**GLOBAL WESLEYAN ALLIANCE MEETING**

Friday, November 30 and Saturday, December 1, 2018

**Location:** **Madison Park Church of God** (Room 182)

6607 Providence Drive, Anderson, IN (765-642-2000)

**Present**:

Matt Thomas, (**GWA President**) Free Methodist Church

Jim Lyon (**GWA** **Vice-President**), Church of God- Anderson

Ron Duncan, (**GWA Executive Director**)

Wayne Schmidt, (**GWA Treasurer**), Wesleyan Church

David Busic, (**GWA Member at Large**) Church of the Nazarene

Steve Jones (**Secretary**), Missionary Church

Fili Chambo, Church of the Nazarene

Marshall Daigre, Association of Independent Methodists

Brian Eckhardt, Evangelical Church

Max Edwards, Evangelical Methodist Church

Dean Hinson, Salvation Army

Mike Holbrook, Churches of Christ in Christian Union

Lindsey Jones, Church of Christ Holiness, USA

David Kendall, Free Methodist Church

David Roller, Free Methodist Church

William Sillings, International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc.

Carla Sunberg, Church of the Nazarene

Gary Thornton, Association of Independent Methodists

**SESSION ONE**

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am by President Thomas. Carla Sunberg shared devotional thoughts from Luke 21 and the implications of advent on the second coming prophecies. We are still in a world waiting to be saved out of its distress. We must do more than to wait for Jesus and simply hope for things to get better.

The 2017 Minutes were presented for approval, with highlights read. M/S/A to approve the minutes.

The chairman called for the Executive Director’s Report. Ron Duncan referred the board to his written report, and added the following:

Issues related to the rising influence of the GWA

1. At New Room Conference, a Bishop from Missouri asked for the middle judicatory leaders to be brought together. Ron asked if this is what the Association wants Ron to do as our representative?
2. Regarding our connectivity to other groups: We have been asked to participate in some things recently, such as a prayer emphasis, a theological dialogue, etc. Kevin Mannoia of Wesleyan Holiness Connection would like to see a prayer-type emphasis about bringing revival to America. Specifically, the participation of the GWA in a 2019 Prayer Focus and a 2020 National Wesleyan event were requested.
3. There are in an increasing number of groups that would like to associate with the GWA. Half of the churches in America today are independent churches, but they are seeking connections. Ron would like guidelines as to how to respond to their requests for affiliation.

ISSUES RELATED TO STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

1. Ron wrote a paper titled, *“What are the eight challenges that are in front of us as leaders?”* He asked the board, “Do you desire to have us do any follow-up to that?”
2. *“Is it possible to retrain pastors over the age of 50 who were trained to relate to a society that no longer exists today?”* This is an example of the strategic issues in which we should be engaging. How should this group address strategic questions?

The report of the Executive Director was presented. M/S/A to receive the report as presented.

There was discussion in response to Ron’s request, with guidelines given, to wit: A) There is no problem with the Executive Director extending invitations to individual events. B) Organizations of churches and denominations may be invited to apply for membership to the GWA if they are organized and hold to the doctrines and values that we have in common, as our bylaws stipulate. C) Diversity of organizations is to be encouraged.

While on this topic, Ron Duncan reported to the board that Dr. Alan Robinson, on behalf of the Brethren in Christ U.S., has requested membership with the GWA. After discussion, it was moved and supported to approve the membership of the Brethren in Christ, U.S. as a member of the Global Wesleyan Association. There was a vote and the motion carried.

It was further moved and supported that this matter of organizational invitations and inclusion be referred to the executive committee for further work.

There was discussion regarding New Room’s request for participation in a prayer event in 2019 and a “Pan-Wesleyan” discussion in 2020. There was a motion that to participate in the events of 2019 and 2020. There was support and the motion carried.

**Survey Responses Summary**

Chairman Thomas shared the results of the “Survey Monkey” responses of the GWA leadership. He invited the Nazarenes to make some comments about their evangelism and refocusing efforts. 67% of their 5,000+ churches are 40 years of age or older. They’d been plateaued for years between closing churches and planting churches. There’s been a renewal in evangelism and church planting in the last 5 years. Half of their DS’s are new. They’ve started 565 new churches in the last five years, and 95% of them are still alive and growing. Districts don’t plant churches. Churches plant churches, because grandparents don’t have the babies. *“Things started to change when we decided not just to tell people to do this, but to provide the tools to do it.”* *“DCPI became a huge tool for us, but we tweaked it to fit our holiness doctrine.”* *“The GS’s began to use new language, and that language filtered down to and through the DS’s and to the churches.”* Also we have certified people in Organic Outreach.

**Recalibrating Plateaued/Declining Churches**

David Roller was called upon to share some thoughts regarding plateaued and declining churches. He shared that the Free Methodists are moving into addressing their plateaued churches through a process of revitalization, recalibration, and reproduction. He distributed copies of the Free Methodist “Recalibrate” materials to the board, noting that it wouldn’t be an exact fit for all of our groups but that it can be an inspiration for our own efforts. He commented that he pushes against the concept of a life-cycle of churches. He views that as descriptive statement, not a rule.

Some highlights of this presentation were as follows:

There is a regular renewal that is needed.

51% of their churches are stagnant or in decline. Southern Baptists are at 90+%.

What do we as apex leaders want to do about this? People say that it is easier to have a baby than to raise the dead, but that isn’t always true. Planting a church is hard!

A force-fields analysis shows that the lost have no advocate in the community of the plateaued churches. This is an uphill battle. The treasurer is usually the one that notices, *“We can’t keep going like this.”* But the congregation doesn’t want to change, and they are often dominated by a matriarch or patriarch. The church has short pastoral tenures, the buildings are dated, etc. To expect a pastor to turn all of this around is unreasonable; that work is on us as leaders.

