Building on the educational philosophy of John Dewey, Kilpatrick developed the Project Method of childhood education (Kilpatrick). Adapting Kilpatrick’s research and honing his own theory, the author integrated the theological framework with which he had begun and soon found himself invited to do workshops and write articles about the the Project Approach to Youth Ministry. In time the author was asked to contribute to an academic textbook on youth ministry as his innovation became part of the literature of
the academy. He later joined the ranks of academia analyzing models of youth ministry as well as writing of the history of Protestant youth ministry.

Unique? Not really. Most of the interfacing of youth ministry with the academy has followed a similar trajectory. In the two hundred plus years of Protestant youth ministry three distinct cycles of youth ministry, each built on a theological base, have followed a pattern of innovation to theory to education in perpetuating and refining the manner in which youth ministry was done. In each cycle, both theology and educational theory were gradually lost and were replaced by an emphasis on programs. Eventually the various forms of youth ministry became disconnected from either culture or the essential work of the church. With this deterioration, a new expression of youth ministry emerged and a new cycle began.

Throughout the history of youth ministry two forms of education have appeared in a predictable fashion. First there were non-formal expressions of education found in conferences, workshops, non-credit training schools, training manuals and a wealth of articles published for consumption by front line youth ministry workers. In time these were followed by formal expressions of education found in college classes, majors, and eventually research degrees. The remainder of this article will trace the development of youth ministry education.

Non-formal youth ministry education

Non-formal education most frequently has to do with shaping values in non-schooling models. The earliest forms of youth ministry education were found in two non-formal forms - union gatherings and published training materials. Union meetings, first promoted by associations of Sunday Schools, temperance groups and later by denominational groups, were opportunities for people who were interested in working with young people to gather for admonition and stimulation. These rallies modeled the best in youth ministry techniques of their day while reinforcing the theological and social outcomes desired by the host group.

Union Gatherings

The Sunday School movement understood it's mission in educational terms. Initially it was a school for the poor and ethnic groups in Great Britain and America. The American Sunday School Union (ASSU), founded in 1824, sought to promote the Sunday School movement through providing inspiration and training for the volunteers who led local Sunday Schools. Though the national organization used the "union" idea in a different way, calling itself an "union", the Sunday School movement was actually comprised of local Sunday School unions who brought Sunday School workers together for encouragement and training. These events were strong on inspiration and weak on training until the ASSU started holding national conventions where training workshops began to appear.

The Juvenile Temperance movement was the grandparent of modern local church youth ministry in that it was primarily focused on providing support to volunteers in primarily Protestant churches to assist them in fostering one aspect of what they understood as moral behavior in children and youth. Little formal education was needed
to accomplish the task they embraced. So, like the Sunday school movement, no formal education was provided for either workers or leaders. Unlike the Sunday School movement, the Juvenile Temperance movement was associated with a broader Temperance movement for adults that was rich in research on the effects of alcohol consumption. That research found its way into Juvenile Temperance movement training events and literature.

The Band of Hope, a British juvenile temperance organization, brought together as many as 5,000 young people and adults in festivals to promote the virtues of temperance using songs, choir anthems extolling temperance, as well as testimonies, stories, and messages which in turn were used by local temperance leaders to help young people live temperate lives. America saw similar meetings, especially associated with American Temperance conventions in Saratoga, New York. (Senter, 120-124)

As denominational groups observed the growing influence of the Sunday school and temperance groups they began sponsoring their own Union meetings, combining the two emphases within their own theological framework and traditions. Denominational Union gatherings were local rallies that generated enthusiasm for ministry to young people and children while at the same time proved to be excellent training vehicles where ideas strategies of ministry were modeled and exchanged. It was very common for a song to be learned at a Union Rally on Saturday night and by the following week it was being sung in gatherings of youth all over the city. Brooklyn, New York, was a hot bed of youth ministry in the mid-nineteenth century. Baptists, Presbyterians, and Congregational denominations all had Union gatherings. (Senter, 169-181)

The YMCA, while influential upon the youth ministry of the nineteenth century, chose to approach training of leaders in training schools rather than union gatherings. The YMCA, unlike the other youth ministry movements, professionalized their movement relatively early. As a result, the need to standardize their training called for greater depth and technical training. This model of training more closely paralleled youth ministry education in the last quarter of the twentieth century than that of any of the other youth ministry movements.

