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.

A Musical Vision and Goal

It is easy for church music ministries to be self-perpetuating, to go from week to week, season to season, year to year, recruiting, rehearsing, and singing. Many churches do this with excellence and success. Emory UMC in Washington, D.C. has taken a different path.

Minister of Music, Gheran Goddard, affirms on the church's website one of the church's goals for worship and music: "We love to come together to praise God, to learn from the Word, and to be moved by the Holy Ghost. We invite you to feel the love of God through one of our worship experiences." Thus, worship and music 1) are corporate, 2) are in praise of God, 3) promote learning, and 4) are an encounter with the love of God through the moving of the Holy Spirit. The ministry of music has set a clear path to these ends.

Last year Pastor Joe Daniels cast a new and challenging vision for the music ministry to achieve these goals, and it has been taken up enthusiastically by the church's musicians. Pastor Daniels called for "the overall goal of the music ministry to lead people into worship with uplifting musical praise. We accomplish this through both instrumental and vocal music."

Mr. Goddard implements this vision by leading the church's vocal and instrumental groups, not only in musical performance, but through his "calling to direct people closer to Jesus through song, praise and worship." He says, "I will reach out to those who have been called to be a part of the music ministry by training through singing and musical instruments. I understand that singers are trained to be Levitical Priests to lead the congregation in transformative worship."

Thus, the vision for music ministry at Emory UMC is much more than mere excellence in performance. It is also fostering and answering a call to serving in music ministry which includes training and study, living spiritually disciplined lives and leading inspired, transformative worship.

Some Questions for Discussion

- How do those who lead music ministries in your congregation describe their vision and goals for this ministry?
- In what ways is music contributing to transforming the lives of the worshipers?

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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 #31. © 2009 GBOD. All rights reserved. Permission is granted to copy this page for use in United Methodist congregations.