

## **Report of the General Presbyter**

**June 7, 2008**

Since starting my work on the first of February I have been educating myself in the workings of Transylvania Presbytery and broadening my focus to include a deeper involvement in the Synod and national church. I attended the “Executive Start-Up Seminar” offered by the PC(U.S.A.) to help familiarize new EPs\GPs with the scope of our work, and I’ve gotten to know the other EPs and GPs in the Synod. Like every pastor serving a church who also serves on a presbytery committee, I’ve found myself asked/assigned to a position on the Synod’s Living Waters for the World Committee – an area in which I am happy to serve, especially in the light of Transylvania’s continued commitment to this great mission. In that capacity I will be attending Clean Water U this fall, and traveling with Joanie Lukins to a conference in Mexico in November. I am also getting acquainted with all the various committees of the presbytery.

The most important part of my work, at least for me, has been my contact with the ministers and churches of Transylvania. So far I have found myself at 25 of our 92 churches either on a Sunday morning or for some other activity during the week. With the number of new pastors to be installed and other celebrations this Summer I expect to continue to build on that number. What I am finding is a wealth of enthusiasm for our common ministry and a growing awareness of that fact that we need each other. The great diversity we find within this presbytery is truly a gift, and our connectionalism is more than just a concept, it is part of the very fabric of our denomination. In April I visited a number of our churches in the Hazard area and enjoyed an evening meal with the area pastors and CLPs. We shared our common concerns and needs as pastors and the group decided to meet regularly to provide mutual support and fellowship. A second, and larger gathering of CLPs from around the presbytery emphasized these same needs. That group will gather again this fall. There is so much we gain from being together.

I have also been working with the Council on several special projects. Council appointed a group to look at the guidelines of the Presbytery and how we structure our work and mission. Right now we have about 18 committees and/or sub-groups working on various tasks. Is there a better way to organize and accomplish our mission? The Task Force on Structure will do some research and let us know. Council is also addressing the concern for an increased presence in the eastern part of our presbytery. Using monies from an endowment earmarked for that region, how can we strengthen our ministry in the mountains? A third task facing the presbytery this year concerns the location of the presbytery office. The Administration and Finance Committee has been assigned the task of looking at all the options and they hope to bring a report and recommendations to the presbytery by December.

I am enjoying my work as General Presbyter and look forward to meeting and greeting even more churches in the future. Let me know of your special events, especially those that occur during the week. There are not enough Sundays to go around 92 churches!

-- Richard Smith