

What opportunities for mission and ministry does the Western Jurisdiction provide the UMC?

Relationships are different here – less formal, more welcoming (based upon our pioneer heritage). Our traditions are (extravagant/radical) hospitality and congeniality. (x7)
Provide a place for identity, belonging and continue to be a prophetic voice (regardless of number of Episcopal areas); inclusivity (Open means ALL); model inclusivity; each person is valued; inclusion of LGBT communities

Large population of unchurched (fertile field) (x6)
Issues of immigration; 1st, 2nd, 3rd generations (x6)
We show leadership – presenting different alternatives
Migrant workers, savvy farmers
Culture of immigrants – at least on the coast
Next generation youth now speaking English

Chance to start to truly be global church with the gateway of the Pacific Rim; thinking bigger; international borders (x5)

Diversity is our greatest strength
Urban/rural; agricultural, technical; age-diversity; ethnicity/cultural (opportunities for language immersion); acceptance of diversity; ability to “Holy Conference” for greater good; theologically; geographically, economically; ministry settings (x5)

Growing population; births and people moving here (Future of the country in the West) (x5)
Great mission-giving spirit is part of our culture, including opportunities to invite children into mission activity. Missions fuels growth. VIM opportunities. Next generation – hands-on living of faith (x4)

Geography and distance (x3)
Unique and appeals to camper, hikers, fisher-folk and other outdoor activities

A rich mission field (out the front door) (x3)
Safe place – life giving, affirming, enriching. Create places that aren’t polarized; safe places to dialog (x2)

Partnership of laity and clergy. Empowering laity. (x2)
People willing to take a different approach (Think outside the box) (x2)
Secularization of Christianity
Great spiritual hunger
Sense of radical openness
Sense of being able to be faithful without bindings of institutional past
High homeless populations in big cities
Opportunity to get deeper into multi-culturalism means
Ability to disagree agreeably -- allows true diversity
Opportunities to nurture leadership; Young and Retiring Young
Opportunities to “hook” some of these opportunities together
Invitational to fellowships
Using (or developing) what works; like cell groups
Use resources we have
New faith communities
Cross conference appointments
Agreements between and among Boards of Ordained Ministry

Health care and pension issues – maybe pooling resources
Evangelical urgency and witness
Training and equipping laity
Need for communication/ technology
Document how we grow the church by 60,000 to help other conferences grow too
To explain our faith and our values to others – Core value: togetherness without demanding same beliefs from others. Our connection is in our relationships.
Less structure – less accepting of a controlling structure. Perhaps less of a hurdle than some think because of our relationships. For example: Paul had a lot of different communities and he never set out to make them all the same
Revitalize churches in urban areas and provide an opportunity for people to come make a difference in prisons and cities
Modeling of starting ethnic churches.
Place to show what works – has less UM history
Image of foster family, instead of family that is only comfortable with itself
Size forces interdependence
Gift of allowing youth to be leaders, active and present at Annual Conference, etc.
Testimony
Street ministry for at-risk youth
Strategizing how to grow the church
Kids
Campus
Canadian mission work
Unique vision
Learning opportunities
Seminaries
Ecumenical

Additional comments:

Regarding boundaries: Commonwealth. Episcopal areas, not boundaries. Boundaries porous, fluid, flexible, non-geographical, but still identity based (x2)
Zero Conference Budget (??)