

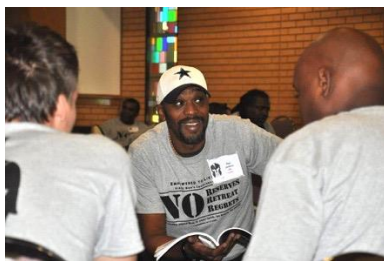
February 1, 2017

Dear Family and Friends,

Several years ago, I drove into West Dallas looking for a classroom where I could offer courses of The Urban Ministry Institute (TUMI). I just knew there were pastors in West Dallas who woke up each morning asking God to provide leadership training resources. I fully intended to find these pastors and train them.

I began meeting with Scott Hanson, Executive Director, of Serve West Dallas and Pastor Arrvel Wilson of West Dallas Community Church who knew several pastors and ministry leaders who could benefit from TUMI. After some months of planning, praying, and plotting with Scott and Pastor Wilson, TUMI Dallas began offering classes at West Dallas Community Church.

Some three and a half years later, I found myself planning a graduation ceremony for students who had completed all 16 modules of TUMI. I sat at my desk working on a slide show of pictures to show at the graduation of the students and classroom activities when I had the thought, "I know I have pictures of Brother Les and other students somewhere." As I searched my photo library, I was surprised to see that I had all kinds of pictures of the graduating students and other TUMI students. I found pictures of students serving beside me at two men's conferences, the Evangel School of Urban Church planting, Bible conferences, playing in the TUMI (More Power Praise) band at events, and even my ordination service. I was amazed that the students I had spent so much time with in the classroom had spent a great deal of time serving with me in ministry. We had long since passed a teacher / student relationship and were truly co-laborers in God's Kingdom. I was blessed beyond measure to be reminded that although TUMI in West Dallas began with a quest for a classroom, empowering leaders has never been merely about classrooms. The ministry our students share with us outside the classroom is the natural result of the ministry education they receive in the classroom. More than students, they are our partners in ministry.



Pictured: ray Jenkins leading small group



Pictured: Class of 2016



Pictured: Les Taylor leading worship

Please be in prayer for these graduates (and others) as they continue to lead ministries, launch TUMI sites, and serve urban churches. These graduates represent the best hope for the under-served communities they (we) are called to shepherd. As always, we are grateful for your continued prayerful and financial support. We could not offer the resources, mentoring, and training we provide urban leaders without your partnership in the gospel. Together we can empower the urban poor.

For His Glory in the City,
Ted Smith