

From This Corner

THE CONNECTIONS OF THE CONNECTION

Larry Baird

Recently Brenda and I attended a wedding. The couple grew up and first met at the church where I held my last appointment before becoming a District Superintendent. The best man and matron of honor were our oldest son, and his wife. Both of them also grew up and first met at this same church. Another of the bridesmaids was a friend of the bride and groom who many of us had met at Henderson Settlement in Frakes, Kentucky (Red Bird Missionary Conference). A volunteer in mission trip had brought us together. We were connected to Henderson, not solely by its relationship to the United Methodist Church, but also because one of the groom's sisters had been a US-2 at the settlement following college. She too had grown up at our local church and in fact had been one of our boy's "baby-sitters."

The connections that day do not end there. The presiding pastor and the bride's mother had been friends and worked together for years in United Methodist ministries. My wife and I also first met through a United Methodist ministry planning event. Between the wedding and the reception we visited a couple who had been a part of the church which was my second appointment, and during which time we were married.

Before the wedding the pastor and I were commenting on how the whole event seemed to be a wonderful culmination of many United Methodist connections.

There are times these days when it almost seems as if it has become popular to disparage the “connectionalism” of the United Methodist Church. “Independent” as related to local churches seems the favored word. I, however, question just how valuable that kind of independence is in building up God’s Kingdom.

This week, once again, we will head off to Annual Conference. There we will be reminded of the extended Christian family that is United Methodist. One can only imagine the stories of connection that will be represented there and in many of Conferences as they occur around the world. Lets pause a moment in the business and planning to say “hurrah for the Connection!”