

NYLC09 Recap

Written by Joel Larkin

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I recently had the pleasure of attending the National Youth Leaders Conference (<http://www.nylc09.com/>) put on by Jeanne Mayo. This conference was marketed as one of the nation's most historic, transformational, and energizing leadership gathering for youth and young adult ministry leaders. I'm not a student of history when it comes to conferences however I think they hit a very high mark on the transformational and energizing aspects. I left this conference feeling inspired and spiritually refreshed. Don't get me wrong I think spiritually driven conferences regardless of topic are amazing to attend, however this one was particularly interesting to me because of my recent involvement with the youth group of our church (www.mycsm.org). Jeanne Mayo, who unbeknownst to me prior to this conference, was/is an amazing speaker, gave this nightly rally/keynote/general session(s).

The first night's topic was 'rented room' and was talking about how sometimes we all rent rooms in our minds to the enemy. She talked about some of these rooms and asked keypad questions (interactive polling system) that drove home how these challenges are for all leaders not just the select few. Probably the most upsetting question/response was regarding pornography. When asked of the males in the room if in the past year had they watched movies, videos, magazines, etc that could be considered pornographic 74% responded YES. It was amazing to me to see this and think to myself, is this representative? Does this suggest that many youth workers are less than authentic or that the power of this particular sin is used to greater effect by the enemy?

The second night topped the first, it's topic was "Hollywood" and what the MTV and Hollywood culture inundate our youth with. There was a question and answer session with a top music producer who shared his Hollywood story. It was an eye opener to hear how sometimes persistence is the key trait to ministry success.

During the day I was able to attend an address by Josh McDowell who was sharing with us the challenges of getting through the noise of the youth of today. He was talking about how a profound shift in thinking as occurred and how the youth process the concept of Truth completely differently. He asked the question is there an absolute truth? Less than 4% of us apparently think so (if I remember correctly) according to his research. I am still reeling over this one. What is the role of the scriptures in our lives when we don't believe in absolute truths? Is this where we get a lot of ministries ignoring scripture (like by affirming homosexuality even though it is forbidden in scripture) to suit their own purposes?

I can go on and on about this conference and the thoughts it left me. Let's just say that the last

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night was continuing the trend of mind-blowing rally's and thought provocation.