



June 2008



A WORD FROM THE PRES...

Any Place, Any Time

Last issue I promised to discuss the advantages of upgrading MissionBase into a "web based" product over the next 2-3 years. I also announced that we have chosen some products with which to do that; specifically a group of three products offered by Adobe - Flex, ColdFusion, and AIR. (See Jacob's article, "What

is AIR?") One major advantage we see to this new computing "platform" is the ability to deliver your data to you any place, any time. Of course, you will still need some computing device on which to access your data. But computing devices include not only desktops and laptops, but now include PDA's, phones, and internet cafes. So if you aren't in your office, and don't have your laptop computer with you, you will still have several means of accessing the data that you currently keep in MissionBase.

In 1970, Richard Bach wrote a book called "Jonathan Livingston Seagull." It is the story of a Seagull's quest to, among other things, transcend space and time. Basically, Jonathan learned how to travel any place, any time, and do so instantly. In a sense, that is what we are attempting to do with your data in this upgrade.

A second advantage, closely related to the first, is that we will be able to focus more on developing the software to access your data and deliver it to you, and much less on getting our software to run on your computer. That will help us to "buy back" the significant chunk of time that we each spend (especially Lori) troubleshooting installation and synchronization issues. When a company is as small as ours, this time that we will gain back is huge.

There are other advantages. Our software will be brought up to date, on an industry leading platform. It will be able to operate on Windows, Mac OS, and Linux, and most likely on any major operating system in the foreseeable future.

Tech Talk...

What Is YOUR Resolution?
Occasionally we are asked what screen resolution MissionBase uses. We currently program MissionBase to best be viewed in a 1024 X 768 screen resolution setting. If you choose to use 640 X 480 on your screen, you will not be able to see some of the items MissionBase has to offer.

You can also use any higher resolution settings offered on your screen (such as 1152 X 864, or 1280 X 1024) and will see all that MissionBase has to offer, but you will also see some blank space on the right side, as well.

To check your screen resolution, right-click on the desktop, and left-click on "Properties". Then click on the "Settings" tab. For Vista users: right-click on the desktop, then left-click on "Personalize," then left-click again on "Display Settings."



FROM THE BULL PEN...

Addressing Schema Update



For over a year now, we have been saying that we are working on the new addressing schema. You are probably tired of hearing us say that, but we have been working hard to bring it to fruition. Many of the MissionBase updates you have been seeing actually have the new addressing code and procedures in place. We are

getting very close to releasing it. However, before we release the new addressing schema, extensive testing must occur to minimize the bugs which you will inevitably find. It always amazes me how most of you find ways to do things in MissionBase that we didn't conceive of and didn't test, and then a bug may fly out which needs to be swatted.

While much of the addressing will appear to be the same on forms and reports, it will be vastly different internally and in the database. It should allow for much more flexibility, including more addresses and more address types for each person, church and/or institution.

There are 6 phases of development in the new addressing project. We are in Phase #4 at this time. Phase #5 will be to release it for general use. Phase #6 will be to implement the address certification and CASS according to USPS standards.

Our plan is to release addressing for general use within the next 3 to 6 weeks. The release will occur for each customer separately. Those customers that also use the district module, event registration module, or other "remote" modules will require a coordinated release similar to the telephones and email release that was done last year. Each of you will be contacted in the near future so we can proceed with a release schedule.

The address certification and CASS is planned for late August to early September. This part of the project will use a third party software from Satori (www.satorisoftware.com) that specializes in address certification and CASS. It will be integrated into MissionBase so that it is seamless and appears to be part of MissionBase.

GSS Schedule

For your convenience, these are the dates GSS staff are "out of the office" and/or unavailable.

Dates Unavailable:

Al Fifhouse:	June 23-24
Bill Johnson:	
Lori Smith:	June 13, July 18
Jacob Fifhouse:	



LORI'S TIPS & TRICKS...

