**GWA Annual Report from Executive Director-2016**

This is my third report to this body. The numerous activities, forums, meetings, and collaborations have filled the year with new insights, promising programmatic thrusts, and potential initiatives for the coming few years. As has been my custom after each forum, I have sent to you an executive summary of what has transpired during the forum so you would have the information immediately. Your gracious comments and responses have been appreciated.

For this report, I will offer a brief summary and any decisions needed from this body to move forward on some of our initiatives.

**Cross denominational credentialing continues** to be a viable option for our groups. Some have moved forward in a formal manner while others are still talking about it within their tribes. Some have requested pastoral assistance and those requests have been forwarded to each of you.

**Young Leaders Task Force on Mentoring** completed their work for a proposal on mentoring in May and a report was sent to each of you. A beta model for testing was envisioned. I am including a few paragraphs from the report:

*After a bit of discussion, we envision the beta model including different geographical areas, being trans-denominational, and including the categories of persons in ministry. It became quickly apparent the leadership of the GWA would be critical in the selection of the beta group personnel. How would this work?*

*Our beta model would look like this:*

* *Three geographical cohorts-Portland, Oregon; Wichita, Kansas; and Indianapolis, Indiana. This corresponds with the location of the three participants on the task force. We would be looking for 12-24 persons to participate in the beta testing. The three members of the task force would also participate as well as oversee their geographical cohort.*
* *Each GWA leader would select and recommend 2-4 mentors or mentees for each geographical region[We realize each GWA member may not have leadership in all three cohort areas so they would recommend in the areas where they do. We would need these names by February 1, 2017 or before.]*
* *The task force member would conduct a half day orientation and then make the assignments. The mentor/mentee would make a learning covenant with each other at the half day orientation meeting. A brief monthly electronic report would be submitted to the Task Force.*

*The time line for the beta testing would be from March of 2017 to November of 2017. The task force would provide the Mentor/Mentee pairings with expectations and desired outcomes prior to the initial meeting.*

*After the beta testing, we would assess our process, revise and refine, and present to all GWA members on how this could be implemented nation-wide.*

As you can surmise, in order for this to work the cooperation of each of the tribes will be essential in the selection of the personnel to participate. Therefore, a decision by this body to move forward with the beta project is critical. This will be discussed in our decision time on the agenda.

**CFO forum was** conducted at the Salvation Army headquarters near Washington D.C. The group was smaller in number this time, but the information and collegiality were outstanding. Their next forum is scheduled for March 14-15 at Free Methodist Headquarters in Indianapolis. Jo Lammey will facilitate the arrangements.

**Mission Directors** forum was cancelled due to a death in the family of Dennis Jackson who was to be the host at Wesleyan Headquarters. This happened so suddenly and calendars were already full, it was not possible to reschedule until 2017. The date for the 2017 meeting at the Wesleyan Headquarters is March 10-11.

**Detroit Incarnational City Ministry** had a full year of meetings and developments. During the last week of October each of you received the report from the group regarding church planting within the city. This group will continue to meet throughout 2017 with emphasis on continual learning and the development of the Mosaic Urban Ministry Institute.

During our decision discussion, the GWA will need to decide if we want to launch this plan in additional cities. If so, the cities must be chosen, and a leadership group formed.

**Potential new initiatives for 2017** revolve around three areas of concern emerging from discussions and observations: Planting multi ethnic, multi economic, and multi cultural congregations(ME2MC); transforming homogeneity congregations into ME2MC ; and training executive leadership to deal with the changing modalities of these times.

**Potential initiative one** is developing a framework(similar to Incarnational City Ministry) which recognizes the current and forecast of demographics of this nation. There are many statistics floating around as to the current constituency of the 325,000 plus churches in America[70% average less than 100; 80% are plateaued or declining; 50% or more constituents are over the age of 50; 30% give 70% of the income; the baby boomers who are major givers today will start dying off in 2017 and continuing for the next 20 years; communities are changing rapidly, see quotes below]. Church planting regardless of the location will not be homogeneity as it has been for the past decade. This requires a different mindset.

***The American church needs to face the inevitable and prepare for the next stage of her history-we are looking at a nonwhite majority, multiethnic American Christianity in the immediate future. Unfortunately, despite these drastic demographic changes, American evangelicalism remains enamored to an ecclesiology and a value system that reflects a dated and increasingly irrelevant cultural captivity and is disconnected from both a global and a local reality." from "The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity" by Soong-Chan Rah***

***The era of Western Christianity has passed within our lifetimes, and the day of the Southern churches is dawning. The fact of change itself is undeniable: it has happened, and will continue to happen." from "The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity (Future of Christianity Trilogy)" by Philip Jenkins***

Additional authors who are alerting us are: Harvey Cox, “The Future of Faith”; and James Emery White, “The Church in an age of Crisis”.

My recommendation is a forum in Houston, Texas to address this issue. Houston according to the Houston Chronicle newspaper has over 179 languages spoken within its borders. Numerous congregations I have visited over the last year are “ME2MC” and growing. This forum would focus on awareness, best practices, and practical help.

