

## Report of the General Presbyter June 6, 2009

In April I attended the Board of Pensions Regional Benefits Conference and want to share with the Presbytery the fact that in spite of the economy in the last six months, the pension fund of the Presbyterian Church (USA) is fully funded. The monies that congregations have invested in support of their pastors and pastoral families are being well managed for the future. The Board also offered a great workshop on stewardship entitled "Generosity in Difficult Times." Among other things, the speaker noted that Christians seem to be at their best when the times are challenging. During times of war, economic depression, or disaster people have historically responded with great generosity toward others. The current "Great Recession" offers many opportunities as well as challenges.

In May I used a week of my continuing education time to attend the Mediation Skills Training Institute offered by the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. The Committee on Ministry also sent Rusty Butler and Gary Huffman to be trained in mediation skills. While we all know that there is never any conflict in our Presbytery and thus no immediate need for these skills, it is good to know that we have people trained if ever we need mediators in any of our congregations.

I have also spent time in the last several weeks learning more about MissionInsite. Through the Synod of Living Waters, Transylvania Presbytery and every one of our churches has access to this wonderful resource. MissionInsite allow you to learn more about the context of your ministry. If you are in an area where the population projections indicate an influx of children under age 5, perhaps your church needs to consider a ministry to preschoolers. If the demographics show a high number of single-parent families in your neighborhood, perhaps that ought to be the focus of your mission outreach and evangelism. If your community is ageing and there are large numbers of people age 55 and above, how might that guide your programs and outreach? If your neighborhood is in transition, with a growing minority population, what is God calling you to do in response? On the reverse side of this report is a flyer on MissionInsite and instructions in how to sign up. I would encourage you to do so, and to take a look at your community. I am happy to assist you in the mechanics of the program once you are signed in. This is a valuable resource that the Presbytery and Synod has made available to help you in your ministry. Please make use of it!

What do you REALLY know about your church neighborhood? What's the population in a 2 mile radius of your church? Are there enough people to start a pre-school or a program for young adults? What's the average household income?

Should you consider a special ministry to single parents or to senior adults?

# MissionInsite

The Next Generation in Mission Context Analysis

MissionInsite is a demographic tool that Transylvania Presbytery offers to all our congregations. It's free! It's useful in planning your ministry! It's easy to use! And you might just be surprised by what you can learn about the context of your ministry!

Every church in Transylvania Presbytery is already plotted on the MissionInsite map.

Registration is simple:

- ♦ Go to [www.missioninsite.org](http://www.missioninsite.org)
- ♦ Under the "Church Agencies" tab dropdown menu click "Church Registration"
- ♦ Our agency account number is: JBVPP
- ♦ Follow the on-screen directions
- ♦ Multiple accounts are available for each church, so members, leaders, pastors can all register.