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**Barriers and Solutions for Indigenous Leadership Development:  
An Outline for Equipping a New Generation for Dynamic Mission Among the Poor**

Sacred Roots Thriving Ministry Project  
Taylor University and TUMI  
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December 8, 2018

The Urban Ministry Institute (TUMI) is the training arm of World Impact, an interdenominational missions organization committed to facilitating church-planting movements by evangelizing, equipping, and empowering the unchurched urban poor. TUMI's role in that vision is to equip leaders for the urban church, especially among the poor, in order to advance the Kingdom of God.

For more than forty years, World Impact has been dedicated to honoring and glorifying God and delighting in him among the unchurched urban poor by knowing him and making him known.

Our vision is to empower urban leaders and partner with local churches to reach their cities with the Gospel, to the end that the Gospel of the Kingdom is proclaimed by the empowered urban poor to every people group through indigenous churches and movements.

Currently, we support 288 satellite sites in 19 countries, with opportunities for many others in the recent months. Our sites utilize our *Capstone Curriculum*, a sixteen-module seminary-level program for mature and emerging leaders for church and ministry. Our discipleship curriculum, *Fight the Good Fight of Faith*, has now been translated into 11 languages, and we have 21 translations now in process. As of this month, we have 1125 graduates, and generally boast about 3,500-4,000 students per semester worldwide. We also sponsor leadership training satellites in 70 prison and correctional facilities today.

In addition to our satellite ministries, we also sponsor church planting training and resources, now in our 18<sup>th</sup> year. Recently, we hosted our 4th *Evangel Dean School of Urban Church Planting* (August 2018), our training which provides training for movements, denominations, and ministries to host their own church planting schools for church planters in their own locale. This past school could possibly have been our most strategic school ever. Thirty-seven Deans, representing thirteen different "dean teams" were certified and commissioned for the glory of God to equip and charter church planters from and for the urban poor using our *Ripe for Harvest: A Guidebook for Planting Healthy Churches in the City*.

We had key leaders present from a number of major communions, denominations, and ministries including Vineyard U.S.A., Assemblies of God, conservative Baptist, Presbyterian, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, the Southern Baptist Convention, Christ the Victor churches, the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, the Reformed Church of America, the United Forum of Churches in Bangladesh, the International Communion of Charismatic Episcopal Church (Tanzania Diocese), and the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference.

This remarkable collection of folks was aggressive in their desired projected outcomes for the next three years of equipping their church planters to reach into poor, unengaged communities with the Gospel. Here is the combined goal list from the Class of 2018 Evangel Dean School:

- To host 45 Evangel Schools of Urban Church Planting
- To charter and launch 350+ Church plant teams to establish new churches among the poor
- To equip all 350+ new church plants with TUMI curricula, resources, and training opportunities

4. Jesus validated claims of salvation based on justice and compassion done to the poor, as in the case of Zacchaeus, in Luke 19.1-9
  5. And Jesus identified himself without qualification to the stranger, the sick, the naked, the hungry, the thirsty, the sick, the prisoner in Matthew 25
- C. TUMI is committed to making and keeping all our resources available to the poor whom God has chosen for His heavenly kingdom
1. We do not believe that you should be rich or know someone who is in order to be trained to serve the humble Carpenter of Nazareth
  2. Our classes taught by faculty with terminal degrees as low as ten dollars a credit hour, compared to \$400 per credit hour in most places
  3. Example: The Doctor of Ministry Seminar I teach at Houston Graduate School of Theology, which costs the students somewhere around \$1500-\$1700 can be taken at TUMI for \$20 even
  4. For those who cannot afford textbooks we lease them by the semester
  5. We have no admissions standards that will disqualify a person based on academic problems or no money alone
  6. We provide oral exams to students whose language and or literacy skills may not presently be adequate
  7. Our entire Certificate in theological studies, representing 32 hours of seminary level teaching, is offered for less than the expense of two separate seminary courses total (roughly \$1,000)!
- D. Ministry Implication
1. Simply because you are poor should never disqualify you from being equipped to minister and serve as an urban disciple
  2. Creating a system which relies on expensive, professional, and culturally-distant C3 models and norms of education will never make Christ available to the poorest of the poor
- E. TUMI's burden: provide the finest evangelical and biblical resources anywhere and make them available to the poor at a price, a time, and in a manner that is conducive to their cultural experience, and respectful of their spiritual desire
- F. Don't misunderstand our motives here. We do nothing shabbily or poorly; we host nothing remedial or preparatory; we would put our students up against any class of believers anywhere, not just here at home but anywhere in the world!

