

Five Reasons Why a Local Congregation Should Send Their Leader(s) to the Missional Leadership Initiative

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Last week I shared some thoughts around why leaders should consider participating in the upcoming cycle of the Missional Leadership Initiative (MLI) that begins in January 2016. Today I want to share some thoughts around why a local congregation should invest in their leader(s) by sending them to MLI. Over the years I've heard all kinds of sad and strange responses to a leader's request to participate in MLI (Why does the conference want you away from our church for 9-10 days a year? You already get more than enough vacation. If we let you do this it come out of your vacation time.). Here are some of the reasons your congregation should consider sending your pastor(s) or other leaders to the next cycle of the Missional Leadership Initiative.

1. **Your leaders need time where someone else invests or pours into him/her.** Leaders spend a lot of their time investing into the lives of others. It may be your pastor who spend a lot of his or her time helping others understand God, his Word, and how He's leading in a particular situation or context. It may be another leader that sacrificially gives hours and hours of service to the local congregation or community, asking for nothing in return. You can't give out of an empty well. It's important for leaders to take the time to replenish and refresh so that they can keep on serving in the ways that God has called them to serve. Congregations can encourage this by offering opportunities for leaders to learn, unlearn, stretch, refresh and be inspired to keep pursuing the dreams God has placed within their hearts.
2. **It gives your congregation the opportunity to put their gifts to use and practice the priesthood of all believers.** The ministry of the local church requires much more than just the efforts of a "professional pastor". This is one of the great downfalls of the lay-clergy divide we've created here in North American Evangelicalism. This upcoming cycle of MLI requires leaders to miss three Sundays each of the next two years (I know there are a lot of pastors who are reluctant to ask for this and I know that there are a lot of congregations that are reluctant to offer something like this). There are others in the congregation who need to be given opportunities to exercise their gifts and lead when other leaders are away – this is a perfect opportunity to foster that kind of environment. It doesn't hurt (and actually helps) for congregations to hear from other voices than just the "paid" pastor of the church. Here's the opportunity to encourage the body of Christ to embrace the idea of the priesthood of all believers.
3. **You won't find a better deal for this caliber of training.** I realize that \$1,000 over two years isn't pocket change – for some congregations or pastors this would be a significant investment of very limited funds. I promise you that you won't find something of this level for that cost anywhere else. We work hard to subsidize this opportunity so that as many leaders as possible can take advantage of it. We've had several leaders from other denominations take advantage of MLI over the years and they've often recognized the value of what they're receiving and the minimum cost involved. I know of similar experiences that run several thousand dollars for the entire experience (and often don't include food or lodging). It's a tremendous learning opportunity offered at a great value.
4. **Your congregation will be blessed by what your leader receives and implements at the local level.** Your leader will have the opportunity to grow in his or her own personal health and vitality for ministry. Healthier leaders help lead to healthier ministry. I could tell story after story about real and lasting change that has happened because of the influence of MLI. Leaders are going back to their ministry context healthier, better able to deal with the rigors and challenges of

life and ministry. Congregations and other ministries are taking significant steps toward shifting from an inward to an outward focus, from being program driven to actually developing people and from church-centric leadership to kingdom focused leaders.

5. **You will help create an environment where leaders are valued and unleashed to use their God-given gifts for God's glory and for the advancement of his kingdom agenda.** Wouldn't it be great to create a local leadership environment where leaders wanted to lead and felt more alive because they were able to do what God designed them to do (compare this to the typical lack of excitement about another church council meeting, etc.)? Through MLI, you are making an investment in your leaders, valuing the work that they do and as a result, creating a culture where leaders can continue to thrive as the congregation pursues Jesus and his kingdom agenda.

The deadline is fast approaching. Do you need to send a local leader to this next cycle? Does someone in your circle of influence need to be there? Be sure to visit <http://www.cggc.org/ministries/transformational-ministries/leadership/> or contact Angie Lavey at resources@cggc.org for an application or more information.

Christ's Peace,

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