**Church Multiplication Forum Summary**

Conducted at Wesleyan Headquarters

Fishers, Indiana

September 20, 2017

The Church Multiplication Forum(CMF) of the Global Wesleyan Alliance covenant partners convened with the following participants:

Association of Independent Methodist-Gary Thornton, Chairman of the New Church Development Committee.

Church of God-Doug Talley, Regional Pastor of Indiana, Esther Cottrell, Regional Pastor of Ohio, and Curt Walters of Crossing Point Church (a plant that is ten years old).

Evangelical Church of North America-Jeff Manness, Element Church of Cheyenne, WY (a plant that is ten years old)

Free Methodist Church-Michael Forney-Gravitational Leadership and Mission Igniter (June 2007) from southern Michigan conference.

Nazarene Church-Bill Wiesman, former director of church multiplication now the director for the Center of Church Multiplication at Trevecca Nazarene University, Mark Bane the successor to Bill as the Director of Church Multiplication.

Wesleyan Church-Ed Love, Director of Church Multiplication and Wayne Schmidt, General Superintendent for Wesleyan Church joined in the afternoon.

Global Wesleyan Alliance, Ron Duncan.

In preparation for the meeting, each of the participants had received read ahead materials provided by Ron regarding cultural trends, projections for future strategists, and the report from the Detroit Incarnational City project.

Devotions were from Acts 1.23-26, the choosing of the disciple to replace Judas. We prayed for all the people impacted by recent natural disasters in the United States and around the world, as well as the needs of our groups we represented in the kingdom.

An overview of the beginning of GWA and its design was shared so the participants could grasp how this forum fit into the design. Each person then shared their history, experience in church planting and multiplication, and their passion around church multiplication. The connections made were of immediate value to numerous participants through the sharing of resources and training events.

Two major presentations were presented.

Ed Love shared with the group the recent unveiling of the **Church Multiplication Collective of the Wesleyan Church.** The link is Wesleyan Church/CMC.org. Within the Wesleyan Church there is now a one stop address to answer questions, receive all the resources, and be supported in church multiplication. Here is the opening statement:

“The Church Multiplication Collective of The Wesleyan Church is an intentional multiplication ecosystem focused on **DISCOVERING**, **DEVELOPING**, and **DEPLOYING** workers for the Lord’s harvest. The CMC’s role in fulfilling the vision of The Wesleyan Church is to:

* Cultivate a culture of church planting and multiplication
* Equip healthy churches to multiply new faith communities
* Provide workers of the harvest with a world-class support system”

The group looked at various aspects of the collective and its organization to support regions and churches’ in the mission of church multiplication. There were numerous questions as well as what is available to partner and covenant groups.

The second presentation was provided by Bill Wiesman **on DCPI and the impact that it has made on the Church of the Nazarene in the last five years.**

‘Dynamic Church Planting International was born from the desire to see church planters thrive in fulfilling their God-given calling. Through the years, DCPI has only gotten better at equipping church planters around the world as we press on toward our Vision of equipping leaders to plant 5 million dynamic churches to reach the world for Christ.

The training is free to church planters. There are five modules of training: Church Planting Essentials, Churches planting Churches, Mentoring Church Planters, Church Planting Movements, and NexGen Challenge. Below are the goals of the first module Church Planting Essentials:

DCPI has two convictions about the Church Planting Essentials training:

1st Conviction –  The **12 Biblical Principles Of Church Planting are essential** for the development and birth of a healthy new church. Every session in the training will support and apply one or more of the Biblical principles.

2nd Conviction – **Knowledge without wisdom is insufficient *and* learning without application is incomplete**. Therefore, to receive the best out of the Church Planting Essentials training each participant is required to prepare Vision-Plan-Timeline (VPT). The VPT is designed to help you begin applying what you are learning in the training and to move you further along in the vision and planting of new churches.

Church Planting Essentials’ interactive and comprehensive instruction is designed to enable prospective planters to avoid church planting “land mines”, plan prayerfully, as well as discern and pursue their vision effectively.”

Bill then shared numbers with the group about the turnaround in Church Planting and Multiplication within the Nazarene Church over the last five years.

“USA/Canada Number of church plants:

2011-72

2012-110

2013-105

2014-136

2015-144

2016-159

Of the 651 churches planted since 2012, 595 reported in 2016 which is a 91% survival rate. Bill contributes this growth and sustainability to the training of pastors and leaders with DCPI. He was going to review if any of the 595 had planted a church.

Bill also presented his latest ministry endeavor which is developing the Center for Church Multiplication at Trevecca University in Nashville. Bill views the Center as a place of resources, training, and noting events being conducted around the country. Bill then invited the group to become partners in the development of the center. In addition, he shared their first event October 3-5, 2017, and invited all who could arrange their schedules to come and be part of the event. Some additional thoughts and a consensus statement came later in the day.

A great deal of dialogue occurred around these two presentations and spawned numerous intriguing questions to be considered.

**The afternoon session began by having the group brainstorm questions concerning church planting and multiplication which senior leaders of the covenant partners of GWA should be thinking about at a strategic level.**

Twenty-seven questions were delineated which initiated a lively discussion and engagement around the issues. Wayne Schmidt asked the group to prioritize the twenty-seven to the top 3-5 questions. Here are the top questions with the corollary questions stated below each of the main questions.

