

Maurice Winley's  
(NYC 2010)  
Relentless Mission

Braving Crucial  
Conversations

# **How Tommy Carrington is Living His Breakthrough Plan**



# CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS

Editorial by Stephenie K. Smith, (Kansas City 2015)

In many areas of leading, serving, and engaging with others, the need to address a contentious matter is critical to progress. Often, those discussions are referred to as crucial conversations. That label can carry a lot of weight because it is reserved for necessary dialogues that are meant to enhance or change the trajectory of a matter or mindset.

For some, these are not enjoyable conversations. They are usually uncomfortable depending upon the magnitude of content, or because of the relationship status of the individual or groups engaged in the discussion. However, the possible benefits are worth the time and care it takes to effectively navigate the conversation.

For instance, I am personally passionate about diversity and

City, I carry the responsibility of communicating policy at both a macro and micro level. Often, I see up close, the intended and unintended impact communicating policy can have on my colleagues. This can sometimes lead to a crucial conversation, and can be even more taxing, particularly when some believe we've already reached a viable solution.

In 2016, during what seemed like a season of the death and murder of unarmed Black men and women, we knew we needed to organize a 'crucial conversation' within our community. This was challenging because we needed to create a safe place for an entire community of people, residents, police, business owners, survivors, and families, to process opinions and feelings. The table had to be set for this conversation to transpire and

**"While crucial conversations can be challenging, they are part of leading."**

inclusion and creating equity in this country. I welcome crucial conversations about diversity because American culture has historically ducked from this hot button issue.

This passion shows up often in my professional life and ministry. As the Executive Director of the Linwood Y/ James B Nutter Sr. Community Center in Kansas

there was no avoiding it. The outcome was successful because in the end there was a full room of people asking; what can I do to unite this community?

I believe that we live in an era where people want to do good. Many people want to be part of the solution. By doing your part to facilitate meaningful discussions about the things that

affect our communities most, we ultimately are worshipping the Creator by bringing His people together.

While crucial conversations can be challenging, they are part of leading. Ask yourself, do you avoid these opportunities or do you meet them head on?

Here are a few steps I follow to guide me as I lead crucial conversations:

- Name the issue or situation
- Seek counsel when able (especially if it involves you directly)
- Be willing to listen first (seek to understand THEN to be understood)
- When dealing with high emotions:
  - \* write down your questions or concerns
  - \* be prepared to share what



Stephenie Smith (Kansas City 2015)





and why it is important to you

- \* ask how has or will the change affect the involved party
- \* be ready to share what you are willing to do.

With practice and intention, the ability to navigate this type of communication can be a key tool for us as leaders. When something is happening or affecting people, it should be discussed. Our ministries are major game changers in our communities and how we engage

in everyday conversations, with both our youth and families, is critical to how we move the needle and create a pathway for breakthrough.

We must continue to exercise the power and effectiveness of crucial conversations!

*Stephenie K. Smith, MSW, is Executive Director of the Linwood Y/ James B. Nutter Community Center for the YMCA of Greater Kansas City in Kansas City, MO. Stephenie is a 2015 DVULI Kansas City graduate.*

*Got an opinion about subject matter impacting your work as an urban youth leader?*

*Email: [staff@dvuli.org](mailto:staff@dvuli.org)  
Attn: Alumni Push Back*

## DVULI Alumni Help Fellow Houston Alumni Recover from Harvey

Micah Espinoza (Denver 2005) and Paul Espinoza (Denver 2003) recently caravanned three truckloads of donated supplies—collected from his fellow Denver DVULI alumni and others in their community—to come to the aid of Houston ministries struck by Hurricane Harvey.

Espinoza contacted Houston-based DVULI alumni Jesse Carballo, Pervis Hall, and Vernon Hubbard to offer much needed school supplies, toiletries, and non-perishable items to their ministries.

“It’s such a huge blessing to be part of the DVULI family!

