

# Connections

Virginia Mennonite  
Conference &  
Board of Missions

October 2003  
Vol. 13, No. 12

## Sfida: Capturing the vision for mission

When a church established by missionaries begins to capture a vision for sending out its own missionaries, it is said to have come “full circle” in its development. This year the Italian Mennonite Church took significant, concrete steps towards accepting this challenge. They formed a missions committee called *Sfida* (meaning “challenge”), composed its constitution, and established a program called TEAM (*Team Evangelistico Assemblée Mennonite*). This committee, comprised of three pastors and a representative from each Mennonite congregation in Italy, is commissioned to promote missionary vision and involvement, first on the national and, eventually, on the international level.

The missionary team in Bari encouraged this initiative by gladly receiving their very first TEAM, an intergenerational group of six persons from the Sicilian churches. We invited them to assist us in *Settimana Felice* (Happy Week), a Bible and music day camp for children ages 4 to 12. The purpose of this effort was to reach new families with the Gospel. The team taught Bible lessons and organized crafts to illustrate the lesson. One team member assisted Maurita Eberly with the music activities. They cooked and served lunch to all staff, greatly lightening the burden for those involved in the morning-long activities. All of them entered enthusiastically into relationship with the Bari believers, with the children and their parents. There were no language or cultural barriers to overcome!

Almost all the parents participated at the final program and lingered afterward to enjoy refreshments and conversation. Many expressed amazement and appreciation for the activities provided for their children. One mother was greatly impressed by the expressions of joy and delight on the children’s faces. Obviously, the team contributed significantly to making it a truly “happy week.” God worked through our partnership to fulfill a mission that we could not have successfully accomplished without the Sicilian TEAM.

• Eva Eberly

Mediterranean Regional Associate



Willard Eberly

Giovanni Barone (back left) and Enza Cascino (back center) were members of a team from Sicily that helped with *Settimana Felice* (Happy Week) in Bari, Italy.

## Changing perspectives

For one week in August, Jesse Bergey and I were given the opportunity to look at the Mennonite Church from a broader international perspective. Though we are both currently serving as missionaries in St. Elizabeth, Jamaica, we were asked to travel to Trinidad and Tobago for one week. Traveling with us to these two islands were Stephen Hayle and Diedre Jones, friends of ours from the Jamaica Mennonite Church. All four of us were excited about the chance to be a part of the Trinidad Mennonite Youth Fellowship’s annual youth camp which was to be held on the island of Tobago for the first time.

For many of the Trinidadian youth, this was their first visit to Tobago. As we all enjoyed the new surroundings of this smaller island, we got to know and appreciate each other through fun fellowship and seri-

continued on pg. 5

## World maps and missionary banks

Earlene's childhood introduction to the world was aided by a large world map hung on the dining room wall. Pins dotted the landscape, each the location of some missionary person or family. The pictures of those missionaries could be found in the mission directory and Earlene memorized all of them. They prayed for and supported one family in particular, the Charles and Ruth Shenk family in Japan. They were Earlene's uncle and aunt.

I knew the world was round before discovering that fact in school. Round was the shape of my little world missionary bank. While I had still not seen the ocean and wondered how high a hill had to be to qualify as a mountain, I got my earliest geography lesson from a little bank used for my Sunday School offering. Counting the coins probably also gave me my first lessons in arithmetic.

Our early acquaintance with God's work has been a lens for our understanding of the world. God created the heavens and the earth and they are good. There are many different kinds of people in the world and God loves them all. We should too. People do bad things sometime and should be sorry. God is.

In each case, the actual observable data is colored and interpreted by the perspective of God that we hold. Then, as we mature, we adapt and adjust these views. Not everything in the world has been left in its "good" state. Not everyone loves God back. Too seldom are people sorry. Such is the world we live in.

Such is the world Jesus visited some years ago.

It seems to me imperative that we still allow our acquaintance with God's work to inform our understanding of the world. How are we doing that today? People from other countries worship in our churches and it becomes more difficult to regard them as enemies. We study the Bible together at Mennonite World Conference and recognize that God speaks to others as well as to us. We embark on service ventures to help some needy people and discover that we are "receivers" more than "givers." Our lives are changed.

