**Incarnational City Church Planting**

**Report by**

**Study Group of Global Wesleyan Alliance**

**December 2017**

**Historical Background**

The Global Wesleyan Alliance covenant members meeting in December of 2013 at the Salvation Army National Headquarters adopted seven priorities for the work of the GWA in the coming years. The fourth priority was Urban Mission Collaboration. Jerry Porter of the Church of the Nazarene, Steve Banfield of the Salvation Army, and Ron Duncan, the newly selected Executive Director of GWA accepted the responsibility for the development of this priority. In May of 2014, a group of twenty persons representing eight denominations met at the Salvation Army Kroc Center in Chicago, Illinois.

The purposes of this forum were to explore a current definition of incarnational city ministry, discover challenges and opportunities surrounding city ministry, listen to current stories of successful “incarnational city ministry”, establish relationships with like-minded individuals and entities, and think proactively as to possible models for “incarnational city ministry. “

In terms of next steps, Detroit was identified as the first city specific forum which occurred on October 24, 2014. All of the GWA covenant members were invited to attend. Detroit was chosen because the Wesleyans were involved in developing an incarnational city ministry at the Wesley Center on west 7 mile road. Twenty-six persons representing five denominations and the Staff at Wesley Center met all day getting to know one another, understanding what was already happening in Detroit, reviewing Detroit demographics, discovering areas of collaboration, how can we support one another?, and where do we go from here?

The group decided they wanted to stay together and walk with the Wesley Center learning how best to go about this ministry. The group decided quarterly meetings would be essential to stay connected and informed.

The group meetings were held October 2015, Nov 2015(CCDA Convention in Memphis), Jan 2016, April 2016, and October 2016. The July 2016 was cancelled due to the construction still occurring at the Mosaic church. Out of the last two meetings, this model of incarnational city ministry has evolved.

As stated earlier, City Incarnational Ministry became an initiative of the Global Wesleyan Alliance in December of 2013 out of the concern that the churches associated with the Wesleyan though and doctrine, except for the Salvation Army, for the most part had departed from the cities some twenty plus years ago. Recognizing clearly that the Gospel calls the church to all and a resurgence of moving back into the cities is happening, then the GWA wanted to explore how we can reengage this aspect of fulfillment of the Gospel. It is fairly clear from the results we have seen over the past decade or so there needs to be a new innovative design that addresses the whole person and is willing to take the long view in planning. The catalyst for bringing together all the players in such an endeavor can be the love of Jesus Christ lived out in the church.

Here are some models we have seen in the past:

A mother church establishes a daughter church with members from the mother church to begin. Members from the mother church do not necessarily move to the new community, but drive in to the church location. The concept is the newly formed church will draw persons from the community so that one day the daughter church will be self sustained and independent of the mother church.

A denominational organization seeks to find a couple who are willing to move to the area in question, find jobs, live in the community, and as opportunity and time allows share the Good News with the ultimate goal of creating a church from the folks in the neighborhood. Another model out of this paradigm is the denominational organization puts upfront money for the church planter so they can spend most of the time developing for the church launch. This usually takes from six months to a year after a core group has been identified. The denominational support diminishes over a select number of years(average is three).

A large church seeks to satellite their services to locations of interest and establish churches in those locations with the large church providing the guidance and direction. This is usually funded by the large church.

An individual or couple sensing the call of God to go and start a work in a particular location and they seek support from family, friends, and denominational sources if possible.

All of these models have experienced some success as well as failures. The demographics, personnel involved, and the level of resourcing are key ingredients. Even with all elements in place, you still encounter failures. Each church group has their own statistics about church plants that are successful within the city.

Each of the above models struggles with addressing the issues surrounding the targeted area that go beyond just establishing a church: Issues of safety, shelter, food, transportation, and job opportunities. It appears the failures of the above models are rooted in these issues mainly.

Is there a need for a new model that could be replicated with success across the landscape? In order for the model to meet the criteria for an incarnational ministry it would need to address the components of the “Whole Person.”

