

**Ms. Inday Day, executive director
National Federation of Asian American United Methodists
Brewster, New York**

The United Methodist Church is the third largest Christian group in the United States according to the 2007 *Directory of American and Canadian Churches*.

It also has an estimated 80,000 to 150,000 Asian American constituents coming from Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Formosan/Taiwanese, Hmong, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, South Asian, and Vietnamese communities. I put the figure on a higher estimate because the *General Minutes* do not list congregations that are not chartered.

Asian Americans like the Japanese, Filipinos, Koreans, Chinese, and South Asians have maintained some stability because most of them have been in the U.S. for a long time, but the smaller groups struggle for survival and moral support. I invite the whole denomination to extend our hands, hearts and support to them so they don't feel forgotten.

The denomination has been very supportive in granting, through General Conference, funds for the Korean National Plan and the Asian American Language Ministry initiatives. Some pockets of the connection feel that by having that, they have no additional responsibilities to nurture the Asian American presence in the general church. They are wrong. Asian Americans still need to be a welcome part of the whole church. By this I mean that Asian Americans still struggle with racism, discrimination, and there is general ignorance of the majority members of The United Methodist Church of the rich variety of cultures they bring to the denomination. My challenge to each person is: have you talked to at least one Asian American in a week, a month, or a year?

The ministries of Asian American churches in the denomination need the support of the whole denomination. I encourage conference cabinets to be more supportive of Asian American ministries, especially in conferences where there are high presence of Asian Americans. In this I mean not just financial support, but welcoming Asian Americans to be part of the conferences' life—inviting them to be part of committees and inviting them again and again. Inviting just once is like a token invitation. Offering a ride would even be better! Many Asian Americans are bi-lingual.

Groups that are isolated will eventually wilt and die off without total care and participation in the connection. Our denomination's mission statement is "to make disciples for Christ for the transformation of the world." We have Asian Americans as disciples for Christ, but we need to share the vision of transforming the world with each United Methodist, Asian or not.