

# The Utah Factor

WHETHER GATHERED IN LOCAL CHURCHES IN TALLINN, San Antonio, Manila, Frankfurt, or Kinshasa, United Methodists are generous, engaged, and attentive to the needs of people around the world.

Pastors in small membership churches and big ones know firsthand that where there is the need for mosquito nets, church buildings for worship, wells for safe water, schools for learning, and clinics for healing United Methodist people respond with their prayers, hands, and money. In many regions UMs advocate for government policies that support human rights, peace, and environmental sustainability. At the core of our heritage, character, and experience of the Spirit, we are compelled to be engaged.

At the core of our heritage, character, and experience of the Spirit, we are compelled to be engaged.

And then there is also the “Utah factor.” For the past decade Utah, with a relatively small population in the interior of the U.S., experienced phenomenal economic growth and some there thought themselves immune to the ebb and flow of the world’s economies. But of late Utah has been caught in the web of the global economic downturns causing a local economist to note: “We’re no longer insulated.”

Indeed. It is apparent that the peoples of the world are intertwined in a delicate balance. And so we unite Jeremiah’s report that we are to “. . . seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you,” and John Wesley’s vision of “the world is my parish” and recognize anew that we are accountable to each other and to God whose hands hold the *whole* wide world.

In whatever rural village, town, or metropolis your congregation gathers, you know that when we speak of the United Methodist *Connection* we are linked spiritually, economically, environmentally, and politically, and we have much to learn and do as we strive to be faithful in our life **together**.

**Neil M. Alexander**

President and Publisher

The United Methodist Publishing House