Furthermore, because of the vast needs within our culture, the resources required to address the whole person will necessitate connecting with partners in our endeavors as long as they reflect our basic beliefs.

It has been demonstrated across America, communities can be revived and reoriented toward love, justice, and mercy.

After study, research, and practical application , the ten steps below are our best thoughts at the current time on how to proceed to have the best opportunity for success in having an incarnational city ministry. The steps are to be viewed as a whole, you cannot pick and choose.

**INCARNATIONAL CITY MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT STEPS**

1. A well thought out philosophy and ministry statement needs to be developed in order to provide the bumper rails for this journey. Some would say the foundation has to be laid properly if success is to be achieved. We found that the Christian Community Development Association(CCDA-www.CCDA.org) provided the best option for our endeavors. They have identified eight key components of Christian Community Development . One of the founders of CCDA was John Perkins who started with the three “R’s” during the civil rights struggle(Relocation, Reconciliation, and Redistribution) . John Perkins and others later added five additional key components. The order of these key components have changed over time with no clear progression except they are a unit. I have arranged the order for this paper as “Church based, Reconciliation, Listening to the Community, Empowerment, Leadership Development, Redistribution, Relocation, and Wholistic Approach. What follows is from their CCDA web site verbatim:
2. “***Church based-*** *The community of God's people is uniquely capable of affirming the dignity of the poor and enabling them to meet their own needs. It is practically impossible to do effective wholistic ministry apart from the local church. A nurturing community of faith can best provide the thrusts of evangelism, discipleship, spiritual accountability, and relationships by which disciples grow in their walk with God.*

*One problem today has been that the church is not involved in developing its communities. Often, the church has been an unfriendly neighbor in communities across our country. Churches are guilty of being open only on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights and being almost irrelevant to the needs of the people around them. Because of this, many para-church organizations have started to do the work of loving their neighbor that the church had neglected. Christian Community Development sees the church as taking action towards the development of its community.*

*It is the responsibility of the church to evangelize, disciple and nurture people in the Kingdom. Yet, from the command of Jesus, it is also the responsibility of the church to love their neighbor and their neighborhood. Churches should be seen as lovers of their community and neighborhoods. It is out of the church body that ideas and programs should emerge.*

*This concept is certainly not new in the black community. The black church has spawned most of the substantial community efforts in housing and economic development. There have been shopping centers built, senior housing units developed and communities transformed by the church. As natural as these transformations have been for the black church, they continue to be foreign to the traditional white church. Often, opposition to the church's involvement in community development still occurs among many white denominations and church groups. Recently, many new efforts are also emerging in the Latino and Asian communities as well that are making the church even more relevant to those they serve.*

*Lastly, probably the greatest sustaining power of community development is the community building of a local church. Because Christian community is based on relocation and people living in the community, having a local church to worship together is essential. It is the church where people gather to be rejuvenated and have their personal needs met. This is true of staff members and non-staff members. How exciting it is to see doctors at a local health center worshipping and sitting next to their patients on a Sunday morning. This is community building at its best. The church helps people to understand that each person has gifts and talents and all must utilize those for the greater good of the community. A worshipping church breaks down many of the barriers including racial, educational and cultural barriers that often separate people in communities.”*

1. ***Reconciliation****- Reconciliation is at the heart of the gospel. Jesus said that the essence of Christianity could be summed up in two inseparable commandments: Love God, and love thy neighbor. (Mt 22:37-39) First, Christian Community Development is concerned with reconciling people to God and bringing them into a church fellowship where they can be discipled in their faith.*

*Evangelism is very much a part of Christian Community Development. It is recognized that the answer is not just a job or a decent place to live but having a true relationship with Jesus Christ. It is essential that the good news of Jesus Christ is proclaimed and that individuals place their faith in Christ for salvation. Christian discipleship is very much a part of this philosophy also.*

