Detroit City Forum Executive Summary

October 8, 2015

The participants gathered at the Wesleyan Center on seven mile road. Those gathered were: Free Methodist(Bruce Rhodes, Elliott Renfroe, Eric and Amy Casteel, Mark Cryderman); Wesleyan(Mark Judkins, Rodney Faul, Mick Veach, Richard Meeks, Regina Smith, Jim Bowen, Kirt Herbert, Kobia Changa); Church of God(Bob Dulin and Ron Duncan). Salvation Army and Nazarene participants had last minute issues preventing them from attending.

Elliott Renfroe brought a devotional from I Corinthians 12 challenging us to remember we are part of the larger body of Christ and we have a specific role to perform in God's design.

An overview of the initiatives of GWA were presented along with the recasting of the vision for Detroit Incarnational City Ministry. A white paper had been sent to all participants outlining the past endeavors and some ideas to be considered for the future. Key features concerning the future would include approaching the initiative from the wholistic perspective, looking for partners with similar objectives, and mobilizing the covenant partners of GWA(this will mean more consistency in meeting together so as to accomplish the objectives).

After a time of reflection and discussion about where we have come from and what should we do , we had lunch thanks to the fine efforts of the Wesleyan Center Staff. After lunch our task was to develop a realistic plan for Detroit that could move forward.

The Wesleyans have been developing and working a plan for Detroit for the past five years. The suggestion was presented to the group that we learn of their plan and adopt their philosophy as the basis for our GWA plan for Detroit. Richard Meeks, Mark Judkins, and Mick Veach) presented what they were doing.

The initial plan for Detroit involved two intersecting circles: one representing a church and the other community development work. After they had worked the plan for a few years, they added a third circle-education. The Community Development Plan is based on the work of Christian Community Development Association with headquarters in Chicago, Illinois. The eight philosophical concepts of CCDA were reviewed with the group. These concepts address the wholistic approach.

We also discussed the danger of working with secular urban renewal groups and models because they typically do not value the people already in the neighborhood and are mostly concerned with renovation and bringing in new people, they are not talking about redemption and raising up the existing residents. We need to both renovate and redeem and focus on all people not just the new ones with wealth and affluence moving in. In connection with the secular urban renewal group, we had some information about Purpose Built Communities. Additionally information is needed to see how they really approach the residents of the communities they assist.

After a question and answer period, the group moved to formalize itself in two ways: write a statement describing who we are and create the next steps for what we do.

The working statement of who we are is: "we intentionally advance God's kingdom by making disciples who multiply ministries characterized by service, reconciliation, and justice, to improve the quality of life in Detroit thru partnerships and collaboration."

It was agreed at a minimum, this group would need to meet in person at least four times annually and by Skype or phone conference as often as needed. It was also noted that we need to bring around the table as early as possible all the participants. There was discussion about having a core group(GWA members) and an extended group of persons with which we can partner.

We also talked regarding sharing resources.  Especially regarding student internships to investigated through our institutes of Higher Education - IWU, Marion, IN and Spring Arbor University, Spring Arbor, MI.  Finally, we did discuss casually some grant options that may be pursuable and resource GWA.

The next meeting of the core group was scheduled for January 14, 2016. Each member was encouraged to visit the website of CCDA and if possible attend the annual conference scheduled for Memphis, Tenn next month. Richard Meeks will facilitate tickets for the event if you are in need of a ticket.

The agenda for January 14th would include the following:

1. Hear the response of GWA covenant members about the plan.
2. Review our statement of who we are.
3. Identify potential partners.
4. Make sure all GWA members are represented.
5. Have an extended time of prayer-Bruce Rhodes will facilitate.
6. In the afternoon have CCDA conduct a training session called CAFÉ and David Clark has confirmed he will lead the event.

The meeting concluded with a season of prayer for our efforts, the people of Detroit and the work of the Wesleyan Center right now. Many thanks to Mark and his staff for their outstanding support of this event.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronald V. Duncan