Those Blue Fields

Problem: There has been much confusion over those fields highlighted in blue that are now a part of our Contact Information. These appear for address, phone and email *if* a Primary Church has been selected for that person, and the church has those pieces of contact information. The confusion comes when a user tries to select the blue field

as the primary contact information (address, phone, or email) for the person, and it just doesn't work. The reason is that the blue highlighted fields are really not contact information for the *person*, but rather for the selected *Primary Church*. Not being associated with the *person*, they are not available for selection as a primary piece of contact information. They are there for reference only, to save the user time looking up the information, if needed.

Solution: To use the primary church's address, phone or email as the Primary contact information for the person, you first must add it as a NEW address/phone/ or email for that person, and designate the "type" as "Church." This may seem redundant, but this action directly ties that piece of the church's contact information to the *person*. It may then be selected as the Primary.



JACOB THE WEB GUY...

Let me first start with a note about the UMCDData.com set of web applications that many of you already use. In order to make many of these web applications work dynamically with the database, the use of JavaScript is required. JavaScript is a pretty typical web programming language that can be used to do a variety of operations for you, such as calculations or data verification. However, JavaScript can also be blocked by your web browser. When that happens the desired results on UMCDData.com are not achieved. You

may have run across this in your use of UMCDData.com, so it is always important to make sure the use of JavaScript is allowed when using UMCDData.com. Now what is this AIR thing I am talking about, and why did I start talking about AIR by bringing up JavaScript, and how does Flex fit in? Adobe Flex is a technology for creating dynamic, Flash based, web applications that typically run within a web browser running the Flash Player plug-in. You have probably come across many sites that contain part or all Flash content in your use of the web. The advantage to flash content on the web is that the look and feel of the application is the same in all browsers and operating systems, and it is much more powerful for creating applications than the use of JavaScript on a standard website.

Applications running in the Flash Player on the web are great, however that means that you have to be online to use them, and that is not always ideal. This leads us to AIR. Adobe AIR is a cross-operating system runtime environment that is installed on your computer, this means it can be used on Windows or Mac just the same (and in the near future on Linux). Once AIR is on your computer, we can take the same web based applications running in the Flash Player and turn them into desktop applications that then run within AIR.

The advantage to AIR is that you don't always have to be online to run the applications. If you are somewhere without internet access, you can open an application running in AIR to just look something up. Or if you need to make a change, you could do that as well. Then it is stored in a very lightweight local database, and the next time an internet connection is detected the changes you made are automatically sent to the database. If you do have an internet connection while using applications in AIR, updates are instantly sent to the server. And if updates are made by someone else, on what you are looking at, you automatically will see the information refresh and have the updated information. To wrap it up, Adobe AIR offers a way to bring desktop applications and web applications together for a more streamlined, user friendly, experience.

What'sNew!

New Reports available

During the "silent" months of our Eagle Eye, a few new reports were added to the database which you may not be aware of, and which could be useful to many of you.

The first is the **Clergy Spouse Report**, located in the Reports function within the "Clergy Reports" folder. This report has been a long-standing request by many to be able to pull information on the spouse of the clergy person. There are options to include Lay pastors' spouses, retired clergy's spouses, and even surviving spouses (if they are designated as such in the conference's Charge Tree.) Information such as address, phone, email, birth date, and even anniversary date are available to a spreadsheet.

The second is the **Committee Details Report**, found in the "Committee/Group Reports" folder. This report allows the user to pull up a list (print or spreadsheet) of those on a committee with a stop date falling between two entered dates. This report is especially useful for those who track subscriptions in committees, to pull those whose subscriptions are going to expire in any given time period.

Thank-you to our users who suggested these reports so that ALL may benefit from using them!

MissionBase Issue Fixed

Many of you have experienced the synchronization issue where it appears to "stall out" at 25%, and you end up having to "End Task" on the synch. This issue has now been fixed.

GoToMeeting

This time of year is full of transition. Some of that transition includes new district administrative assistants, and new District Superintendents. This means new USERS of MissionBase. If you are a new user, and would like a comprehensive, 2-3 hour beginning course in using MissionBase, please contact Lori Smith, lori@greatspirit.com. If there are a few who have need in this area, a GoToMeeting training session will be scheduled at a time convenient to those desiring the training.

Training cost: \$20/per person for the 2-3 hour session.