It has given us the blessed opportunity to support each other and our cities in some of life’s toughest challenges, and it has taken the concept of being the body of Christ and turned it into a reality during Hurricane Harvey,” says Espinoza. “Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. DeVos and family, for

bringing strangers together and fulfilling Jesus’ prayer ‘that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.’ - John 17:21 (NASB). You all have been an answer to the prayer of Jesus!”



Micah Espinoza (Denver 2005) and Pervis Hall (Houston 2003)



# Save the Date - Reunion 2019

We're celebrating 20 years of DVULI by returning to one of our four original cities – Phoenix!

You'll be able to shake off those winter blues with fellowship, fun, and reconnecting with your alumni family and the DVULI staff.



**Mark your calendars for May 1-4, 2019 at the Sheraton Grand at Wild Horse Pass.**

Keep an eye on your inbox! More information about Reunion 2019 will be revealed throughout the next year. If you'd like a sneak peek at what this resort has to offer, please visit their website: [wildhorsepassresort.com](http://wildhorsepassresort.com)

As always, this will be a reunion to remember!



**May 1-4  
2019**



# 2018 City Coordinators

This year DVULI welcomes our 20th team of City Coordinators who will lead and learn with cohorts from Houston, Miami, Pittsburgh, the Twin Cities, and Youth for Christ.

Pictured (L-R) are:

Mike Gault – Miami, FL

Eric Iverson – Twin Cities, MN

Sheila Johnson – Pittsburgh, PA

Brian Muchmore – Youth For Christ

BJ Ramon – Houston, TX

If you know urban youth leaders in any of the above cities, please nominate them at [dvuli.org/nomination](http://dvuli.org/nomination) or contact the DVULI office.

Join us in welcoming the Class of 2018 City Coordinators.





# How Tommy Carrington is Living His Breakthrough Plan

by Kristen Pearson

When people think of Miami, an image of beautiful beaches, elaborate parties, or even “Miami Vice” may come to mind. Many don’t realize that Miami is, in fact, one of the most unchurched areas in the country, and is very segregated both culturally and denominationally – making reaching people, especially youth, very difficult.

Tommy Carrington (Miami 2006) had been working as the Urban Director for Miami Youth for Christ (YFC) for 12 years when he left to start his own organization, The Urban Training Network. During his time in DVULI, he was inspired to create a training and support program for youth workers in the Miami area – the Miami Youth Leadership Initiative (MYLI) – which he described in his breakthrough plan.

Ten years later, Carrington is living his breakthrough plan through his work with MYLI and is helping youth workers change the way they reach the youth of Miami.

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**How did you hear about DVULI and why did you want to become involved?**

I had heard about DVULI through people that had been through the program. I met Eileen [Kooreman] at a National Network of Youth Ministry meeting in Orlando in 2005. That was during the same time DVULI was having discussions about a cohort in Miami. Later that year, the process started of developing Miami as a site for the DVULI program. I took interest in the role of city coordinator

and applied.

There were two main reasons [I wanted to become involved]. One, was their commitment to empowering leaders and facilitating effective leadership in a city. [DVULI] had the reputation for doing it, and doing it effectively.

Second, was the quality and the depth of their training. Capacity building, strategic planning, the five core values, going to the heart of the youth leader, and examining those aspects of one’s personal life and mission.

**How has DVULI impacted your life and ministry?**

One of the big takeaways for me was the breakthrough plan. Some people write their breakthrough plan, then it goes to the side, while others write their plan



and execute it. I'm living my breakthrough plan ten years later!

### **What inspired the objective for the MYLI program?**

I was doing youth ministry with inner city kids, and we were bursting at the seams – I had a waiting list of kids who wanted to join our group. During that time, I was driving by churches

segment we'll do strategic planning, resource networking, and a breakthrough plan. We teach on over fifty topics.