*The gospel, rightly understood, is wholistic. It responds to people as whole people; it does not single out just spiritual or just physical needs and speak to those. Christian Community Development begins with people transformed by the love of God, who then respond to God's call to share the gospel with others through evangelism, social action, economic development, and justice.*

*People To People*

*The most segregated time of the week in our nation is Sunday morning during church services. American churches rarely are integrated and weaken the gospel because of this practice. Christians pray in the model prayer that the Lord taught: "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Mt 6:9 Churches should reflect heaven on earth, and heaven will be the most integrated place in the world. People of every nation and every tongue will worship Christ together. This is the picture of the church Christ presents to his people.*

*The question is: Can a gospel that reconciles people to God without reconciling people to people be the true gospel of Jesus Christ? A person's love for Christ should break down every racial, ethnic and economic barrier. As Christians come together to solve the problems of their community, the great challenge is to partner and witness together across these barriers in order to demonstrate our oneness in Christ. Christian Community Development recognizes that the task of loving the poor is shared by the entire body of Christ, black, white, brown, and yellow; rich and poor; urban and suburban; educated and uneducated. While the Bible transcends culture and race, the church is still having a hard time with living out the reality of our unity in Christ. Christian Community Development is intentional about reconciliation and works hard to bring people of all races and cultures into the one worshipping body of Christ.*

*This comes not so much through a program but through a commitment to living together in the same neighborhood. This is why relocation is so important and how each of the other principals builds upon it.*

*This is where what Dr. John Perkins calls the felt-need concept can be so helpful for individuals seeking to establish authentic cross-cultural relationships in under resourced neighborhoods. In order to build trust with people who may be suspicious about our motives for being in the 'hood' because of negative past experiences, stereotypes, or ignorance, we must begin by getting to know people right where they are at. As we listen to their stories and get to know their hopes and concerns for the present and future, we also begin to identify one another's deepest felt-needs; those hurts and longings that allows us opportunities to connect with people on a deeper level, which is always necessary for true reconciliation to take place.*

*The power of authentic reconciliation between us and God, and between people of every culture and race is an essential component of effective ministry in our hurting world.*

1. ***Listening to the community-***

*Often communities are developed by people outside of the community that bring in resources without taking into account the community itself. Christian Community Development is committed to listening to the community residents, and hearing their dreams, ideas and thoughts. This is often referred to as the "felt need" concept. Listening is most important, as the people of the community are the vested treasures of the future.*

*It is important not to focus on the weaknesses or needs of a community. Again, the felt need concept, as referred to earlier, helps us as community developers to focus on the desires of the community residents. The priority is the thoughts and dreams of the community itself. What the people themselves believe should be the focus. Asset-based community development focuses on the assets of a community and building upon them. When fused together through Christian Community Development, they can have extremely positive results.*

*Every community has assets, but often these are neglected. When a ministry utilizes Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD), it names all of the assets in the community that helps the community see its many positive characteristics. It is through these assets that people develop their community.*

*Christian Community Development realistically points out, through community meetings and efforts, some of the areas that people in the community would like to see improved. The areas to be focused upon are not looked at from some outside group or some demographic study that is laid upon the community. Instead, it is the community members themselves that decide what area they would like to improve.*

*After a community has decided where they want to focus some of their attention, it is then directed to the means with which they themselves can bring this about. What qualities, talents, and abilities does the community have that can help solve these problems? The focus is on the community members seeing themselves as the solution to the problem, not some government program or outside group that is going to be their salvation.*

*It is essential for community leaders to help the community focus on maximizing their strengths and abilities to make a difference for their community. The philosophy of Christian Community Development believes that the people with the problem have the best solutions and opportunities to solve those problems. Christian Community Development affirms the dignity of individuals and encourages the engagement of the community to use their own resources and assets to bring about sustainable change.*