We need to help them to see that they are in survival mode, and that they need to think about preparing the church for the grandchildren.

The Free Methodists are in their third year of working on recalibrating the churches, and David has found that this is not as hard or impossible as we may think. This is an 18-month process.

The process works, but it isn’t ALWAYS successful. They are trying 30 churches a year. Three churches grew, three churches had the pastors not survive the process, and most saw 5% growth a year.

3 Assumptions:

1. This is a spiritual exercise, but people will hear it as a technique. These are people that love Jesus but have lost their ecclesiology.
2. The life-cycle is descriptive, not prescriptive.
3. This probably won’t work in churches under 30, because you will lose some folks and in a church that small, they can’t survive.

3 Key Processes:

1. Rethink. This takes 6 months.
2. Realign. This takes 6 months. This is where the leadership need to buy in (although not necessarily the elected leaders).
3. Relaunch. This may take a year. The pastor engages the key lay leaders.

(This is the formalized leadership structure.)

Purpose, Vision, Mission and Values are the necessary components.

They use Nelson Searcy’s 8 systems of the church and then they add technology as a ninth system. The major three are evangelism, worship and assimilation. Three weeks after school starts is typically when they formally relaunch. The church needs to agree on how they will do evangelism, worship and assimilation. The small group is the next critical system, and they don’t suggest that the group get to work on that before January.

3 Necessary elements:

1. The cohort (7-13 pastors working on these things at the same time). The DS nominates people, and if they desire to be a part, the church needs to put in $500.
2. The coach.
3. The material. Andy Haskins wrote most of their “Recalibrate” book. Their book is coming out in Spanish.

The DS’s are invited to attend the cohort, because the pastor may need an advocate.

Appreciation was expressed for this valuable report from our Free Methodist members. It was decided that further discussion by the GWA would focus on three major questions:

What are we doing that’s new in church planting?

What are we doing to recalibrate the existing churches?

What are we doing to re-enter the cities?

**SESSION TWO**

Dr. Brent Ellis (President of Spring Arbor University) joined the board for an interesting discussion entitles, “Church and Academy: Working Together Through Change.” This was a great deal of discussion on this important topic, and appreciation was expressed to Dr. Ellis for his thoughts and for his leadership. Dr. Ellis then left the meeting.

A roundtable discussion followed, across a broad range of topics. A couple of highlights include:

*“When revivals take place, new things are birthed and THEN the church is recalibrated. The church usually thinks that the opposite order is what has happened but they are incorrect.”*

*“We spend a lot more time making sure that kids get a toy than that they get to hear the gospel. We need to change that, and we are changing that.”* –Dean Hinson with the Salvation Army.

The Salvation Army is determined to be more intentional at every opportunity, to talk about Jesus, give an invitation, and practice follow-up. It was noted that this is a good reminder for all of us.

The board spent some time getting acquainted with the new leaders who have joined us.

After a break, Dr. Wayne Schmidt presented some thoughts on the topic, “Flagship and Anchor Churches: Engage and Connect.” Wayne shared that the Wesleyan Church has been doing some real work at relating to and involving the large churches among them. His presentation included thoughtful insights on the unique role which large and/or influential churches (and their pastors) play in the role of a denomination or church organization.

He further described the changing role of the middle judicatory in today’s denominations, emphasizing that their role is shifting from that of caretaker to that of overseers of missional movements. He concluded his presentation by suggesting some ways in which these unique changes could be addressed, while taking care to make clear that his thoughts were Wesleyan-Denomination-specific, and intended only to stimulate the thinking of the other groups represented by the board.

A time of discussion followed on the point brought out in the presentation, and then appreciation was expressed to Dr. Schmidt for his work.

**SESSION THREE**

Mike Holbrook led the board in a time of thought-provoking devotions. A time of prayer followed.

**Constitution/Bylaw Changes**

Chairman Matt Thomas led the board through a series of proposed amendments to the Constitution of the Global Wesleyan Association. There was discussion, and it was moved that the amendments be voted on as one, rather than seriatum. The motion was supported, and the motion carried. M/S/A to approve the amendments as presented.

**Election of Officers**

The board turned to the election of officers. It was noted that the term for Vice-President and for Secretary were up for election. (The terms for President and Treasurer will be up for election in 2019.) In addition, there was an open seat for Member-at-Large that would need to be filled at this time.

After discussion, Jim Lyon was nominated for Vice-President, Steve Jones for Secretary, and David Busic for Member-at-Large. M/S/A to close nominations. M/S/A to approve the election of the aforementioned officers.

**Evaluation of the Executive Director**

After dismissing the Executive Director from the room, the Board went into Executive Session. There was discussion regarding the work of the Executive Director. Many positive comments were made in support of the diligent work which Ron Duncan has done on behalf of the GWA. M/S/A that we again authorize Ron Duncan to serve as the Executive Director of the GWA. The board then returned from Executive Session.

**2019 Budget**

The Board took up the matter of the annual budget. There was discussion regarding the needs of the GWA regarding adequate funding, both now and in the near future. M/S/A to approve the 2019 Budget as presented.

**Other Matters**

A brief discussion took place regarding the financial trajectory of the GWA, and the chairman asked if by common consent, the Executive Committee could investigate the options regarding contributions, and approach the members for consideration of increasing their contributions. This was agreed to by common consent.

It was the opinion of the chair that the business which had been covered by the board constituted all of the necessary actions that needed to be taken during this 2018 board meeting. This was approved by common consent.

After a time of prayer, the meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the GWA Board will take place on December 6-7, 2019 in Kansas, with the Church of the Nazarene hosting. More details will follow.