### **How are participants chosen?**

Initially, we made the decision that it was by invitation only. We wanted to make sure that it was the right person, who had the capacity to change, and the willingness to implement this

**"Some people write their breakthrough plan, then it goes to the side, while others write their plan and execute it."**

that were struggling to get ten kids to come to youth group. I thought, 'There's something wrong with this picture – here I am in the inner city and we're bursting at the seams, and these churches are struggling to reach kids. What's the disconnect?'

I started visiting churches and talking to youth leaders and realized that a lot of them didn't have any formal training, materials, or resources. I thought, 'I can do that! God has given me the ability to receive great training and resources, why can't I pass it on to others?' That's what led me to start my own ministry focused on training and equipping youth leaders with an effective model for youth ministry.

### **What does MYLI focus its training on?**

We train on the five core values from the first national conference, and in our final

new idea of ministry. It was a very strict qualifying process. Later, we opened it up to anyone in youth ministry and allowed them to bring their team and volunteers.

### **Tell us more about MYLI.**

It's a two-and-a-half-year program designed to introduce a model of youth ministry that focuses on effective evangelism, discipleship, and empowerment of young people. The first cohort went through in 2010 with five people. This year, we have six cohorts going on at the same time, but each cohort is as small as five people. We want this to be ongoing, we want to model this as a lifestyle for a youth leader in an urban setting.

The concept of MYLI is that it's not just a youth ministry training in a box, but it's a way to invest in a youth leader's life over an extended period of time; measuring their growth and

if they're doing the essentials of an effective youth ministry. You're not just doing a six-hour workshop – you're involved in weekly meetings, weekly trainings, follow-ups, and evaluations. Putting the pieces together of how you make this measurable, sustainable, and trackable.

One of the things I find very interesting about the people involved with MYLI is the age range. Right now, our youngest is 20 and our oldest is 70, so it's hard to pin down a demographic. Some are in urban settings, others are in the suburbs. MYLI spans [a broad range] of denominations and theological perspectives. Male and female, rich and poor, black, white, Hispanic, Dominican, Haitian – it's a pretty diverse group.

### **What are some challenges MYLI has overcome?**

We're teaching a new model of youth ministry; we have taken bits and pieces from DVULI, various parachurch organizations, and my own experience. For a lot of [the participants] some of these principles are brand new. So, getting them to switch the paradigm of how they look at ministry, how to reach the unchurched, and how to do effective small groups – can be a challenge.

*continued on next page*





Tommy Carrington (center) is flanked by graduates of the Miami Youth Leadership Initiative.

### **What's an issue currently facing Miami?**

Our hot button issue is immigration. It's not on the top of the radar of things that affect MYLI, but it's the thing you hear about on social media; it's the buzz. Most of our Hispanic population is from Cuba and South America, so the illegal portion of documentation does not affect them, but we have quite a few Haitians and other immigrants that are in fear.

### **What are your hopes for the future of MYLI?**

I've been doing youth ministry for quite a while, training leaders, and leading the MYLI program. I would like to see someone emerge, to raise up someone to take some of the reins of

leadership. Someone who has the heart and passion for training and equipping others. There are some DVULI alumni and other trainers who assist, and I'm looking forward to finding the person who will take ownership and who I can share the vision with.

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Carrington continues to live his breakthrough plan, having recently enrolled in a Ph.D. program in Chicago. MYLI will continue its mission by hiring the necessary staff to keep the program going while he commutes between Chicago and Miami.

With breakthrough defined as strategic, significant, sustainable change in the way one lives

and works, Carrington is the embodiment of how breakthrough can change one's life. "MYLI is the result of my breakthrough plan. It forced me to put down on paper what is my mission, my calling, what God is doing, what's happening around me, how can I collaborate – all of that became my breakthrough plan, and I'm living it. It became my career."