## II. **The Barrier of the Invisible Middle-class Cultural hegemony.**

The second barrier addresses the issue of cultural hegemony of mainstream western culture as the baseline for acceptable leadership training. We must admit that we have willingly yet unfruitfully relied upon cultural forms and content of education which are bloated, overly abstract, expensive, and filled with culturally-distant C3 models which are too cumbersome to raise up a dynamic class of urban missionaries and ministers from among city folk.

1. TUMI emphasizes that leadership and church offices given and conferred based on the anointing and gifting of the Spirit recognized and displayed amid the people of God (pastoral imprimatur within a legitimate communion)
2. Theological and pastoral education that is not tethered to discreet ecclesial authority may easily become sectarian, schismatic and unhelpful
3. The proliferation of so many individualized, non-ecclesial ministry initiatives which are not connected to solid Christian community oversight is a sign that perhaps our theological education structures contribute to the schismatic nature of much 21<sup>st</sup> century outreach
4. Theological education must always affirm and support the notion that ministry comes from an awakening of the empowering presence of the Spirit in the life of the church

**C. What TUMI is doing**

1. We do not use academic, professional, and external criteria as the primary means of selecting church leaders
2. Reliance on confirmed leadership amid the church is our criterion for training
3. Only one reference in the TUMI admissions packet: the pastor's evaluation and recommendation
4. Not based on what you know but who you are: church leaders must be set apart for their tasks and offices through an acknowledgment of their gifts of the Spirit and testimony, confirmed through the consensus of the church and its leaders

D. Our burden: Resource congregations to select and equip their chosen leaders to identify the place and opportunities for ministry that the Holy Spirit has called them to do, and commissioning and resourcing them to do it

E. Our Ministry Implication: *TUMI provides its leadership resources to leaders within and through the church, in its diverse traditions, organizational and liturgical forms, and locale church venues*

F. Graphs: Sacred Roots, The Theology of Christus Victor

**IV. The Barrier of Programming Irrelevance and Impotence.**

The fourth barrier addresses the character of the content offered in our traditional Christian leadership circles. We must abandon any unthinking devotion to abstract, professionally oriented, and hard-for-laymen-to-reproduce programs and in their place streamline our equipping for a more basic Biblical and historically orthodox core that can be passionately preached and reproduced:

**TUMI is committed to retelling the Story of the Kingdom of God in the Bible, with Jesus Christ as Center of the Story, and using the Nicene Creed as the plumb line for a truly evangelical orthodoxy.**

A. Theological Tenet: The Biblical Story of Christ and his Kingdom interpreted through lens of Christus Victor as developed through the Great Tradition

F. Graphs: Systems view of Church; A Call to An Ancient Evangelical Future; Fit to Represent

#### V. The Barrier of Non-Entrepreneurial Investment.

Finally, we believe that we ought not live for the purpose of studying but study for the purpose of living. We must therefore shift our leadership development programs and ministerial studies from an emphasis on covering intellectual ground to equipping people for ministry, whether it is how to evangelize, how to disciple, or how to plant churches among the unreached

**TUMI concentrates its efforts on equipping individuals, teams, and congregations for effective ministry in underserved communities among the poor. We resource urban Christians and their congregations whose members to initiate and fulfill new kinds of ministries in communities where no evangelical presence or witness exists.**

- A. Theological Tenet: Ministry entrepreneurship is the goal of all Christian leadership development: training is for the equipping the saints for the work of the ministry, Eph. 4.9-16
- B. The dialectical challenge
  - 1. The unbelievable ripeness of the urban harvest, John 4.35
  - 2. The shortage of urban laborers, Matt. 9.35-38
- C. What TUMI is doing
  - 1. Using local church cohort learning to equip urban Christian leaders who will evangelize and make disciples in urban contexts
  - 2. Creating a network of training centers (TUMI satellites) in urban areas that can provide excellent and affordable ministry education that is sensitive to urban culture
  - 3. Equipping church plant team trainers among the poor and under-resourced: *The Evangel School of Urban Church Planting, Dean Training* provides excellent equipping for church plant trainers responsible for assessing, training, commissioning, and/or coaching church planters working among the poor:
    - a. The *Evangel School Boot Camp* includes a team assessment and an application process which helps to confirm that the planter has the calling, character, and competence required of a church planter working among the poor.
    - b. Seminars on every phase of urban cross-cultural church planting Prepare, Launch, Assemble, Nurture and Transition (*PLANT*)
    - c. Evangel Coaches come alongside the church planters and their teams to listen and cooperate with the Holy Spirit to see that their vision becomes a reality.
  - 4. Sponsoring courses, workshops, seminars, conferences, and publications all designed to dramatically increase the number of workers in unreached urban neighborhoods
- D. Our Ministry Implication: *TUMI seeks to generate ministry entrepreneurs who, under the guidance of their spiritual leaders and the prompting of the Holy Spirit, will invest their lives and efforts in new and diverse ways of ministry, both in the church and to the world*