



August 2007



## A WORD FROM THE PRES...

### GSS Grows!

I take great pleasure in announcing that the GSS team will see some new growth. Some of you have been aware that the person primarily responsible for our UMCDData.com website and programming is my son, Jacob Fifhouse. Beginning on August 24, Jacob will move into a full time role with GSS. I am extremely

pleased that Jacob will become a more integral part of our team.

When we started UMCDData.com, it was a fledgling project requiring not a great deal of programmer time. As the number of customers using UMCDData.com grew, and as we have received requests for more web based functions to be developed and implemented on UMCDData.com, it has become obvious that we need to put more programming resources in this area. As the initiator of the site, I believe Jacob is in an excellent position to help us build it out to become a major part of our software offerings for United Methodist Conferences.

Jacob graduated from Oregon State University in 2005 with a degree in Computer Science. Since that time, besides his work for GSS, he has been in the quality control department at Summit Information Systems, a division of Fiserv, which provides software to credit unions across the US and Canada. He currently resides in Corvallis, Oregon, with his wife, Andrea, who graduated from OSU this year.

Jacob's first full-time task with GSS will be to participate in our Customer Conference on August 24, his first full-time day with GSS.

These are exciting times!

### Our Current Add-on Modules:

- Benefits (Pension [CRSP/CPP] billing, Medical, Flex, Life Insurance, Dental, Vision, & UMPIP billing)
- Event Registration
- Cabinet Decision Support
- Certified Leadership (Safe Sanctuary)
- Candidacy Process tracking
- Year-End Statistics (Tables 1,2,3)
- Church Remittance
- Online Local Church Leadership
- Online Statistics entry
- Online Event Registration
- Onsite & web-based training

For more information on any of these modules, contact [lori@greatspirit.com](mailto:lori@greatspirit.com)



## FROM THE BULL PEN...

### End of Year Changes

#### CRSP Billing



2007 was first year in which CRSP was billed through MissionBase. CRSP replaced MPP on January 1, 2007 as the United Methodist clergy pension plan. Unlike MPP, which had the same uniform formula for calculating billing amounts across the entire United Methodist connection, each conference defines its own CRSP billing formula. We have as wide a range of billing formulas among our customers as we have customers, with each conference using its own formula.

**IMPORTANT NOTE FOR CRSP BILLING CUSTOMERS:** If your 2007 conference session changed billing formulas to begin on January 1, 2008, please let me know as soon as reasonably possible. No later than September 30, 2007 would be very helpful, as some formulas are quite complex and I will need time to integrate the change into MissionBase and test it with real data. Please don't wait until December 30 to let me know about formula changes as that could mean it would not be ready for January 1, 2008.

#### Medical Insurance Billing

Like CRSP, some conferences have special billing formulas for medical insurance. If yours is changing for 2008, please let me know by September 30, 2007 so I can begin to integrate and test it within MissionBase.

### Module of the Month: Candidacy!

For quite some time we've had a small Candidacy module in use by one customer. It is designed to help the conference track the candidates for ministry from the time they declare their candidacy through Probationary membership, where the clergy section of MissionBase picks up. Recent inquiries lead us to believe that it is time to build out this module for use by any of our customers, with some information and entry being available through our UMCDData.com web interface. If you have some interest in this module and have not already done so, please let us know.



## LORI'S TIPS & TRICKS...

### I'm Addicted!

Late last year we began subscribing to the GoToMeeting web conferencing tool on a monthly basis. We found it very useful to bring small groups of folks together for the purposes of training or MissionBase software demonstrations. Being of the "Waste not/Want not" mentality, I thought I would try utilizing this tool for other uses, since it cost the same monthly fee whether we used it once or

every day. So I tried using it for technical support when I thought it might be helpful. Since doing so, I've become very attached! (Kind of like you might have felt towards your very first cellphone!) This one tool has made a night and day difference in my ability to diagnose issues and provide support.

The GoToMeeting web conferencing tool allows me to see your screen, so that I can view exactly what you are having difficulty with in MissionBase, or the exact error that is occurring, and allows me to watch when and how it occurs. The added benefit is that when I'm connected to your computer, you can turn over keyboard and mouse control to me so that I can "use" your computer as though I were sitting right there in your office! I've had more than a couple folks already remark that it is "so cool to sit back and just watch their computer issue get fixed!" And for me, it is infinitely easier than trying to picture in my mind what you describe to me as happening, then try to duplicate it on my system, which may never produce the same error.

GoToMeeting has also been very useful when someone calls me to ask how to do something in MissionBase. My common response now to tasks that involve more than just clicking a button or two is, "Let me show you!" Or sometimes, "Let me watch you do it" so I know where you might be missing a step.

So the true confession here is "I'm addicted to GoToMeeting," but then again, who wouldn't be in my position? So don't be surprised if the next time you request support for a MissionBase issue if I ask, "Would it be alright to connect to your machine through a GoToMeeting?" Like your cellphone... I'm beginning to wonder how I ever lived without it!

### Tech Talk...

#### Update MissionBase And Windows Vista

We have been reporting to you our progress on MissionBase and Windows Vista in previous issues of the Eagle Eye. We are beta testing one Vista computer with a customer in a client/server situation where a Vista computer in a conference office is using the conference server. There was one initial problem, which was solved, and so far the beta test has been going well since the initial problem.

## What'sNew!

### Addressing Project

Last year we solicited input on changes needed for the addressing part of MissionBase. This is a very large project as it impacts almost every part of MissionBase. Addresses serve as part of the foundational base of data for the system. We have been considering changes to the addressing system for several years, but other projects such as the conversion to Sql Server, the change in UM pension plans, the addition of new benefits billing modules and other items have taken precedence. However, we now need to move the entire addressing project to the top of our priority list.

Changes to addressing will be significant, and as such, will be introduced one part at a time so that we can maintain the integrity of your data and properly integrate the changes into MissionBase. The first part of the addressing changes will be coming very soon. We are separating phone numbers from being connected to addresses. Historically, phones were tied to places. However, society has changed resulting in virtually all of us carrying mobile phones, which are associated with persons rather than places. Thus, phone numbers will no longer be connected to places, but to entities within MissionBase, that is persons, churches, and other organizations.

In addition, email will be separated from being connected to addresses. Again, historically email was related to places more than to persons, but the wireless revolution has changed that with email addresses now being related more to persons and available from telephones, PDAs, and at internet kiosks found in malls and airports. Thus, email addresses will be separated from places and related to entities within MissionBase.

The separation of phone numbers and emails from places is the first phase of many in the addressing project and should be released within the next two or three weeks.