And fundamentally, the perspective on God's work that we need most is this, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. World maps and missionary banks were right on target.



**Loren Horst**  
President of VMBM

*Loren Horst*

### Financial Focus

Thank you for your faithful financial support of Virginia Mennonite Conference and Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions. Both finished their fiscal year with strong financial contributions in August. We are grateful for the support of God's people and churches in sustaining our ministry across the street and around the world.

VMC received \$213,611 toward the Conference's work and ministry, 94% of what was needed to finish "in the black." The Weaver Ministerial Training Trust Fund was also enriched by more than \$10,000 during the past fiscal year, bolstering our ability to help pastors pay for the training they need for effective ministry.

VMBM received \$1,410,843 toward its ongoing ministry and operations, over 95% of what was needed to finish "in the black." In addition VMBM received \$298,289 in various restricted gifts and income.

Both VMC and VMBM will be making adjustments to reduce costs and ensure strong ministry into a new year.

Your partnership in our ministries is greatly appreciated.

**Thank you.**

Steve Carpenter, Virginia Mennonite Conference Coordinator  
Loren Horst, President, Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions

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# A message to the churches

## from Mennonite World Conference Assembly 14

*On August 17, the final day of the 14th Mennonite World Conference Assembly in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, General Council members approved this statement issued as a message from Assembly 14 to MWC member churches around the world. A partial text follows:*

Greetings from more than 6,200 sisters and brothers gathered in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe!

The theme for our gathering, the 14th Assembly of MWC was “Sharing gifts in suffering and in joy” based on Paul’s message to the Corinthians: “If one part of the body suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part of the body is honored, every part rejoices with it” (1 Cor. 12:26).

Everyone in attendance was overwhelmed by the “grace of hospitality” demonstrated by the host Brethren in Christ Church. In numerous acts of service, members of the church—including many young people—shared their faith, music, prayers, food, houses, and technical and organizing skills with more than 1,600 international guests and thousands of Zimbabwean attendees. The ethos of gratitude and the enthusiastic singing of “God is so good” in a conspicuously painful situation moved us.

People from one of five continents planned two worship services each day. Mornings featured Bible studies and evenings sermons on the conference theme by representatives from the churches on that continent. During the worship service on Africa Day, footwashing among Africans and African Americans (from North, Central and South America) demonstrated that the cross of Jesus Christ reunited in Bulawayo Africans who had been divided by colonial slavery. There were also stories, dramas, and much, much singing every day.

In these services we were made conscious of sharp contrasts in where we live. Some churches live amidst stunting poverty, pandemic diseases, disintegrating states, and eroding economies. Others live amidst distorted values, spiritual poverty, corrupting affluence and rampant militarism. Numerous churches struggle with social violence amidst religious plurality.

The Mennonite World Conference in accord with the host Brethren in Christ Church released a public statement on the situation in Zimbabwe, expressing strong support for the current efforts to initiate dialogue between the various political parties in order to bring about change and reconciliation.

While the Assembly was celebrative, the General Council—with representatives from more than 90 national conferences in 54 countries—made a number of significant decisions. It welcomed five new member churches and five new associate members. The Council affirmed for study and reflection a Faith and Life Council statement of shared theological convictions based on statements from member churches. It heard the concerns of African women theologians for more involvement in church life. Representatives of the first Global Youth Summit reported on their interest in more inter-generational conversation in their congregations and with MWC. The Council received with enthusiasm “Africa,” the first volume of the Global Mennonite and Brethren in Christ History series. There was an extensive report from the Global Gift Sharing project. The Peace Council produced an enlightening document on a continuum of peacemaking activities, Biblical virtues that undergird peacemaking, and practices that form Christians as peacemakers. The Global Mission Fellowship, facilitated by Mennonite World Conference, was inaugurated at this Assembly.