*Tommy Carrington is the president and founder of Impact 922 Ministries, director of Miami Youth Leadership Initiative and adjunct professor at Trinity International University. He is a 2006 Miami graduate and former city coordinator for DVULI.*



# Before You Hit Send

Resource recommendation by Ron Carter

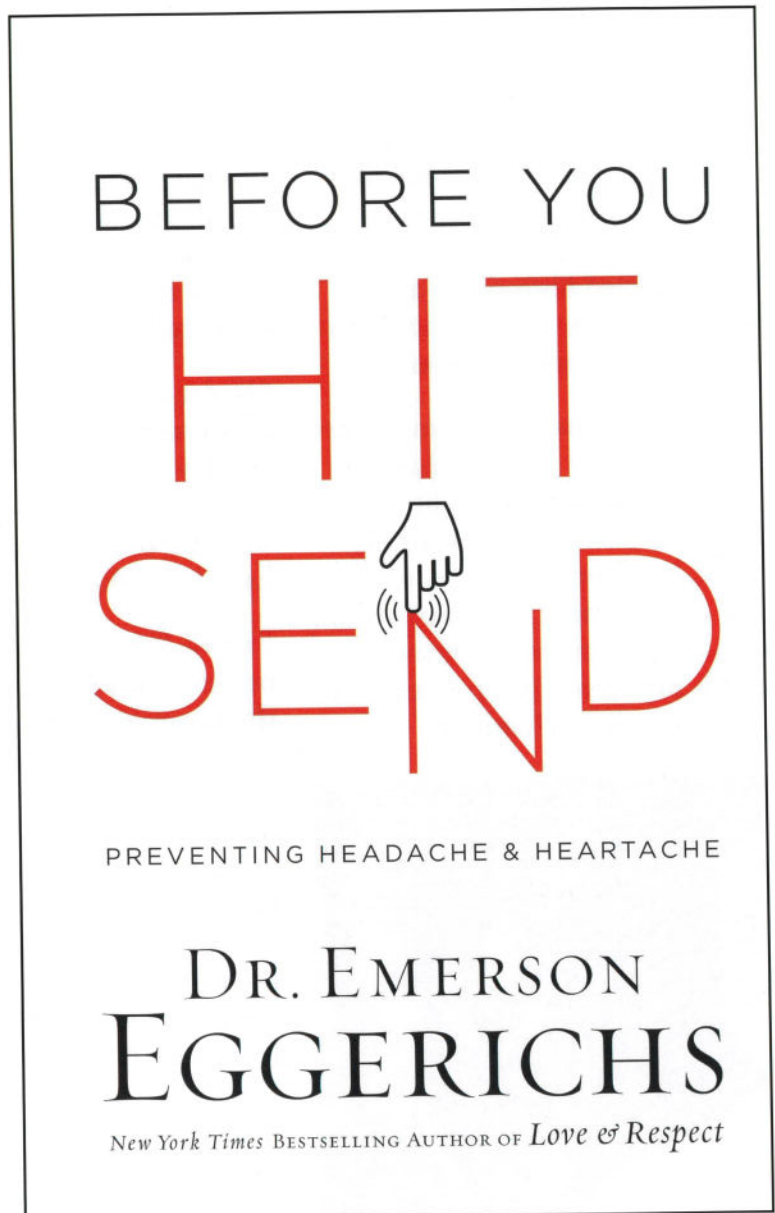
Have you ever sent an email or posted a social media comment you later regretted? Perhaps you inadvertently sent an email or a text to the wrong person, or maybe you tweeted or posted an inappropriate response which resulted in a misunderstanding and hurt feelings. Even if this hasn't happened to you, there's a good chance you know or have heard of someone who has suffered the consequences of miscommunication. But, these communication blunders can be minimized or avoided.

Christian communication expert, Emerson Eggerich offers a way forward in his recently released book, *Before You Hit Send*. The key, says Eggerich, is that we need to "pause long enough to think before speaking or writing." Specifically, Eggerich believes we need to stop and ask ourselves four questions in all our communication with others: 1) Is it true? 2) Is it kind? 3) Is it necessary? 4) Is it clear?

Drawing extensively from Scripture and professional experience, Eggerich unpacks each question in separate chapters and provides practical suggestions which can be readily

applied. As Christians, we are called to not only be good stewards of our time, talent, and resources, we are also called to be good stewards of our words. Jesus said, "I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matthew 12:36-37).

