

Connections

Virginia Mennonite
Conference &
Board of Missions

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Jamaica—no problem, mon!

by Danny Trobaugh

If you have ever been to or heard anything about Jamaica, you are probably familiar with the phrase “No problem, mon.” There was even a popular song some 15 years ago by a Jamaican artist, entitled “Don’t Worry, Be Happy.” People in the mainstream of life here in Jamaica, as well as those of us who visit the island for that occasional excursion to the enchanted tourist attractions and resorts, love to believe that all is well, and that Bob Marley’s words “one love, one life, let’s get together and we’ll be alright” permeate the lives of all who call Jamaica home.

Before God called us to serve as missionaries at the Maranatha School for the Deaf in St. Elizabeth, Shirley and I had vacationed here several times during a span of 12 years. Our stays took us to three different all-inclusive resorts and several side trips to some of the beautiful sites located near the resorts, but never to where the people of Jamaica actually make their homes. We were discouraged from leaving the fenced-in property, being told that it was too dangerous to go into the villages and countryside. And, indeed in that protected atmosphere there is “no problem, mon.” There are plenty of games, food, and pleasures to be had, so why venture out?

We have left the resort now. The 20 deaf children, the deaf community of Ridge (the locality where the school is situated), and many of the other folks we have met and grown to love over the past three months have never seen the resorts. Some of them have never even been to the beach, which is only about five miles from here. The money that one couple would spend at an all-inclusive resort for one week of fun and relaxation would feed a family of four here for a year! And most of the people who work there leave their families behind in the village, seeing them perhaps once a month and sending most of what they earn home to feed and clothe their children.

But life is still good for them. I can’t tell you how many fruits and vegetables have been brought to our door since we arrived here in November. Little bare-foot boys and girls, teenagers dressed in their various

school uniforms, and adults whose attire ranges from rags to fine satins frequent the Alice House, which Shirley and I now call home. Some just wander in for a peanut butter and jelly sandwich or a “sweetie” (candy). Others come and stay for a full meal, knowing that life is good wherever the love of God is represented. Whether they are bearing gifts or seeking a blessing, they know that there are some of us who have left the resort and have chosen to live among them. We promised only one thing to our folks back home and our God in Heaven: that we would “hold His people in our hearts.”

Our mission at the school and in the community is to teach woodworking, cooking, and sewing, provide general maintenance around the property, and become involved in the worship life of the community. Shirley teaches cooking, arts and crafts, and sewing to about five or six of the older girls, and also prepares food on the weekends for the nine dormitory students. She has also become the mother, doctor, nurse, friend, and chef for the children at Maranatha and in the community.

Every Thursday night is “cooking night” at our home. Three to ten girls and women show up to learn how to make cookies, bread, cakes, and whatever else we have the ingredients for. Some come just to eat, and that’s OK, too!



Danny Trobaugh (R) looks on as Jordan Bent and Terrence Bennett make progress on a special wood-working project.

“No problem” continued on pg. 3

Do not weary in well doing

by Joseph L. Lapp



Joseph L. Lapp is the Southeastern Regional Representative for MMA Trust Co. and Mennonite Foundation.

When I began practicing law, my father, a primitive Fraktur artist, used his pencils and brushes to create mementos reminding me to “do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God” and to “care for the widows and orphans and those in need.”

Just before Christmas I received numerous requests for financial contributions for many good causes, but many of these were left unanswered due to the lack of personal resources. Yet I enjoy a comfortable life. I am blessed with a supportive family and congregation, good health, and employment. These blessings come in part from an excellent education, a nurturing faith community, and access to quality health care.

The story is told of a wealthy person who was also very generous. Financial reversals resulted in this person filing bankruptcy. Friends asked, “Aren’t you sorry you gave so much away?” The formerly wealthy person replied, “What I gave away is really what I have left.”