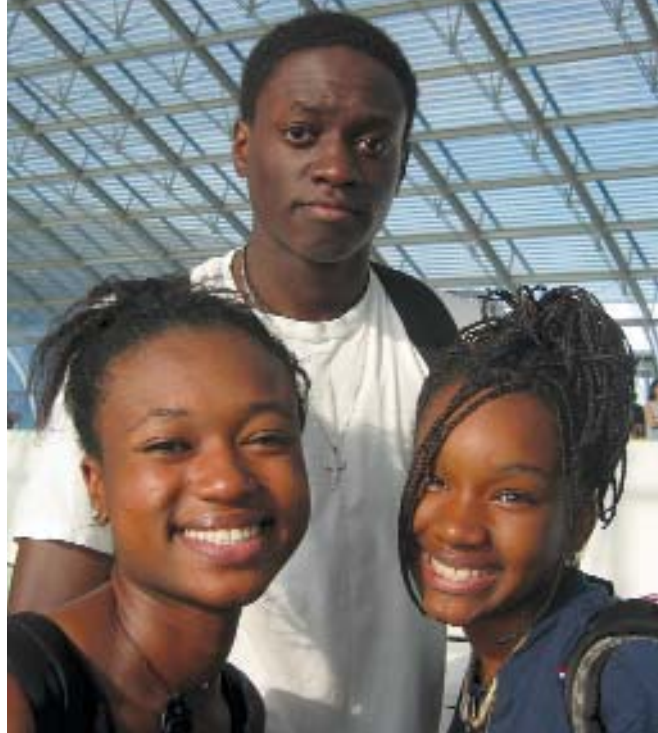
The Bulawayo Assembly was a timely recognition that more Brethren in Christ and Mennonites now live in Africa than on any other continent. The Assembly was an expression of unity, of solidarity between churches witnessing to God’s grace, peace and justice in remarkably different cultural, political, and economic circumstances. The Assembly was a sign, an announcement that this new era of church life calls for a re-ordering of relationships. It was a foretaste of the eternal kingdom when “nations will walk by its light and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it” (Rev. 21:24).



courtesy of Jill Landis

Monica Hochstedler, Harrisonburg, Va., served on a Partners in Mission team during the Mennonite World Conference Assembly. You can read more about the team’s volunteer efforts in the *Mission Connections* insert in this issue.

Crystal Morrison, Benjamin Brickhouse, and Brittney Walls traveled to Mennonite World Conference in August through the LEAP program.



courtesy of Richard Pannell

## Taking a LEAP

*Forty-eight high school students spent five days on the campus of Eastern Mennonite Seminary in August, then traveled to Mennonite World Conference and the Global Youth Summit in Zimbabwe. LEAP (Learning, Exploring, and Participating) is a new initiative at EMS aimed at helping youth to hone their leadership skills, to explore Christ-centered theological studies and pastoral ministry (or other church-leadership roles) as a possible vocation, and to engage in cross-cultural learning experiences. LEAP is funded through a grant from Lilly Endowment. Learn more at [www.leap.emu.edu](http://www.leap.emu.edu).*

More than a year ago my youth minister, Glen Guyton, and Bishop L.W. Francisco III invited me to attend a seminar at Eastern Mennonite University where I could express my thoughts of what Mennonite youth would like to achieve if money were not an issue. I did not know that I would be a part of the result of that meeting. Now, eighteen months later, I have been to Africa and back with the help of the Lilly Foundation.

Learning that you do not have to go out of the country to have a cross-cultural experience was a surprise. Fifty different youth from multi-cultural backgrounds coming together for one or more purposes is a blessing in today's society. The "getting-to-know-you" activities planned by EMU's admissions staff was definitely a big help to jump start our "hellos" and helped ease any tension.

My first reaction of being on a Mennonite campus was more or less subtle. When you know the peace of God is there, you should not have anything to worry about. Therefore, being on EMU's

campus, I felt at home. I did not get homesick until I actually left the country.

Zimbabwe is slowly, but surely, coming back up from its downfall of six years. It is a very wealthy and resourceful country and they received us with open arms. Driving on the opposite side of the road has always been awkward to me, but when you are there for more than ten days it becomes a custom. Wherever there are people, the "noise" will be the same. But, hearing the accents of the natives was intriguing to me because they think Americans have an accent!

