



Choosing a Future for Youth Ministry Educators: *Workshop*¹

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Theme: Choosing a Future for Youth Ministry Educators (YME): Defining this Organization's Service to those Who Minister to Young People. Organizations emerge because people have needs that require cooperative work with colleagues. *Effectiveness* of an organization depends on the worth of the needs that are being met. Trivial purposes, lack of vision, and self-serving habits—these are the earmarks of an ineffective organization. What evidences of effectiveness can be expected from YME? The future of the organization is in the hands of its membership. The needs are great, the prospects are strong; what about the vision? Where should it be headed?

Choosing a Future: Several Possibilities Expressed as Alternative Views of the Organization

1. *The Old-Boys Brigade of Barnstormers*: A happy gang of friends who are *Old*, or getting there faster than those they serve; *boys* who are rather sure that their work isn't really for women; a *brigade* of frustrated veterans, who *barnstorm*, also known as flying by the seat of the pants.
2. *The League of Learned Loafers*: Brilliant and self-satisfied folks whose mark in life is largely produced by leaning against fences and swapping yarns. Potentially non-producers.
3. *The Caravan of Curious Chameleons*: Traveling together; learning by exploring the environment; changing appropriately.

Romantic Ideals Die Hard

1. The Big Buddy (relational sibling as the image of youth minister)
2. The Wise Wonder (impartor of wonder-filled wisdom)
3. The Acolytes of Saint Augustine (searchers for the Fountain of Youth)
4. Paul's Partners ("all things to all people")

Spinning into Narrowness

1. Under-powered at low altitudes—recipe for disaster
2. Recycling yesterday's habits (suggested motto for YME: What worked probably won't)
3. Provincialism in a global era ("Been there, done that.")

Toward a Renewable Future—How to Build a Profession

Characteristics of a profession:

- Defined Field of Service
- Defined Specialization(s)
- Expanding a Continuously Critiqued Knowledge Base
- Self-disciplined Affiliation
- Established and Defended Code of Ethics

¹ Ted Ward. Choosing a Future for Youth Ministry Educators. Workshop outline for the Youth Ministry Educators Conference, Nashville, TN, October 17-19, 1998