In its early years, the YMCA was closely associated with revival movements and intensional evangelism efforts. The theology of the movement drew its teachings from a simple understanding of the Gospel that focused on repentance and confession of faith. More complex doctrines, while present in the writings of such leaders as Oswald Chambers, emphasized a holiness of life more than theological orthodoxy. As the YMCA expanded their operations and found it necessary to expand training schools to colleges, core evangelical doctrines gave way to a more liberal theological perspective. (Senter, 109-111, 213)

Perhaps the most sophisticated Union gatherings were associated with the Christian Endeavor movement. When the Christian Endeavor Society burst on the youth ministry scene in 1881, annual conventions quickly followed. By 1895 the convention held in Boston was reported to have been attended by 56,425 Endeavorers. Like the earlier Union meetings, which Christian Endeavor also had, the annual conventions held for nearly fifty years served as the movement's primary educational leadership development instrument. Ideas from all over the world of Christian Endeavor were showcased and promoted at these gatherings. Core values were reinforced. Vision for
future ministry was cast. Unlike the YMCA, Christian Endeavor determined to remain grounded in local churches and their affiliated denominations with their doctrinal distinctives. Consequently, formal training institutions affiliated with Christian Endeavor never emerged. (Senter, 158-159)

**Newspapers and Published Materials**

The most influential form of youth ministry education in volunteer driven youth ministry movements in the nineteenth and early twentieth century (Sunday School, Juvenile Temperance, and Christian Endeavor) and in the church youth fellowship movement that followed in the middle of the twentieth century, were newspapers and published materials. These publications went directly to the volunteers who were doing youth ministry and provided them with inspiring stories of what was happening elsewhere and a wealth of ideas intended to help local youth ministries achieve their vision of shaping the lives of young people.

The *Cold Water Army and Picnic* was a weekly newspaper published weekly between ? and ? that provided stories, testimonies, admonitions, riddles, and program suggestions for adults working with temp romance groups. The paper reinforced the importance of what the adult volunteers, many of whom were women, were doing with youth while at the same time providing them with new ideas and a sense of being a part of the larger army of temperance workers.

The *Sunday School Times* and other similar newspapers for Sunday School leaders, provided a virtual pathway for tracking the ideas Sunday School leaders drew upon for the ?? years of its existence. The doctrinal grounding of the paper was evangelical, both in it's emphasis on evangelism and in the literal manner in which the Bible was interpreted. Doctrinal issues were left to denominational groups but a core understanding of historic Christian doctrines was assumed.

The YMCA was the most prolific publisher of newspapers of all the youth ministries in the nineteenth century. Unlike the Sunday school, juvenile temperance movement or Christian Endeavor, newspapers for the inspiration and development of YMCA workers were published in every region of the country and all over the world.

The *Golden Rule*, a newspaper and the official voice of Christian Endeavor, was perhaps the most effective non-formal educational tool in the movement that claimed millions of members worldwide. Edited by Amos Wells, the publication provided monthly reports of activities from local societies, stories, program ideas, inspiring thoughts on how people had been helped in their endeavor to know God, as well as the inspiration which came from being a part of a world-wide movement appeared in the pages of the paper. Non-formal training was the effective impact of its monthly publication.

For fourteen years, from the beginning of the Great Depression through most of World War II, very little non-formal youth ministry education took place probably due to the expense involved. Evelyn McClusky's Miracle Book Club had a newsletter that shared news from clubs across the country and the United Christian Youth Movement had a conference on the shores of Lake Erie in 1934 and produced training materials for church youth fellowship leaders, but little actual youth ministry education took place. Then with the sudden appearance of the Youth for Christ movement conferences for youth and their leaders once again came into vogue. Youth for Christ Magazine followed
the model of *The Golden Rule* in spreading ideas for ministering to America's youth. Conferences and the magazine continued into the sixties and were supplemented by a mid-winter business meeting and training conference that helped maintain the Insight/Impact philosophy of campus ministry.