From my experience in South Africa last year, I knew that it would be winter season and that there would be no central heating or air. A lot of the other youth met their cultural shock with that factor, since the weather conditions are extreme. You learn not to take the last thing on your mind for granted.

Many different languages were spoken during the Global Youth Summit, including English, French, Spanish, German, Ndebele (the native language of Zimbabweans), and other African languages. Africans, Americans, Asians, and Europeans came from all over—not just their native continents. The worship styles during the Summit reflected the cultures of the people who attended. My favorite was the African worship. During the Summit, the LEAP group represented North America by leading a few worship songs at one of the nightly services.

"We are Marching in the Light of God" was sung at every service during the conference. The intriguing thing about this song is that it was sung in every language of all the different attendees. That showed me how vast culture is and that even though I did not understand everything that was going on, God did.

Now that I have returned home, the cross-cultural experience I encountered with fifty other youth will stay in my mind and prayers until I receive the opportunity for another cross-cultural experience. This experience has helped shape me to be the person that I am, especially spiritually.

During the latter part of the trip God's call for my life was revealed to work with women who are mentally, physically, and spiritually broken, and to let them know that they are virtuous women in God's eyes. I feel more confident now about my call and will definitely pursue it. I believe each and every person who stepped out of their comfort zone received something from God.

• Crystal Morrison  
Calvary Community Church



**Left:** Trinidadian youth enjoyed youth camp in Tobago for the first time.

**Below:** Trinidadian, Jamaican and American friends: (L-R) Anil Sookram, Soney Maraj, Philip Rhodes, Lisa Kalloo, Stephen Hayle, Diedre Jones.

— **Changing Perspectives** continued from cover —

ous sessions. The theme for this year was worship, and since the four of us who had come from Jamaica were some of the oldest in the group of about 30, we were asked to lead out in the areas in which we were spiritually gifted.

Stephen inspired us with his devotionals, acting abilities, and his talk on worship and dating. Diedre shared her passion and love for Jesus as she led in times of praise and worship. I played guitar, sang, and spoke one-on-one with a few of the guys about spiritual issues and difficulties that they were facing. Jesse kept us all safe and in good emotional health by grabbing snakes by their tails and carrying them far away from the guys' dorm. I was very impressed with the servant hearts of my three companions from Jamaica. Each of them continually inspired me with their words and actions.

With assistance from VMBM, the Mennonite churches in Trinidad and Jamaica have been working together to begin an exchange program for the youth in their churches. The hope is that as they travel between the two islands and experience the Mennonite Church in different locations and cultures, their perspective will change. They will gain a broader understanding of the dynamic effect that the Mennonites have on the lives of many in the Caribbean and across the globe.

This was precisely the effect that the trip had on me. I learned an incredible amount about the culture of Trinidad and, more importantly, the lives of my brothers and sisters who live there. The Mennonite Church of Trinidad and Tobago is changing many lives as it grows, seeking to carry out the Great Commission and to raise up strong Christian youth to lead in the church. The Jamaica Mennonite Church will be looking forward to meeting some of these committed youth in the very near future.

As I got to know the Trinidadian youth, I was surprised by both the differences and similarities between us. I met one youth who was amazingly similar to me. As Andy and I shared about our lives,

beliefs, and struggles, we often made remarks such as, "I've experienced the exact same thing," or "I believe that too," or "I can't believe how much we are alike!" We became friends instantly because we could communicate so easily on many levels.

All four of us from Jamaica had a wonderful time with our Trini brothers and sisters, and as our final day sped by, we hated to say goodbye. We took group pictures, shook hands, hugged, traded addresses, and then drove to the airport to fly to our respective islands.

The kingdom of God is spread out so far over the globe, stretching to wherever there is another who believes in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Yet the physical countries where I have lived and visited seem so unimportant when I compare them to the awe-inspiring spiritual place where I always live . . . in the kingdom of God.