If you desire to improve not only your communication skills, but also instruct the youth you are called to serve, then don't hesitate in getting a copy of this book. *Available at Amazon.com*



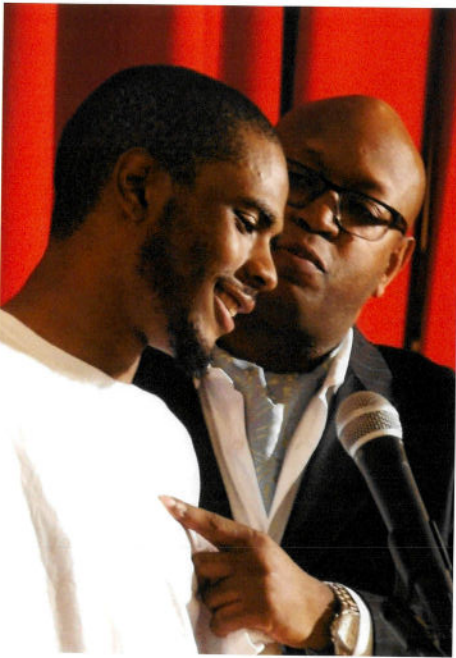


# A Relentless Mission

by Gerald Bell

When it comes to advocating for positive change in the lives of New York City's youth, Maurice Winley (NYC 2010) will knock on the toughest doors and patiently wait for an answer. The Harlem-based youth minister has a big vision for young people—especially those labeled high risk—and is working every possible angle to see transformation happen.

Like some urban youth ministers, Winley's story mirrors many of the youth he serves. Fighting for his life on the streets of New York, head-on exchanges with law enforcement, and the turmoil of having to convince authorities of his innocence (even in times of guilt) are all too familiar.



"I'm very grateful," he sighs. "My testimony is that I was out here on the streets struggling, even though I had a mother and father at home."

Winley has shared openly how years ago he was faced with a sentence of life in prison after taking a life in self-defense and how fortunate he is that "the case was thrown out." This experience is what drives his mission to work with some of Harlem's most hard-core adjudicated youth through a program he leads called Living Redemption.

"We're dealing with high need, disadvantaged, alienated youth," Winley describes. "We are building relationships with youth who are doing the shooting, or have been shot."

Part of Winley's mission is to prevent kids from entering the juvenile justice system and to reduce the recidivism rate. He hopes to accomplish this by leveraging a long list of grassroots relationships. Many of them are organizations that are already on board and working in the trenches under a partnership named Community Connections for Youth (CCFY).

CCFY is a collaboration of a dozen partners who came together earlier this year after learning that they're on the receiving end of a \$10.3 million award made available by Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance. These funds have been allocated for the creation of (one of five) "Youth Opportunity Hubs" in the boroughs of New York.

Last February, the District Attorney (DA) introduced this first-of-its-kind effort and his

goal to knit together community-based providers. The DA also reported that part of the investment would go toward capital funding for the upgrading and construction of new youth facilities in target Manhattan neighborhoods. Overall, the DA has apportioned \$45.9 million towards the five hubs that will enhance public safety, aid in crime prevention, and promote a fair and more efficient criminal justice system in New York City.

The Youth Opportunity Hub that Winley and other Harlem-based organizations will collaborate in was given the name Living Redemption Youth Opportunity Hub. Winley's church, the Soul Saving Station, serves as the main site in Harlem. This hub will involve churches, health centers, youth sports leagues, and more. Among the lineup of partners is Thrive Collective, a youth arts education program led by fellow DVULI alumnus Jeremy Del Rio (NYC 2010).

"I partner with community-based organizations who have programs that are being ran across the city, and we're talking maybe 30 sites," explains Winley. "For the last five years, I have personally been running programs via the New York City Department of Probation."

