

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Columbia Seminary invites applications for Thompson Scholars program on young adult ministry**

Decatur, GA. How can congregations reach young adults ages 18 to 35 when so many of them see the church as unhelpful or non-essential? That's the challenge participants will explore during Columbia Theological Seminary's 2012 Thompson Scholars program, May 1-4, 2012. Qualified applicants will be accepted until the maximum enrollment of 15 participants is reached. The program cost, \$175 per person double/\$230 single (limited availability), covers the course fee, three night's lodging on the seminary campus, and meals. For an application, [click here](#).

"For many of our churches, reaching and retaining young adults is a challenge," says Ralph Watkins, associate professor of evangelism and church growth at Columbia and director of the Thompson Scholars program. "For other congregations, integrating young adults into the full life of the church presents a different set of challenges."

"We hope to receive applications from senior pastors, pastors of young adult ministries, leaders in churches with an absence of young adults, and those who want to make their young adult ministries more vibrant."

Participants will discuss with each other and with young adults themselves – the major issues around young adult ministry:

- Why is it important to bring young adults into the life of our congregations?
- How do we disciple young adults in the midst of the media and digital age?
- What are ways to use the virtual world to breathe life into young adults' real world?
- What do we need to understand about being a young adult – especially in today's culture?
- What aspects of the gospel of Jesus Christ can captivate young adults?
- How do we provide space for young adults to ask their tough questions and grow in their faith?
- What is foundational to birthing and developing a thriving young adult ministry?
- How do we bridge the gap between our more mature adult members and young adults?

*Columbia Theological Seminary, located in Decatur, GA, was established in 1828 and is one of 10 theological institutions of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The seminary offers seven graduate degree programs: Master of Divinity, Master of Arts (Theological Studies), Master of Arts in Practical Theology, Master of Theology, Doctor of Ministry, Doctor of Educational Ministry, and Doctor of Theology in Pastoral Counseling. Currently 421 students are enrolled, representing 30 denominations, 34 states, and 10 countries. More information about Columbia: <http://www.ctsnet.edu>.*