**Twentieth Century Training Conferences**

Youth Specialties broke onto the youth ministry education scene in 1970 with the first National Youth Workers Convention attended by people interested in developing their skills as youth ministers. With no clear philosophy of how youth ministry should be done, the conventions brought together an eclectic set of approaches to youth ministry, combined with humor, cultural analysis, strategies developed in churches and para church groups across the nation. Since founders, Mike Yaconelli and Wayne Rice, came out of the Youth For Christ movement and the Church of the Nazarene, a smaller evangelical denomination, the de facto theological perspective of the training events in the early days reflected its evangelical roots. Youth workers responded with enthusiasm and soon Youth Specialties offered traveling one day seminars to benefit youth workers who could not attend the national convention.

Shortly thereafter, in 1974, *Group Magazine* founded by Thomas and Joni Schultz, filled a gap by producing a magazine to assist local youth workers of their ministry more effectively. When Youth Specialties temporarily moved away from an exclusive youth ministry emphasis, *Group Magazine* moved into the gap and started their own training conference.

About the same time, Dann Spader developed a leadership development system around a single philosophy which he called Sonlife. In 1979, for the first time since the beginning of Christian Endeavor in 1881, Spader produced non-formal training dedicated to a single philosophy of youth ministry. While attractive primarily to Evangelical denominations, a number of whom adopted Sonlife as their official youth ministry training program. Levels of certification became a motivating factor for youth workers, some of whom were by this time teaching youth ministry in formal education settings.

In 1995, Pete Ward and the Oxford Youth Works called for British youth ministry to get serious about research into youth ministry rather than merely perpetuate primarily American models. They hosted a research conference at Mansfield College, Oxford University, attended by youth workers from Great Britain, the British Commonwealth, the United States, and Europe. The conference differed from previous youth ministry conferences in that it was much more academically oriented and research focused than previous non-formal educational conferences. It was more like the beginning of a research association and gave birth to the International Association for the Study of Youth Ministry.

**Formal youth ministry education**

Formal youth ministry education came in two waves. Both were tied to the professionalization of youth ministry. In the nineteenth century, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) realized a need for well trained professional workers
(General Secretaries) as the movement spread around the world. After the first World War, formal schools developed, both independent colleges and aligned with American universities. Following World War II, as Young Life and Youth for Christ expanded and then gave life to church based youth ministers, a second wave of youth ministry education took place connected with Christian colleges and seminaries.

**YMCA**

The need for "General Secretaries" to lead YMCAs primarily in major cities of America gave rise formal educational structures. Unlike the other youth ministry movements of the period, YMCA ministries relied on paid staff members and required buildings in which to house their work. These professional staff required a set of skills and abilities more aligned with business men than with the ministers who founded the movement. This complexity was intensified as YMCAs began reaching out to college and university students whose academic training required a greater knowledge of academic disciplines than General Secretaries typically had. As a result, early training schools provided workers with instruction related to the history of the YMCA, management of buildings, methods of work by departments, business management with a smattering of biblical studies. (Hopkins, 175). Training schools were held during the summer in resort like locations.

By the 1880s, the General Secretary positions in YMCAs had become decidedly professional and a call went out to provide academic training similar to law schools and medical schools. Responding to this need, two schools were formed. Western Secretarial Institute based in Chicago, Illinois, (later renamed George Williams College) was spearheaded by Robert Weidensall and a committee of Midwest business men and the School for Christian Workers (later called Springfield College) under the leadership of David Allen Reed, a Congregational pastor, in Massachusetts. The former provided training for only YMCA workers while the later offered what amounted to a major for YMCA General Secretaries as well as four other tracks of training. (Hopkins, 173-178; Putney, 66)

Since there were no textbooks, classes were based on lectures from experienced General Secretaries. These quickly became printed class notes (handbooks) and later text books. The schools began as two year schools and after the turn of the First World War were incorporated as colleges. In 1888 the YMCS's World Conference in Stockholm congratulated the American Movement on the establishment of these training schools and recommended that young men enter the profession. (Hopkins, 176)