Though I may be far away from my Trini brothers and sisters, we're still closely connected through our common purpose as Christians, which was our focus of study throughout the week—to love God and all people and to worship God with our very lives.



photos courtesy of Philip Rhodes

• Philip Rhodes  
St. Elizabeth, Jamaica

## New congregation develops in Chapel Hill

A new congregation in a place with no prior Mennonite presence is typically the work of a church planter.

But Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship required



Nick Plummer

Five members are currently in the preaching rotation of the Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship. Left to right: Steve Jolley, Jennifer Connerley, Alex Sider, Tom Lehman, Jennifer Graber.

no such help. CHMF grew spontaneously out of a small group from Raleigh that met for several years in members' homes in Chapel Hill and nearby Durham.

CHMF evolved in part from convenience. The small group

had come to include some who didn't want to drive as far as Raleigh for worship but who wished to be active Mennonites. Close friendships were formed, and the group became so large that few households could host it.

The painful prospect of dividing into two smaller groups was resolved in late 2001 by a decision to begin meeting for Sunday evening worship.

Most of the fellowship's 25 participants are

young professionals or students at Duke University in Durham or the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

There is no paid minister or staff, but leadership has been provided from the start by current and former graduate students at Duke Divinity School who have a solid understanding of church life and worship.

Five people, three from Duke, take turns preparing sermons. Provision for pastoral services beyond preaching and worship planning is under discussion.

Lectionary readings form the basis of worship planning. This commitment was made, in the words of one member, "to keep the Bible central and to prevent us from preaching only on our favorite topics."

The lectionary has influenced singing as well. By selecting hymns appropriate to the texts, the group has sung nearly a fourth of the hymns in *Hymnal: A Worship Book*.

In June, CHMF was welcomed into Virginia Mennonite Conference and is active in the Eastern Carolina District.

The recent award of a City on a Hill grant by Mennonite Mission Network to stimulate growth in central North Carolina is expected to assist CHMF in reaching out to the university campuses.

CHMF meets in the facilities of the Chapel Hill Friends Meeting on the edge of the University of North Carolina campus. Its website is [www.rtp-net.org/chmf](http://www.rtp-net.org/chmf).

• Tom Lehman

Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship

Reprinted from *Mennonite Weekly Review*

## Congregational Resource Center

It is the time of year with a variety of holidays and celebrations. Books that inspire creativity and cover a spectrum of these include:

- **Celebrating Holidays and Holy Days in the Church and Family Settings**
- **Seasons to Celebrate: God's Children Celebrate the Church Year**

Also consider:

- **Halloween: Is It for Real?** A story that unmask's Halloween, revealing its history and God's victory.
- **Creative ideas for Thanksgiving**
- **We Give You Thanks: Three Services of Thanksgiving**

Advent will soon be here. We have children's musicals, preview copies of dramas from Contemporary Drama Services and other seasonal dramas. Don't miss the top drawer of the filing cabinet for worship and other seasonal ideas. Some highlighted resources:

- **Christmas Bells & Blessings** — All your church needs for the Advent/Christmas season
- **Scripture Scenes for Advent**
- **Abingdon's Christmas Dramas for Children**
- **Whose Birthday is it Anyway?** A children's Christmas program

The Mennonite Church Advent theme this year is "Be Alert! God is on the move!" Check [www.leaderonline.org](http://www.leaderonline.org) and the resource center for supplemental ideas.

The Resource Center is open 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, with a key available at the EMU Information Office for use after hours.

Visit our website at [www.emu.edu/mrcr](http://www.emu.edu/mrcr) to browse our catalog. Contact us at 540-432-4219 or [wengerkw@emu.edu](mailto:wengerkw@emu.edu).

# October 2003 Prayer Calendar

## Sunday

This month's prayer calendar is sponsored by Layman, Diener, & Bontrager Insurance, Inc.

*If you would like to sponsor one or more months of the prayer calendar, contact Gloria Lehman at 540-434-9727 or 1-800-707-5535.*

**To me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.**

Philippians 1:21 (NIV)

## Monday

**5** Pray for the members of Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship as they provide opportunities for Christian worship, study, fellowship, and service. Pray also for the five members who are currently in the preaching rotation.

