

How Mission Crossroads website brings the world together

By Gary Payton

Summer is past and so is the majority of our congregational and personal international mission travel. It's my prayer that relationships were deepened and partnerships as brothers and sisters in Christ were strengthened.

So, how can we stay connected? What tools are available across our Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to help us share and learn from each other?

Let me introduce the Mission Crossroads website, a networked community for sharing mission stories, best practices and concerns in search of more faithful and effective mission engagement.

Most of us have heard of Facebook, a social networking site that has connected millions of people around the world. Well, Mission Crossroads uses social networking software to build a space for sharing about mission.

What's on it? Pathways to connect with others engaged in God's mission in countries around the world. A resource library filled with articles on improving our mission outreach. "God's Mission Matters," a monthly podcast from Presbyterian World Mission of faith stories about global mission. News from a host of mission networks: Guatemala, Malawi, India, Russia and dozens

more. Downloadable "Webinars" or Web-based seminars of mission topics. Blogs with the reflections of PC(USA) mission co-workers. And, much more!

Does this all sound too "techie?" My response is like that of the angel Gabriel, "Do not be afraid!" First, find the site: www.missioncrossroads.org. Second, sign up (red box, top right). Third, take your time and explore slowly all the possibilities for you or your congregation. Fourth, visit the Mission Crossroads website often to discover what is new and useful.

The Internet has created new ways for us to learn, to stay connected, and to be engaged in the world. Why not use that technology to improve the ways we Presbyterians "do mission in partnership?"

Gary Payton is a Mission co-worker and Regional Liaison for Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Poland.



Gary Payton's ministry is a bridge between partner churches and other mission workers in four countries in Europe.

A joyful Russia Mission Network conference

Gary Payton reports a "joyful" Russia Mission Network Conference in Omaha, Nebraska, in September. Meeting with the theme "Sharing Faith, Expanding Horizons," participants from the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists of the Russian Federation and the Russian Orthodox Church joined mission network members, most from Presbyterian churches that have a "twinning" partnership with a church or parish in Russia or Belarus. "Voices and views of the Russian participants added greatly to the tips shared from several PC(USA) congregations."

The joy of the new came in multiple ways. **Alex Krutov**, author of *Infinitely More* and co-founder of The Harbor, shared his ministry experiences facing the challenges of the Russian orphanage system. **Marina Shishova**, a 2011 International Peacemaker and the first Russian Orthodox participant in the annual conferences, addressed "The Challenges of Modern Times (in Russia) and the Christian Response."

Highlights of the conference also included **Rev. Bob Bronkema**, recently concluding five years as pastor of the Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy, providing an overview of the chaplaincy's critical ministries of compassion, and a lively panel on "Technology in Partnership." Read more: www.pcusa.org/russiamissionnetwork11