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.

From Beneficiary to Benefactor

The Korean congregation of First United Methodist Church in Flushing, New York exemplifies connectional relationships that facilitate God's mission of local and global transformation.

The congregation started in 1975 with only a few members. First United Methodist Church in Flushing generously supported this new born Korean immigrant church by sharing the church facility and teaching the children of Korean immigrants in Sunday school.

The New York Annual Conference chartered the Korean church and financially supported this vulnerable congregation during its early years. It was the connectional relationships with First United Methodist Church in Flushing and the New York Annual Conference that made it possible for this Korean church to start and be in ministry with Korean immigrants in New York City.

Many Korean immigrants in New York City soon found their spiritual home at this church and it grew rapidly. Presently the Korean congregation of the First United Methodist Church in Flushing has the largest regular Sunday worship attendance in the New York Annual Conference and is the largest apportionment giver in the conference.

The Korean church remembers the blessed connectional relationships that helped it to become the vibrant church it is today. It now continues the relationships by connecting with the local and global mission of The United Methodist Church. They have partnered with the General Board of Global Ministry and other Korean congregations to extend the church's ministry by building mission centers in Kazakhstan and Mongolia. They also send short term missionaries to Guatemala, Argentina, Mongolia, and Kazakhstan.

This church began as a beneficiary of connectional relationships and now participates as a connectional partner to be a benefactor in God's mission fields.

Some Questions for Discussion

- In what ways is your congregation a beneficiary of connectional relationships? How do you remember and celebrate these relationships?
- How is your congregation extending its ministries through connectional relationships?

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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 #23. © 2009 GBOD. All rights reserved. Permission is granted to copy this page for use in United Methodist congregations.