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the YMCA in America began dividing into two camps with the Social Gospel of Walter Rauschenbusch leading the way to a "vigorous, robust, muscular Christianity ... devoid of all the et cetera of creed." (Putney, 40) Conservatives retained convictions that the Bible and Christian doctrine should be at the core of the YMCA ministry. These leaders identified with D. L. Moody and Robert McBurney, both of whom had died in 1899. Most local Association workers retained these convictions. Those committed to progressive orthodoxy embraced modern science, evolution, and the new science of Biblical criticism. The authority for their work shifted from the Bible to the disciplines of modern science. Much of the national leadership of the YMCA followed the more liberal trend founded in the Social Gospel.
In the middle were more open-minded leaders influenced by Henry Drummond. (Hopkins, 510-512; Ladd and Mathisen, 78, 86)

The curriculum developed over time and remained committed to an emphasis "body, mind, and spirit" symbolized by the YMCA triangle to include muscular Christianity, academic preparation and personal conversion as long as Luther Gulick directed the Training School in Springfield, Massachusetts. He moved elsewhere in 1903. (Ladd and Mathisen, 86; Putney, 69-70) In Springfield, academic disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and social work as well as business and management came to dominate the curriculum. The Midwest training school that would become George Williams College retained a more moderate theological position. Ultimately the training schools would shape the future of the movement. YMCA roots in evangelicalism and pietism lost their central role and were for the most part lost to the academic preparation of General Superintendents.

Other summer training schools developed regionally leading to affiliations with colleges and universities. The Southern YMCA Graduate School affiliated with Vanderbilt University's Peabody College for Teachers and Scarritt College for Christian Workers was established after a World War I and became the graduate program for YMCA education. Other training schools were associated with Yale Divinity School, Whittier College, Columbia University, Union Theological Seminary, and New York School of Social Work. (Hopkins, 610-614) In time, the original youth ministry training programs of the YMCA morphed into formal academic disciplines. Theology and ties with Christian studies were lost in university settings.

The Religious Education Association founded in 1903 by William Rainey Harper, the first President of the University of Chicago, drew heavily on academic disciplines to provide a sound educational model for church ministry as well as the YMCA. For years there was a section of the Religious Education Association for leaders of the YMCA. Noted religious educator and Professor at Northwestern University, George Albert Coe, was a frequent speaker for the YMCA attempting to bridge the gap between formal theology and the other academic disciplines in university and mainline seminary settings. But in the process, more liberal expressions of Christian theology came to dominate the new field of Religious Education and in turn, the YMCA. YMCA leadership education became a function of schooling and soon churches modeled their Sunday schools and other educational efforts after the public schools. Both mainline denominational churches and the reactionary Christian fundamentalism embraced the schooling model while moving in different directions related to the nature of scripture, the relevance of historic Christian theology, and the mission of the church.

While the American YMCA embraced the Social Gospel, their counterparts in the rest of the world maintained much of their emphasis on Bible studies, evangelization and Christian piety.

**Southern Baptist Revive Youth Ministry Education**

With the post World War II acknowledgement of *teenagers* as a distinctive market, the Southern Baptist Convention responded by hiring a Professor of Youth Education in 1949 to serve in the School of Religious Education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Phillip B. Harris taught in the Master of Religious Education
program thus placing youth ministry education in the discipline of Religious Education. (Taylor, 14, Ross, 18) According to Bruce Lee Merrick, Harris' doctoral dissertation in 1954 entitled "The Youth Director" established the vocational identity for professional youth ministry. (Merrick, 1-2)

The vocational identity were parsed into seven themes that gave direction to Southern Baptist youth ministry. Youth directors were to be Christ-centered, enthusiastic for their task, builders and sustainers of teams, apt to engage an array of issues, convinced that young people were the church of today, committed to building their ministries on the platform of denominational programs, while involving young people in planning their own activities. (Merrick, 68-95)

Timothy Jones reports that Southern Seminary opened its School for Religious Education in the 1953-54 session with Gaines Dobbins as Dean offering courses (though not full degree) in Religious Education of Intermediates and Young People. In its first session, Sabin Paul Landry, Jr. (Assistant Professor of Religious Education) taught the two courses focused on work with Intermediates and Young People: (1) Religious Education 461: Religious Education of Intermediates and Young People and (2) Religious Education 462: Psychology of Adolescence and Youth. (Jones)

Placement of youth ministry courses in Southern Baptist seminaries remained in a Religious Education departments or schools until the current day. Since Southern Baptist seminaries are free standing, not placed within university structures, efforts to draw upon the social sciences have been subject to the changing theological tides of the denomination's schools.