1. ***Empowerment***

*Empowering people as community developers meet their needs is an important element to Christian Community Development. How does a pastor ensure that people are able to help themselves after they have been helped? Oftentimes, Christian ministry, particularly in poor communities, creates dependency. This is no better than the federal government welfare program. The Bible teaches empowerment, not dependency.*

*In the Old Testament, empowerment is an important aspect to God's care for the poor. In Deuteronomy 24 and Leviticus 19, God instituted the gleaning system. The farmers harvested their crops but were only allowed to go through the field one time. What was left behind or dropped on the ground was available for any widow, alien, orphan or poor person to come and harvest. This program was one that empowered people.*

*Three principles come out of God's welfare system in the Old Testament. First, there must be opportunity for people to get their needs met. In Deuteronomy and Leviticus, this happened to be a field with food in it. Secondly, the person who had a need must be willing to work for it. The widow, alien, orphan or poor person must go into the field and pick up the crops. This, then, involved work on the part of the poor. This is also found in 2 Thessalonians 3:10 which says, "If you don't work, you don't eat."*

*Thirdly, when these first two principles are working, a person's dignity is affirmed. All people have inherited dignity by being created in the image of God. Oftentimes, charity demeans a person and strips him or her of dignity. The last principle of empowerment affirms a person's God-given dignity.*

1. ***Leadership Development***

*The primary goal of leadership development is to restore the stabilizing glue and fill the vacuum of moral, spiritual, and economic leadership that is so prevalent in poor communities by developing leaders. This is most effectively done by raising up Christian leaders from the community of need who will remain in the community to live and lead.*

*Most Christian Community Development ministries put a major focus on youth development, winning youth to Christ as early as kindergarten and then following them all the way through college with spiritual and educational nurturing. Upon returning from college a ministry creates opportunities for exercising leadership upon their return to the community.*

*At the core of the leadership vacuum in inner city communities is an attitude of flight. For many, success is defined as being able to move out of inner-city communities, not remaining there. The erroneous goal is to help a few people leave the neighborhood so that they can escape the problems of inner city communities. This core value of escapism has caused a major drain on the community. Success in the world's eyes is leaving the neighborhood and owning a home in a more affluent community.*

*Leadership development is possible only when there is longevity of ministry. All too often people are guilty of trying to have quick fixes in poor neighborhoods. Leadership development is of the highest priority in Christian Community Development. Each ministry must have a dynamic youth ministry that is reaching young people with the good news of Jesus Christ and then equipping them to become faithful followers of Christ, and effective community leaders. This will take at least fifteen years to accomplish, so a worker must plan to stay in the neighborhood for at least that long.*

*In situations where Latinos and other ethnic groups are negatively affected by their current legal status in our country, this progressive, developmental process is nearly impossible to accomplish, as young people are not able to attend college or prepare for a stable career. In this case, ministries are often moved to engage in social action to challenge and change current immigration laws that debilitate the lives of promising youths and their families.*

*For CCD ministries, developing leaders from the community is a huge priority that requires absolute commitment; the payoff is that our communities will be filled with strong Christian leaders who love their neighbors, and have the skills and abilities to lead our churches, organizations, and other institutions that bring sustainable health to our communities.*

1. ***Redistribution***

*Just Distribution of Resources*

*When men and women in the body of Christ are visibly present and living among the poor (relocation), and when people are intentionally loving their neighbor and their neighbor's family the way a person loves him or herself and family (reconciliation), the result is redistribution, or a just distribution of resources.*

*When God's people with resources (regardless of their race or culture) commit to living in underserved communities seeking to be good neighbors, being examples of what it means to be a follower of Christ, working for justice for the entire community, and utilizing their skills and resources to address the problems of that community alongside their neighbors, then redistribution is being practiced.*

*Redistribution brings the principles of Justice back to the underserved communities. Justice has left communities of color and lower economic status, leaving an unjust criminal court and prison system, unjust hiring practices, unjust housing development and injustice in the educational institutions. Justice has been available only to people with the economic means to acquire just treatment.*