**6** Pray for Susannah Gerber Lepley and the staff of New Bridges Immigrant Resource Center as they assist immigrants in Harrisonburg. Thank God for the financial support they are receiving that enables their ministry to continue.

**7** Millicent Peart, pastor of Waterloo Mennonite Church in Kingston, Jamaica, was named the head of the Caribbean zone of the Global Missions Fellowship at the recent Mennonite World Conference. Pray for Millie as she assumes this role.

**12** Is God calling you to a term of service in the US or around the world? Listen carefully for the call of God in your life, and pray for those who will talk with representatives at EMU's Mission and Service Days this week.

**13** Philip Rhodes, serving in Jamaica, participated in the Mennonite youth camp in Trinidad. He and Andy Ramsumair found that they had a lot in common, especially their faith. Thank God for this connection.

**14** Pray for pastors Milford & Carolyn Lyndaker at Crest Hill Community Church. Thank God for the congregation that is meeting and for their growing commitment to share God's love in the Wardensville, WV, area.

**19** The Creating a Congregational Culture of Call Committee has designated today as Ministry Sunday. Thank God for faithful pastors and church leaders in the past, and pray for your congregation's current leadership.

**20** Pray for Conference Minister Owen Burkholder as he participates in the MC USA Consultation on Pastoral and Theological Education following the CLC meeting in Colorado Springs.

**21** Pray for the Eastern Carolina District City on a Hill Committee as they meet this evening in Durham, NC. Projects include a new church plant, an Anabaptist Study Center, and a news and prayer network among area churches.

**26** Pray for Kirk and Marilyn Hanger as they lead a church planting team in Alexandria, Va. They are using the Alpha Bible Study model for outreach and evangelism and hope to begin a Sunday morning service soon.

**27** Pray for Flinn Ranchod as he pastors Calvary Community Church Chesapeake. Thank God for the growing attendance and pray that the congregation will be "salt and light" in their community.

**28** A key to calling pastors is a positive atmosphere in the congregation. Pray that our congregations will find focus and harmony in being God's people.

## Wednesday

**1** Steve Campbell recently moved into an apartment in the village of Kemishtaj, Albania. School is off to a good start; continue to pray for Steve as he leads the school program for the Hess children.

**8** Norma Teles is spending a few weeks in Virginia en route to her home in Brazil. Pray that Norma's visits in congregations will be a blessing. She will spend several months in Brazil before returning for another term of service in Albania.

**15** Tomorrow evening is the Church Vocations Banquet in Williamsburg, sponsored by the Creating a Congregational Culture of Call Committee. Pray for those persons that God might be calling to pastoral ministry.

**22** Pray for Joe Bontrager as he attends the annual Partnership Leaders Consultation tomorrow. This is a meeting of representatives of various mission partnerships for the purpose of networking and sharing experiences.

**29** Praise God that Angie, who attends Hope Mennonite Church in Esperanza, Trinidad, accepted Christ as her Savior last month. Pray that Angie and her family will grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus.

## Thursday

**2** Thank God for the contribution flow from individuals and congregations in response to the Spirit's prompting at the end of the fiscal year. Pray that persons and churches would continue to give faithfully throughout this next year.

**9** Pray for Donna van Horn, chair of the Gift Discernment Committee, as she guides the search for a new Conference Moderator. This person will replace Joe Longacher, who will complete his second three-year term next summer.

**16** Pray for Marvin Slabaugh as he leads the VMBM Board meetings this weekend. Pray also for Lowell Miller, a new board member from the Eastern Carolina Dist., and Lawrence Yoder, newly appointed to the Program Committee.

**23** Pray for those attending "The Church Meets the Muslim Community," an Anabaptist consultation on Islam at Eastern Menn. Seminary. This consultation will review approaches and programs by Mennonite agencies in Muslim contexts.

**30** Pray for business and church leaders who are gathering in Winnipeg, MB for the annual Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) meeting. MEDA celebrates 50 years of ministry and innovation this year.

## Friday

**3** The annual MCC Relief Sale is being held this weekend at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds. Thank God for the many volunteers who put time and energy into making this a successful event.