Young Life's Model of Education for Youth Ministry

With the rise of the Youth for Christ movement in the 1930s and 1940s, youth ministry returned to its roots in evangelical theology. The leaders of the movement were products of evangelical seminaries and Bible colleges. Most cut their teeth in ministry closely associated with the seemingly discredited fundamentalism but by the time the movement gained national visibility because of youth evangelists like Percy Crawford (Westminster Seminary), Jim Rayburn (Dallas Seminary), Torrey Johnson (Northern Baptist Seminary) and Billy Graham (Wheaton College), these youth ministry innovators had pioneered a twentieth century form of evangelicalism. A high view of Scripture and a passion for the Gospel once again came to the forefront in this form of Christian youth ministry.

Young Life pioneered the training of youth workers in 1954 when the movement established the Young Life Institute at its headquarters in Colorado Springs. As Young Life began recruiting staff from places other than seminaries and Christian colleges, they found the need for a more well rounded training of staff and as a result created an innovative training model combined summer enrollment in the Institute attended over four summers, regional training that included a mentoring relationship with more mature Young Life leaders, and formal theological education in seminaries sympathetic to the movement. Al Rogness, President of Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, opened a dialog between Young Life and Seminary leaders resulting in partnerships with Luther (St. Paul, MN), Fuller (Pasadena, CA), North Park (Chicago, IL), and Gordon Conwell (South Hamilton, MA) Theological Seminaries. (Meredith, 122-127)
In 1973, for example, a collaboration between Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary and Young Life was established with Dean Borgman teaching a youth ministry course for the Seminary and working with three recruited students. The program grew slowly in the 1970s and blossomed in the 1980s, then program diminished in the 1990s and was cut for financial reasons, although for many years youth ministry courses were still offered at the Hamilton and Boston campuses (Borgman, 2013).

In 1977 D. Paul King Jewett, on the faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary of Pasadena, California, developed an arrangement whereby Young Life staff members could earn a Master of Arts in Theological Studies from Fuller in Colorado Springs. It was called the Institute of Youth Ministries. Though short residency was required at the Pasadena campus to justify accreditation requirements by the Association of Theological Schools, most of the classes were held in Colorado Springs. The curriculum fit within the Master of Arts in Theology that Fuller offered on their Pasadena campus. The courses in theology, church history, and biblical studies were those of Fuller Theological Seminary. Training for youth ministry, including the two Practicum courses, were done under regional Young Life directors, while attempting to develop an incarnational approach within Christian theology that would provide a grounding for Young Life’s philosophy of ministry of evangelism and discipleship for high school youth done in clubs, camps, and in their follow up program they called Campaigners.

**Christian College Majors in Youth Ministry**

As churches in the United States began hiring youth ministers in the 1970s and 1980s, this new expression of youth ministry turned to Bible Institutes, independent Christian colleges, and evangelical seminaries to provide academic formation of youth workers. Grounded in evangelical theology and differing expressions of evangelical pietism, these educational institutions followed the established ministerial preparation model that drew upon biblical and theological studies complemented by pastoral skills in pastoral theology, missions, and counseling. Though church youth ministry training continued the focused on high school students begun in the post World War II era by paraparochial youth ministries Young Life and Youth for Christ and followed by Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Campus Crusade for Christ's high school ministry, Student Venture, the curriculum looked more like a pre-seminary curriculum than a professional degree in youth ministry.

Most Bible institutes, Christian liberal arts colleges, and twentieth century expressions of evangelical seminaries offered a youth ministry course or two within their Christian education majors modeled after the Southern Baptist model. Few offered anything more. Text books reflected the Christian Education orientation. When Moody Press released *Youth and the Church* in 1968 and *Youth Education in the Church* ten years later and Zondervan Press published *Youth Ministry* in 1972 by Lawrence O. Richards, youth ministry education was poised to emerge as a distinctive discipline.