***Potential initiative 2***  revolves around transforming a homogeneity congregation into a “ME2MC” congregation. Our past history at this endeavor is rather gloomy and dismal. Yet the more than 325,000 congregations in America are facing this common challenge. I think we have learned some valuable lessons from the Detroit project that are transferable to this initiative. My recommendation is we select two-four congregations of various sizes and history to serve as a laboratory for all. These congregations would work together in transformation toward becoming an “ME2MC” congregation.

The process is still in the developing phase but would center around key executive leadership, pastoral and lay leadership, congregational analysis, community demographics, and creating a local implementation plan. The beginning would involve several months of preparatory work for the leadership. I would guide the process with the assistance of the group participants. Any cost incurred would be shared by the group participants.

**Potential initiative 3** involves you and your senior leadership across the nation. Do you and your state ministers, district or regional superintendents have a good grasp of what is coming in the face of the American church in the next 5-10-15 years? It would seem to me we can bring together some of the brightest minds to inspire, challenge, enlighten, and assist us in forging a future that is adaptive, responsive, and kingdom oriented. My recommendation is to conduct either in 2017 or 2018 a major leadership summit. A planning task force would be formed to guide the process. The end goals would be to present the best thoughts around our common future, skill sets needed in senior leadership functioning, and a broad understanding of the demographics impacting the church.

**Additional activities** I have completed include attendance at the Wesleyan Church General Conference June 4-8, 2016. This 13th General Conference was most inspiring and the fellowship experience gratifying. The honoring of Dr. Lyon was very appropriate and the selection of Dr. Schmidt was done with gracious humility.

I also attended the Church of God regional convention in Anderson, Indiana, and renewed acquaintances from the past.

On October 18-19, I attended the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies(ASARB) at Baylor University’s Institute for Studies of Religion. This group meets annually and the venue changes each year. This group has been given the responsibility from the National Council of Churches to produce the Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches. NCC produced the last one in 2012 and has passed the baton to ASARB.

The side benefit of meeting at ISR was the ability to draw on the expertise and wisdom residing within this outstanding and world renowned faculty. We were fortunate to hear from the Institute Director Byron Johnson and the role of prison seminaries.(Google Angola Prison Seminary or the book, “The Angola Prison Seminary: Effects of Faith-Based Ministry on Identity Transformation, Desistance, and Rehabilitation.).

We also heard from J. Gordon Melton who is a member of ASARB concerning the underestimating and counting of churches in America as well as the number of denominations and membership. He purports we have more than a thousand denominations and a thousand non-Christian groups like “Buddhist,Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Shitoists,Jains, Zoroastrian, metaphysicians, and Western Esotericists”. He is also the editor of Melton’s Encyclopedia of American Religions, ninth edition, which was released October 21. One of his facts included in his presentation was this and I quote:

“*American Religion as a whole, and Christianity in particular, has been on a growth trajectory since the time of the American Revolution. As the dust settled from the war, and the system of voluntarism imposed on the dozen plus denominations present in the new nation, the percentage of the population who are church members has grown from some 10-12 percent to somewhere between 75 and 80 percent today. It had reached around 20 percent by the time of the Civil War, about 33 percent at the end of the century, and finally reached 50 percent during WWII….There were 15 Christian denominations at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and one Jewish community. As the nation expanded, so did the number of Christian denominations, there being more than 300 by the end of the century. That number had expanded to more than 600 by the 1960s and is well over 1,000 today.”*

Finally, we had a presentation by Philip Jenkins on the relationship of fertility and faith in political environments. A most fascinating man and presentation. He has written more than 24 books and is considered an authority on faith and world history. One statement he made, “the more religious the government, the less religious the people.” He then talked about Iran as well as other current events.

We also had presenters from the Pew Research Center and the Lake Institute at the School of Philanthropy at Indiana University. The Pew Research Center presentation compared the 2007 and 2014 Religious Landscape Studies. The Lake Institute looked at the changes in giving over the past and looked at predictions for the future. Americans are still giving, but more is going to designated giving. Both of these presentations are attached to this report.

**Conclusion**

GWA is at the threshold of moving forward to address significant issues facing all covenant members of GWA. A kingdom worldview has been foundational to Wesleyan thought and the commitment to introduce Christ to all has motivated and inspired leadership. Today, in my opinion, our challenges and opportunities are no larger or smaller than those faced by leadership in the past but they are happening at a pace which is new and sometimes overwhelming. Therefore, **choosing what is absolutely critical to occupy our time and energy is key to our future and success**. We cannot do it all, but we must do the most important. For this, we need the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to lead and guide in our decision making.

Thank you for allowing me to take this journey with you, it has been truly a capstone to my fifty plus years in ministry.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev Ronald V. Duncan, D. Min.

Executive Director, Global Wesleyan Alliance

SIGNIFICANT DATES

DETROIT GROUP-January 19th at Detroit Free Methodist Church-17377 Westbrook-1:00pm

YOUNG LEADERS MENTORING TF-Jan 31, 2017 Identify Beta Group

WESLEYAN HOLINESS WOMEN CLERGY CONGRESS-February 23-24, Atlanta, GA

YOUNG LEADERS MENTORING ORIENTATION-Portland-March 3, Wichita 7th, Indy 16th

MISSION DIRECTORS-INDY-March 10-11

CFO-Indy-March 14-15

Nazarene Quadrennial in Indy-June 21-30

Church of God Convention-Wichita-June 20-23

CCDA in Detroit-Oct 4-7

Potential Initiative Dates