**10** This weekend is Homecoming at Eastern Mennonite University, and next weekend is Homecoming at Eastern Mennonite High School. Pray that alumni would remain faithful to God's call in their lives.

**17** Pray for Joe Longacher, Jan Showalter, and Owen Burkholder as they represent Virginia Mennonite Conference at the MC USA Constituency Leaders Council meeting in Colorado Springs this weekend.

**24** Pray for pastors Steve and Karla Francisco as they lead a new church plant in Suffolk, Va. Pray for the leadership team and for Saturday celebration services in anticipation of beginning Sunday morning worship services in January.

**31** Pray for persons traveling to Palermo, Sicily to attend the Annual Conference of the Italian Menn. Church this weekend. Pray for Willard Eberly and Giovanni Greco, conference speakers, who will speak on evangelism and missions.

## Saturday

**4** Pray for Willard and Eva Eberly as they return to Italy following meetings with missionaries and churches in Albania. Pray for the ongoing development of the churches in Albania and that additional long-term workers would be placed on the field.

**11** Pray for Chaiya Hadtasunern as he leads the emerging Hmong congregation in Hickory. Thank God for the families that attend the weekly worship services on Sunday afternoon and pray that their faith will grow.

**18** Prayer for Harold and Christine Wenger and the leaders of Stuarts Draft Mennonite Church as they are on retreat this weekend. Conference Coordinator Steve Carpenter is facilitating their discussions.

**25** Pray that a publisher will be located for the publishing and distribution of the book "Exploring Worship" in the Italian language. Pray for Eva Eberly and her Italian helpers as they diligently work to complete the translation.

# Announcements

**Highland Retreat** will hold its Annual Fall Banquet at Eastern Mennonite High School, Harrisonburg, Va., on October 30, 6:30 p.m. All who are interested in Highland's ministry are invited to this time of celebration, reporting, and inspiration. Ervin Stutzman will be the keynote speaker. For reservations call 540-852-3226 or e-mail [info@highlandretreat.org](mailto:info@highlandretreat.org).

A major consultation, "**The Church Meets the Muslim Community**," will be held Oct. 23-26 at Eastern Mennonite Seminary. This forum will explore, from an Anabaptist-Mennonite perspective, the calling and challenges of the church meeting the *ummah* (Arabic for community) in trust-building relations between Christians and Muslims around the world, particularly in the wake of September 11 and the recent war in Iraq. For more information, visit [www.emu.edu/churchandislam](http://www.emu.edu/churchandislam), call 540-432-4260, or e-mail [stutzmal@emu.edu](mailto:stutzmal@emu.edu).



"**Ethics of Biotechnology: Viewing New Creations with Anabaptist Eyes**" will be held November 13-15 at Eastern Mennonite University. This conference will focus on biotechnology as it relates to the power and use of new understandings in genetics. For more information visit [www.bioethics.emu.edu](http://www.bioethics.emu.edu), call 540-432-4400 or e-mail [bioethics@emu.edu](mailto:bioethics@emu.edu).



**David and Liz Driver** have begun a term of service as mission associates with Mennonite Mission Network. Liz is an English professor at the university in Szeged, Hungary,



through the International Institute of Christian Studies. David plans to write and may also teach journalism in the spring. They have two children, Katie and Dani. The Drivers are members of Washington (D.C.) Community Fellowship.

## **Philip and Rebecca Geiser**

of Knoxville, Tenn., are beginning a three-year assignment with



Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Bangladesh as staff development coordinators. They are members of Concord Mennonite Church, Knoxville, Tenn.

**Jay and Sarah Wittmeyer** of Harrisonburg, Va., are beginning a three-year MCC assignment in Nepal. Jay will work as a program coordinator and Sarah will work in community development. They have



three children, Alysson, 6, Elliot, 4, and Anna Grace, 10 months. They attend Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

## Leadership Transitions

**Marvin J. Zuercher** was licensed as pastor of Chestnut Ridge Mennonite Church, Orrville, Ohio, September 7, 2003.

**Richard Bowman** was installed as overseer in Central District of Virginia Mennonite Conference, September 7, 2003.