*Redistribution brings new skills, new relationships, and new resources and puts them to work to empower the residents of a given community of need to bring about healthy transformation. This is redistribution. Christian Community Development ministries harness the commitment and energy of men, women, and young people living in the community, and others who care about their community, and find creative avenues to develop jobs, schools, health centers, home ownership opportunities, and other enterprises of long-term development.*

*Seeking a just distribution of resources and working for justice in underserved communities contributes greatly to helping people help themselves, which is at the heart of Christian Community Development.*

1. ***Relocation***

*Living Among the People*

*Living out the gospel means desiring for one's neighbor and neighbor's family that which one desires for one's self and family. Living out the gospel means bettering the quality of other people's lives spiritually, physically, socially, and emotionally as one betters one's own. Living out the gospel means sharing in the suffering and pain of others.*

*How did Jesus love? "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." (Jn 1:14) Jesus relocated. He became one of us. He didn't commute back and forth to heaven. Similarly, the most effective messenger of the gospel to the poor will also live among the poor that God has called the person to. A key phrase to understand relocation is incarnational ministry.*

*By relocating, a person will understand most clearly the real problems facing the poor; and then he or she may begin to look for real solutions. For example, if a person ministering in a poor community has children, one can be sure that person will do whatever possible to ensure that the children of the community get a good education. Relocation transforms "you, them, and theirs" to "we, us, and ours." Effective ministries plant and build communities of believers that have a personal stake in the development of their neighborhoods.*

*Relocation is community based in the very essence of the word. There are three kinds of people who live in the community. First "relocators" are people who, like the project director, were not born in the inner city but moved into the neighborhood. Second, are the "returners." These are the people born and raised in their community and then left for a better life. Usually they return from college or the military. They are no longer trapped by the surrounding poverty of their neighborhood. Yet, they choose to return and live in the community they once tried to escape. Lastly are the "remainers." These are the ones that could have fled the problems of the inner city but chose to stay and be part of the solution to the problems surrounding them.*

1. ***Wholistic Approach***

*Oftentimes, many in ministry get passionate and involved in one area of need and think if they solve this particular problem that all else will be resolved. Christians, of course, often focus this area on a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Of course, the most essential element to Christian Community Development is evangelism and discipleship. Yet solving problems with lasting solutions is more than evangelism and discipleship.*

*There is never a simplistic answer to the problems in poor communities. Often, people will say that the problem is spiritual, social or educational. Of course these are problems, but they are only part of the larger problems. Solving the housing problem does not solve the emotional struggles that a person has. Christian Community Development has a wholistic approach to ministry that deals with the spiritual, social, economic, political, cultural, emotional, physical, moral, judicial, educational and familial issues of each person.*

*Of course, the wholistic approach is difficult because there are so many aspects to a person's life. That is why there is no better way of helping a person than having him or her committed to a local church. A church that is committed to Christian Community Development sees not only the soul of a person as significant, but also his or her whole of life on earth. It is being completely pro-life for a person, not only eternally, but also as the person lives on this earth.*

*Therefore, Christian Community Development sees the church must be involved in every aspect of a person's life. It is important to network with other churches and organizations in communities. In order to accomplish the wholistic aspect of ministry, pastors and leaders must be networkers. Christian Community Development builds coalitions in communities so that they can work together to solve the problems*