The earliest majors in Youth Ministry appeared in the mid seventies in Christian liberal arts colleges and Bible colleges. The author surveyed Campus Life's "Guide to Christians Colleges" and found Sterling College, associated with the United Presbyterian Church of U. S. A., listed a major in Youth Leadership in October 1976. The following year, Miami (FL) Christian College also listed a Youth Leadership major.
while Pacific Christian College (Fullerton, CA) and Rockmont College (Denver, Co) included Youth Ministry among their majors. By the time a "Major's Matrix" was included in the Campus Life Guide in October 1984, thirty of the sixty-four colleges listed offered youth ministry majors. Many of these proved to be better defined as concentrations within other majors, but by the end of the decade thirty of the seventy two colleges listed offered youth ministry majors with an additional fourteen offering concentrations. (Campus Life Magazine, 1976-1989)

Many of these early youth ministry majors were marketing devices designed to attract students who were on the front edge of the transition from para church to church based youth ministries. Rather than creating a distinct discipline, schools collected courses from a cross section of the disciplines found in their schools. It was not unusual to find the catalog listing of courses to collections of psychology, sociology, business, education or Christian education, social work, theology and even physical education or recreation. Only two or three youth ministry courses had distinctly Youth Ministry labels.

One of early example was the youth ministry education was at Barrington (RI) Bible College begun in 1976 with Doug Stevens as the primary instructor. The major was one of five majors that survived the merger with Gordon College even though the merger converted the Bible college into a liberal arts college in 1985. (Cannister) The major, however, appeared in Campus Life Magazine for Gordon College in October 1982.

The Barrington model was a very well thought through approach to youth ministry education. The Barrington College Bulletin for 1976 describes the competences to be developed by graduates of the program as

1) knowledge and understanding of contemporary youth culture; (2) understanding of the psychological and sociological developmental forces which impinge upon teenage youth; (3) developing skills in applying Biblical insights to the problems youth experience; (4) developing a basic philosophy of youth leadership which will apply in many cultural situations; (5) developing basic skills in organizing and implementing a ministry to youth in a local church. (Barrington College Bulletin)

Six Youth Ministry courses (Introduction, Communicating Christian Faith, Organization of Youth Program, Curriculum for Youth Ministries, Directed Study, Youth Leadership) and an Internship were supplemented with courses in Physical Education, Psychology, Social Work, Philosophy, and Biblical Studies in the 32 semester hour program. The Barrington program demonstrated an educational sophistication not seen at other schools for as many as fifteen years.

The youth ministry major at Trinity College (Deerfield, Il), exemplifies a less sophisticated beginning. In 1984 the college housed the new major in the Christian Ministries Department with youth pastors teaching the skills courses. In addition to Bible and theology courses, the youth ministry major required classes included Survey of Christian Education, Introduction to Christian Ministry, and Teaching the Bible. Six classes related to adolescents were also required. They included Methods of Recreation, Arts and Crafts, Developmental Psychology, Interpersonal Skills Training, and three Physical Education classes. (Trinity College) The following year the Youth Ministry Major emerged in its own right as a youth ministry discipline began to take shape with Methods of Youth Ministry and Advanced Methods of Youth Ministries with
recommended courses Human Sexuality, Organizational Psychology, readings in Management.

In a 1993 article in *Youthworker Journal* entitled "Where to go to School; Youth Ministry Majors, Graduate and Undergraduate" twenty-eight Christian colleges were cites as having youth ministry majors and thirty-two other undergraduate schools offered concentrations in youth ministry while fourteen seminaries were listed as having masters level programs in youth ministry. Partially as a result of this article, an organization was formed that became known as the Association of Youth Ministry Educators in 1994. The Association quickly bonded with an annual professional conference and a journal, the *Journal of Youth Ministry*.

**Regrounding Youth Ministry Education in Theology**

Since the emergence of para church Christian youth ministries about the time of World War II, youth ministry found its grounding in Evangelical theology and pietism. Preparation for the evangelism of youth and various approaches to discipleship (or follow up, as it was originally called) dominated efforts to train or educate youth workers.