Building collaborations, mentoring high risk youth, directing capacity building programs, and empowering emerging leaders are what keep



opening the doors that Winley is pounding on. Impressively, his network of partners and community-based relationships continues to expand. The Harlem Children's Zone has approached Winley to work with some of

Winley's program recruits and trains mentors that he's branded "Credible Messengers." These youth and young adult mentors are former delinquents who have now been placed in at-risk settings (juvenile facilities) to

**"One of our mottos is that change is not an event; it's a process."**

their more challenging students, YoungLife invited him to serve on their local board, The Navigators Isaiah 58 Mission and National Church Ministries are strategic partners, and Cru Inner City has offered their career development module and compassion products as a partner.

"We have a very hyper-local strategy that's multi-layered [with] wrap around services to meet the needs of youth and families in the community," he said. "This is about breaking the cycle of recidivism and creating all types of opportunities for these young people."

positively engage youth who need a second chance.

"They were once the cancer and now they're the chemo therapy," is Winley's way of describing his Credible Messengers who are matched with young offenders. "Some are former gang members. They learn group facilitation and how to create an environment of trust through questioning and open responses. They are taught conflict resolution, crisis intervention and then about self-leadership... We believe you can't give what you don't have, and that your credibility comes from your authentic transformation."

Living Redemption has a three-level track that goes from "participant, to producer, to leader." Each Credible Messenger is given the opportunity to build relationships that will lead to personal healing for the offender, position youth to reunite with their families, and to stay on a path of reaching their potential outside the juvenile system.

"One of our mottos is that change is not an event; it's a process," he asserts. "Imagine how it would feel to be locked up and have another young person—who has been there—talking you through a transformative process."

But what is it that makes Winley's mission so relentless? It's the systems working against him that continue to spend millions on youth incarceration. He and his partners argue that the better investment in high risk youth is wrapping your arms around them rather than isolating them behind bars. Further, Winley claims that fifty percent of the youth touched by Living Redemption's Credible Messengers have never returned to jail.

"Punishment is not justice—these kids need relationships," says Winley.

*Maurice Winley is the director of Living Redemption Youth Opportunity Hub – Community Connections for Youth in Harlem, NY. He is a 2010 New York graduate of DVULI.*



Maurice Winley (left) prays for graduates of the CCFY Peer Mentor Leadership Development Program.



# Alumni Updates



For more, visit:  
[facebook.com/dvuli](https://facebook.com/dvuli)



Amy Williams (Chicago 2007) is one of the authors of a new youth ministry strategy and curriculum program called *GROW*.



Carolyn Conrad (Fresno 2016) and her husband Grayson are the proud parents of a baby girl. Emilia Conrad was born on July 13, 2017.



Claude Valentin (Orlando 2016) has released a CD titled *Worship In The Land*.



Danyiel Yarbrough (Orlando 2016) was presented with the 2017 Orange County District Two Citizen of the Year award for her work at the New Journey Youth Center.



Fritz Williams (San Antonio 2001) received his Doctorate of Ministry from United Theological Seminary on May 12, 2017 in Dayton, Ohio.

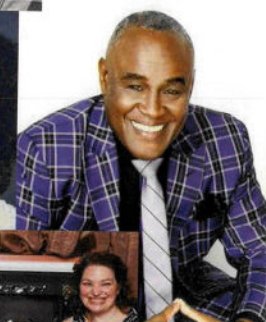
Katrina (Moore) Belser (Atlanta 2014) married Tristram Belser on June 25, 2017.



Phil Williams (Cincinnati 2014) has accepted the position of High School Pastor at Vineyard Cincinnati Church in Cincinnati, Ohio.



Tamir Reyes (Newark 2014) is now a program manager for Catholic Charities in Hudson County, NJ.



Gary Wyatt (Seattle-Tacoma 2014) has released a CD titled *Legacy*.

Nicole Bernacet (NYC 2010) and her husband Jon are parents of triplets! Joshua Maximus, Oliver Broderick, and Elijah Jonathan were born on March 30, 2017.