1. Key Curriculum is essential as you begin the process of reaching out. Books like “When Helping Hurts” by Steve Corbett, Brian Fikkert, John Perkins, and David Platt; “Making Neighborhoods Whole” by Wayne Gordon and John Perkins; and “Where the Cross Meets the Street” by Noel Castellanos are essential for every incarnational worker’s personal renewal and transformation. For most church planters a mind set change must occur from the traditional models of church planting. In the city the church planter needs to live in the neighborhood, probably get a job, and listen to the community before initiating anything.
2. Collaboration or asset based partnership. This step requires the church planter to be involved with multiple groups in order to accomplish the community needs. For many city neighborhoods safety and security, healthcare, quality education and access to basic needs are key components in bringing hope to the community. If you are to be viable then involvement in solving these issues will demonstrate your compassion.
3. A kingdom viewpoint as the world view present in the discussions and work. This step moves the church planter to a deeper level of servanthood than they may have experienced. Who gets the credit, whose in charge, and other ego driven issues may need sanctified. This is God’s work and many are involved and I just need to find my place and do my task.
4. Sustainment of the mechanism employed is essential: Counting the cost and building the ministry on solid rock instead of sand. The long term view is critical. Many are saying that a minimum of fifteen years is required in order to really bring wholeness and change to the community. This is not for the faint of heart. Our last recommendation will speak to this.
5. The identification of resources inside and outside of the church boundaries will be crucial in meeting needs. Most church planters are not knowledgeable of the process for grants, fellowships, and large gifts. In addition working with corporations in the area who have a vital interest in the neighborhoods where their workers live and the city governments whose policies impact the underserved will need to be cultivated.
6. A clear mission statement or overarching theme for the work which is being done. The communally determined working mission statement and overarching theme for the study group for Detroit City Ministry is this: “*We intentionally advance God’s kingdom by making disciples who multiply ministries characterized by service, reconciliation, justice, to improve the quality of life in Detroit thru partnerships and collaboration.”*
7. Identifying the Biblical mandates to motivate us: fellowship and unity, evangelism and discipleship, compassion for poor, abused, imprisoned, and addicted.
8. Learning some new language that is inclusive of all people of goodwill. Without knowing it we all speak a language familiar to our surroundings and social status. Some words do not translate well from one locale to another so being conscious and listening to the common verbiage is essential.
9. We are recommending that incarnational church planters be screened in two ways: through their own denominational selection processes and they apply and serve an internship with Mosaic Urban Ministry Institute. This should not be the first ministry assignment for the individual or couple. Because this is a high stress environment, support mechanisms must be in place before the individual or couple begin. It is akin to a foreign missionary assignment where the normal support systems may not be available. For best results a team that supports one another, resources one another, and is a sounding board provides a strong energy source.

These are our recommended steps in the journey thus far. The two major practictioners have been Mark Judkins and Mich Veach with many supporting cast members.

The persons named below are persons who have attended one or more of our meetings and contributed to the dialogue and discussion. The list is long dating back to the original meeting in Chicago, but it illustrates the interest and concern for incarnational city ministry. Thanks to each of them for their contributions.

Our next step is to continue our meetings in 2017 especially as the CCDA Convention will be hosted in Detroit on October 4-7, 2017. We would recommend any covenant member of GWA to attend this convention and be exposed to the work of CCDA and be inspired by the speakers and the gathering.

Persons involved in the Chicago and Detroit meetings:

**Chicago**: Stephen Banfield, Russ Couwenhoven, Dale Cudjoe, Lexa Ennis, Darlene Harvey, David Harvey, Roberto Hodgson, Michael Hudson, Raphael Jackson, Jerald January, Mark Judkins, Mark Klemme, Shawn Morrison, Jerry Porter, B. Elliott Renfroe, Jimmy Santiago, Jeremy Summers, William Wiesman, Benjamin Winn, Sr., Brian Wilson, and Ron Duncan

**Detroit**: Bob Dulin, Mark Judkins, Jay Height, Jeremy Height, Bill Wiesman, Glen Gardner, Rex dela Peret, Joe Knight, Jeffery Harrold, Patrick McNeal, Bill Mulwee, Mark Cryderman, Mary Cryderman, Richard Meeks, Mick Veach, B. Elliott Renfroe, Regina Smith, Kobia Davis, Charles Harvey, Sharon Holmes, Janise Judkins, Lorna Cossey, Rodney Faul, JoAnn Bastien, Danny Gomez, Edgardo Nieves, Jim Bowen, and Ron Duncan.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the group,

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