With the emergence of the Young Life Institute in 1954 and following, a distinctive effort was made to ground youth evangelization in theology. The resulting Incarnational Theology was more of a missional slogan than a well developed theology of ministry, much less youth ministry. Primarily based on John. 1:14, the call was for adult youth workers to enter the world of students, to go where they were, in order to earn the right to present the Christian Gospel to them. The word *incarnate* comes from two Latin words when put together mean "in flesh" and the emphasis in the early Young Life years was that youth workers should represent Jesus among young people by doing life with them (in the flesh), not just calling kids to come to church.

As a fraternity of youth ministry educators developed both in the United States and the United Kingdom, calls were made on both sides of the Atlantic to bring together youth ministry academics to present and discuss current research in their emerging field. What would come to be called the Association of Youth Ministry Educators met in October 1994 at Talbot Theological Seminary in California to discuss how to collaborate. On the other side of the Atlantic, the first Conference on Youth Ministry was held at Mansfield College in Oxford in January of the following year. The conference would give birth to the International Association for the Study of Youth Ministry. (Ward, 1-7)

In the years that followed both organizations published books and journals that raised the quality of academic reflection on the issues confronting youth ministry education. One of the central issues in the United Kingdom was the issue of the theological grounding for youth ministry.

*Starting Right; thinking theologically about youth ministry*, published in 2001, proposed a new theological direction for youth ministry education. Shaped by the need for professors in mainline denominational seminaries to ground their approaches to youth ministry in a theological perspective acceptable to the tenured professors at their schools, Practical Theology left room for youth ministry educators to draw upon contemporary theologians as well as the Evangelical theology in which youth ministry was based.
On the east coast of the United States, Kenda Kersey Dean at Princeton Theological Seminary, engaged the work of James Loder and Richard Osmer to provide a way to free youth ministry from the dominance of the social sciences. Concurrently on the west coast, Kara Powell and Chap Clark built on the Practical Theology of Ray Anderson to bring the social sciences into the theological discussion of youth ministry. The conversations that followed at conferences and in journal articles showed a lively and at times confusing debate over an appropriate theological grounding for youth ministry education. Reformed theologians, exemplified by Malan Nelson, argued for understanding youth ministry as a manifestation of God coming to the church that is inclusive as a part of congregation as a whole. (Nel, 2-22) Lutherans, such as Andy Root, grounded youth ministry within a relational Christology. (Root) Para church thinkers like Dean Borgman continued to ground youth ministry in an incarnational approach to missiology. (Borgman, ????) While the majority of youth ministry educators blend youth evangelism and Christian living. (Dunn) At the same time east and west coast schools of Practical Theology attempted to provide a rather complicated assortment of Practical Theology approaches which, to many practitioners, seemed neither practical (i.e. too complicated) nor theological (in the sense of revealing new aspects of the nature of God).

Conclusion

It is quite possible that formal youth ministry education has come full circle. While built upon the existing theological traditions of the churches in which youth ministries are housed, youth ministry educators have once again come to a place where they must determine how the social sciences and theology relate to each other.

When the YMCA chose the Social Gospel over the proclamation of the historic Christian Gospel, the YMCA quickly yielded its Christian roots, especially in the United States, and rooted its practice in the social sciences with few remnants of the supernatural. God stopped showing up.

In reaction to the influence of the Social Gospel, fundamentalists at first hunkered down and rejected much of science and especially the social sciences. The Gospel was reduced to calls for conversion. The Gospel had very little "social" to it. Discipleship was more tied to pietism than matters of justice. Youth ministry, as much as any single factor, forced what came to be known as Evangelicalism to engage once again in the life of the mind and engage issues confronting people at risk in society.

Youth ministry educators in Christian colleges have become agents of integration bringing together theology and social sciences. Unlike the the first time around, youth ministry is engaged in a rigorous conversation that is seeking to understand both general revelation and special revelation as they play out in the lives of the nearly three billion people who are under the age of twenty. Confident that God is showing up, youth ministry educators are agents of redemption and societal change.

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