

Dear friend,

Thank you for your continued engagement, prayers, and support of our work with Ministry Leadership Initiative. With your help, our ministry has reached thousands of young people with authentic, intentional, and proficient leadership. We are in the midst of another great year, and we are grateful for your help and kindness.

It's gratifying to see how those whom we educate and train provide care, love, and grace with young people. This has been extraordinarily meaningful to our partners and clients during the pandemic, and we want to share appreciation for your support in accomplishing this missional work.

MLI is celebrating its 10th year of ministry! Thanks to you, we again ended the year with a small financial surplus, and our enrollment has returned to pre-pandemic levels. Please read our 2022 year-end report, linked on our website (ministryleading.org/give), to learn more about our mission and vision.

Today, I'm excited to share a new strategic partnership with The Center for Youth Ministry Training that will help this ministry grow in scope and reach over the next 10 years.

CYMT has been equipping youth and children's ministry leaders since 2006 as a non-profit organization. CYMT offers a Graduate Residency program that provides a Masters of Arts in Youth Ministry, in partnership with Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. CYMT is the largest graduate program in youth ministry. Please visit cymt.org to learn more about this work and ministry.



Matt Vaughan (MLI Executive Director) and Dietrich Kirk (CYMT Executive Director) shown at a recent board retreat. MLI currently provides coaching support for the CYMT Innovation Lab (cymt.org/innovate).



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The leadership teams of MLI and CYMT determined that we have a shared mission and that we will better serve our audiences by joining together over the next year. Perhaps by providence, our missions align beautifully:

- *MLI develops authentic, intentional, and highly proficient leadership, sharing the love and grace of Jesus Christ with young people.*
- *CYMT equips youth ministers and communities of faith to develop innovative, effective, and theologically informed ministry so youth may experience the love and grace of Jesus Christ.*

By uniting missions, MLI and CYMT will offer multiple tiers of educational and training support to youth and children's ministry leaders in churches, camps, and other organizations throughout the United States.

Thus, the work we began with MLI will continue to grow!

Most importantly, we believe our combined efforts will become more than summative for those whom we serve. Here are some of the advantages we'll gain by working together as one team:

- The MLI Instructional Cohort Program will become available to churches, camps, and other organizations served by CYMT in 14 additional states throughout the country.
- The CYMT Graduate Residency Program will become a staffing and training option in the 5 states where MLI serves, to churches and their youth and children's ministry leaders.
- Both organizations will pool their extraordinary teams of faculty members and coaches, increasing the quality and reach of MLI and CYMT services.
- Personally, my work will benefit from gifted CYMT networking, marketing, and development staff. I'm excited about this collaboration and support!

Our key objective is to grow the work we began 10 years ago, with CYMT providing key networking and leadership resources for an expanded variety of Ministry Leadership Initiatives across the country.

You'll continue to hear from me because your partnership is profoundly important in our innovative efforts to improve and grow this ministry. Look for some changes in how we utilize our MLI brand as we share communications in the months ahead.

In the meantime, we'll teach the youth and children's ministry leaders in our current cohort. We'll coach the pastors and professionals served by our clinicians. We'll lead events with our alumni to better serve our region. And, we'll be in touch to share exciting news about the group of cohort participants whom we'll be commissioning for ministry this coming May. This is the work that we're excited to share with our new colleagues at CYMT!

I'm grateful for your partnership and support, and I'd love to visit with you over a cup of coffee. What questions do you have? Let's explore them together.

On behalf of our board, our faculty, and my family, I thank you.



Peace,
Matt Vaughan, Executive Director
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The MLI cohort participants gathered for an instructional retreat in March 2023. Shown on screen is Baylee with her baby, Landon. MLI and CYMT will explore more virtual learning options.



Members of the CYMT staff and faculty reunited for an in-person retreat in March 2023. I look forward to introducing the MLI staff and faculty to this creative and extraordinary team.



Jack, Amy, Sam, and me during our Spring Break trip to California. Jack is a high school junior and Sam is a junior at Colorado State University. Our family sends greetings and appreciation!