

# A Mobile Office?

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## I. History

- a. Transylvania, formed in 1786, encompassed all of KY, parts of TN and later parts of OH.
  - i. Can you imagine the issues of communication they dealt with? How separated they felt from each other? How difficult and how wonderful it was to gather together?
- b. Over the last 200+ years, our presbytery has morphed with the culture.
  - i. Periods of rapid growth in the number of churches caused it to split into several smaller presbyteries.
  - ii. Communication changed from postal deliveries only, to telegraph, telephone.
  - iii. Electricity transformed communities.
  - iv. Transportation moved from horses to cars. Roads went from dirt to gravel to pavement, and easy-to-travel highways now crisscross our presbytery in ways our foreparents could never have imagined.
- c. Then it got more complicated.
  - i. In the last 50 years, mainline churches all over began declining. Kentucky industries, like mining, began to falter. Churches struggled to hold onto their aging congregations and care for their aging buildings, while attempting to continue to do God's work in the community and bring the good news of Jesus to their neighbors.
  - ii. And in the last 20 years, technology has changed the way we connect with each other.
    1. Cell phones
    2. Computers/internet
    3. Social networking sites
      - a. Facebook
      - b. Twitter
      - c. Skype
- d. What has this done to our presbytery? Well, again, it's complicated.
  - i. Since membership and attendance is down in our churches, and many churches choose to keep more of their mission money close to home, fewer dollars are available to governing bodies.
  - ii. In recent years, we have had to close the Hazard office and end the position of Associate General Presbyter.
  - iii. Though we have a nice facility in our current office, it is underutilized.
    1. Committee meetings.
    2. Resource center. VERY few use this.
    3. Offices for our 4 staff.
- e. The pressures of shrinking dollars along with the desire to be more connected have caused the council to consider a bold new step.

## II. Why?

- a. Have you ever wished you could attend a presbytery committee meeting closer to your home? Have you ever wished you could have some help at your church with technology, or setting up good financial practices, or with a mission project?
- b. Have you ever wondered if the presbytery's resource center has something in it you could use for your Sunday School, but it was just too much trouble to drive down there?
- c. The presbytery spends about \$40,000 a year in rent and utilities for underutilized space, and to keep our office in a spot that is not convenient for the vast majority of our churches. What if? What if we could bring the presbytery's staff and resources to you?

## III. How?

- a. If we stopped using the current office we could have significant financial savings. Not sure how much at this point.
- b. We'd be looking for a spot in one of your churches to house a few files, a copier and for occasional small meetings, for a small amount of rent.
- c. We would free up our staff to come to you.
  - i. Their office would be the presbytery. Sometimes they would work in this office, sometimes at home, often they would be traveling to you.
  - ii. They would be far more available to you than they are now. Still available by computer, cell phone, in person.
  - iii. Staff would still meet regularly with each other. Maybe not always in the same place.
- d. We would change the way the resource center is used. It would have an online catalog, and could be housed at a number of different places. If you need something, we could get it to you. Perhaps some of it might live in your church building.
- e. Committee meetings could be held any place in the presbytery, and encouraged to do so. Small groups might meet at a Starbucks or local restaurant—what better way for the church to integrate with the world around us. I think not too far in the future are conference/internet meetings held with webcams and computers.
- f. Presbytery money would be freed up to (things that have been discussed):
  - i. Help churches improve their technology.
  - ii. Assist you with local mission.
  - iii. Support more continuing education for pastors, CLPs and lay persons.
  - iv. Anything else the council or presbytery decides.

## IV. You have seen the advantages and disadvantages listed in the e-news and in your packet for today's meeting. What questions/comments do you have?