1. HOW DO WE MAKE CHURCH MULTIPLICATION PART OF OUR DNA, NOT, JUST A PROGRAM?
   1. How do we get our people to multiply on a micro level?
   2. How do we develop focus outward?
   3. Does the national budget reflect church multiplication as a core value?
   4. Does your church discipline hinder or help church multiplication?
   5. How do we structure to get a different result?
   6. What are the projections for the next 10-20 years in terms of church multiplication?
   7. If every church planting movement has been led by lay people, how can our polity allow for that?
   8. How do we help local churches define success?
   9. How does our denomination define success?
   10. Have you as senior leaders accepted responsibility for your present reality?
   11. Which of these questions do you need to ask those you lead?
   12. How many new churches will you have to plant to stay even? Grow?
2. HOW DO WE DEVELOP APOSTOLIC\* STYLE LEADERS FROM A CULTURE OF SHEPHERDS? \*Apostolic is defined as having a regional outlook, sending capacity as opposed to seating capacity, and the ability to raise up new leaders.
   1. How do we develop change agents from a culture of stability?
   2. How do we foster innovation in a system that rewards sameness?
   3. Are we celebrating the things we want to reproduce?
   4. Are developing leaders who want to have a legacy of multiplication?
   5. How do we make room for younger leaders?
   6. How do we retool our seasoned pastors to relook at church multiplication?
   7. What’s your vision regarding church multiplication and how are you communicating this to those you lead?
   8. How do we finance education for new leaders especially regarding cultural diversity?
   9. How do you train and deploy leaders to their giftedness?
   10. Does our system allow for mavericks?
   11. What are we measuring? Inputs or Outcomes?
   12. How are you using qualitative and quantitative metrics?
3. WHO HAVE YOU LED TO CHRIST THIS YEAR?

We then turned our attention to the question, **Is there a Wesleyan model of church planting and church multiplication?** The initial discussion revolved around the word “model” which was changed to “ethos”. Most felt model was an inadequate term to achieve clarity in the result. Is there a Wesleyan ethos in church planting and church multiplication? The consensus was yes and we need to develop that construct. As a beginning step, Bill Wiesman offered to edit a document which would contain four items from each tribe:

Biblical Foundation for Church Planting and Church Multiplication;

Historical Perspectives

Present Reality

Future Opportunities

This would provide an ethos framework to develop the Wesleyan perspective on church planting and church multiplication.

The group then turned their attention to offering an answer to question number one which they had posed earlier, **“How do you make Church Multiplication part of our DNA, not, just a program?**

**Their answer revolved around “Organizational Seriousness**” which includes the system, personnel, budget, message-communication, celebration, church planting training, plant a church, prayer support for the lost. If the organization is serious about church multiplication then the above items must be addressed at the highest levels of leadership. In addition, create environments to innovate, reward the risk taker, create new partnerships if the old system isn’t or won’t work, and use measurements that mean something. And, plant pregnant churches!

Gary Thornton asked the group this question regarding those responsible for planting churches within their tribes, **what should you be measuring as a director of Church Planting/Church Multiplication?**  The group answer was the following:

1. Training of Leaders
2. Involvement of churches
3. Rewarding and Celebrating
4. How many leaders are in the pipeline and the number progressing?

**Throughout the day there was consensus on numerous concepts and next steps.**

1. We need to think in terms of multiplication rather than addition as we look at church planting. We need to plant pregnant churches.
2. Our matrix of measurements would be better served if we focused on outcomes rather than inputs.
3. Because of numerous “models” on how to plant a church, this group believes the best approach is for a church to plant a church, with the regional leadership assisting, and the national leadership providing the framework. Furthermore, they believe that new pastors should be trained in church multiplication prior to the taking of the first pastorate. Some even suggested that before you could be ordained, you would need to plant a church.
4. The current group would like to be involved in developing the Center for Church Multiplication at Trevecca and would encourage the GWA covenant partners to endorse the development of the Center for Church Multiplication.
5. Several books were recommended throughout the day:

“Leading Church Multiplication” by Tom Nobel and Steve Pike,

“Church Planting Movements” by David Garrison

“Indigenous Church Planting” by Charles Brock

1. Leading indicators of how a denomination is doing in growth was a topic of discussion. The book by Dean R. **Hoge** and David A. **Roozen** (eds.). Understanding Church. Growth and Decline: 1950-1978. New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1979, addresses this issue. Their study over a 28-year period showed that every group that showed a net increase in total number of churches showed a net increase in attendance and members.  And, every group that showed a net decrease in number of churches showed a decrease in attendance and membership over a period of time.  Total number of churches was a leading indicator in that it took a period of years before the result of increase or decrease in total number of churches impacted attendance and members.
2. An invitation was extended to attend two events in the near future: one at Trevecca on Oct 3-5, 2017 contact Bill Wiesman, and, two, Mission Igniter in Dearborn, Michigan on March 8-9, 2018, contact Michael Forney.
3. **The group decided on a next meeting and next steps. The date is April 8-10 at Trevecca University to follow up on the “Ethos” development and participate in at least a portion of the DCPI training**.

After a full day of enriching dialogue, the group closed in prayer giving thanks for the day, new relationships and the leading of the Holy Spirit in our deliberations.

Written by

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