Romans 12

We who are many are one body in Christ.

Produced by the General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church to communicate effective principles and practices demonstrated by congregations that are actively making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

These congregations are marked by:

- Clarity around the mission and vision of the congregation.
- Practice of spiritual disciplines, both corporately and individually.
- Nurture of growth in discipleship through mutual support and accountability.
- Cultivation of intentional and mutual relationships with the most vulnerable—the poor, children, the imprisoned, the powerless.
- Consistent concern for inviting people into relationship with Jesus Christ, combined with wise practices for initiating them into the Body of Christ.
- Connectional relationships that facilitate participation in God's mission of global transformation.
- Shared clergy and lay leadership.

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Looking for Shiny Eyes

One of the trends that emerged from the Romans 12 site visits is that these congregations are constantly on the look-out for new leaders to nurture, using both formal and informal gifts assessment processes.

As one pastor reported, "I look for people with shiny eyes. People whose eyes light-up with an excitement for God and a passion for the possibilities a ministry can offer. I look for the shiny eyes and then connect them to what they are passionate about. I believe very strongly in helping people grow and use their gifts."

In another church the lay leader said, "We help people identify their gifts and then guide them in how to put the gifts into practice and use. We try to make sure everyone's gift is recognized and utilized. We are concerned for the whole person, not just the Sunday morning person."

Formal gifts assessment processes are common in many Romans 12 congregations. Of the more than 3600 individual surveys that were completed, one-third of the respondents agreed with the statement, "almost all newcomers participate in a gifts discovery process." Nearly 85% of the respondents indicated that the congregation had helped them to personally gain a clear understanding of their spiritual gifts.

Some Questions for Discussion

- What makes your eyes "shine?" What would it take to turn the "sparkle" in your eyes into an effective ministry?
- Where are you seeing "shiny eyes" in your congregation?
- If you asked the members of your Church Council or other leadership group to articulate their spiritual gifts, what do you think they would say?
- How do the formal and informal gifts assessment processes in your congregation work together to ensure that everyone's gift is recognized and utilized?

More information about gift-based ministry can be found at http://www.gbod.org/equipped

In 2007 church leaders throughout The United Methodist Church in the U.S. were invited to identify churches that demonstrated the vision of discipleship described in the twelfth chapter of Romans. Over 200 churches were surveyed or visited. Issue #12. © 2009 GBOD. All rights reserved. Permission is granted to copy this page for use in United Methodist congregations. To subscribe to this newsletter or for copies of previous newsletters go to http://www.gbod.org/Romans12