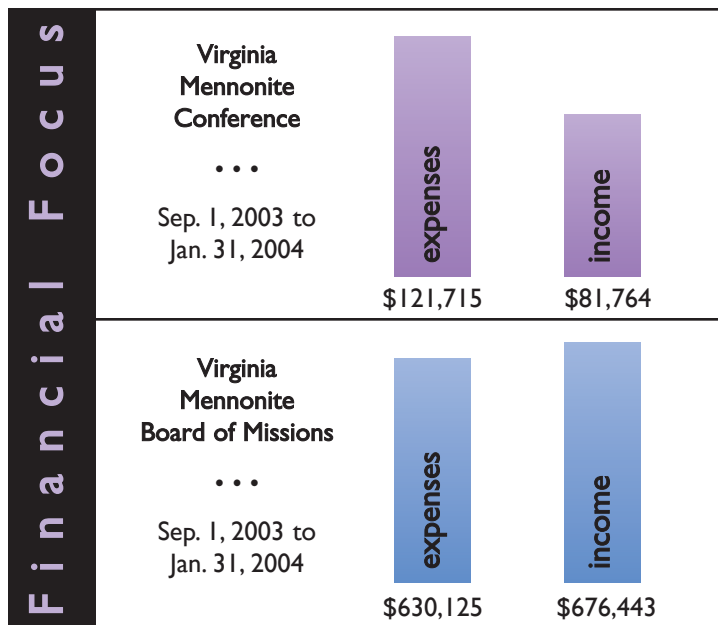
It seems to me the scriptures teach us to use our resources wisely, developing them not for personal benefit, but for the good they can do for the larger world. Jesus did not lay a guilt trip on anyone for not being able to provide for all those in need. On the other hand, He was concerned about a person’s attitude towards wealth. Jesus praised the persons who gave generously (the widow’s mite), who honored God with treasures (expensive perfume), who invested wisely (parable of the talents).

Those Jesus rebuked did not recognize a connection between their love for God and their money. He

challenged those who withheld precious treasures from their worship of God with the colloquialism of “better to care for the poor” or persons who buried their treasures rather than investing it. He criticized those who refused to care for their parents by saying their money was “set aside for God.”

The temptation for many of us is to obsess over the questions of “what do I need for my future care” or “what do I do with all these requests for contributions?” I believe Jesus would rebuke both of these questions, but not because He does not want us to care for our own needs or support important charitable programs. Rather I believe Jesus calls us to an all-consuming love for God accompanied by care and love for those around us, both far and near, in the same measure as we provide for and love ourselves.

Let us recognize again it is God who provides. We in North America have received and consume a disproportionate share of God’s resources. However, with these resources comes great responsibility. Let us resolve corporately and individually to be wise trustees, recognizing the opportunities God provides for us to do well. He desires the grateful, glad, generous offering of our talents, whatever they may be, to honor Him and care for those in need.



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Editor

Gloria Lehman

Assistant Editor

Rachel Smith

Circulation manager

Beth Brunk

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Phone 540-434-9727

1-800-707-5535

E-mail info@vmbm.org

info@vmconf.org

Web www.vmbm.org

www.vmconf.org

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“No problem” continued from the cover

I am blessed to have five eager young men and one girl in my woodworking classes. Maintenance and general facility upgrades are an ongoing task, full of challenges and rewards. In the evenings after school, while I am trying to catch up on made-to-order furniture projects for the school, church, and community, I am inundated with little boys and young people from the school and community who always seem to “need” something fixed or built for them. Would you believe that the special planned projects are a little behind schedule?

What can I say about worship in Jamaica? The Holy Spirit is alive and well! Shirley and I have been blessed to have worshipped with five congregations. I have spoken at all five, including the four Mennonite churches in St. Elizabeth. Not once has my sermon gone as planned. With “Amens” and “Praise the Lords” coming from all directions, my scribbled notes were replaced with a more appropriate word from the Holy Spirit. Messages that were planned for 20 minutes went on for an hour! What an experience we have had getting to know Him and His people in a new and exciting way.

This is life in the real Jamaica. People do “get together, there is a spirit here, and things are all right.” If there is food on your table or in the cupboard, as long as it is within sight, it is shared. If a vehicle is going to Junction, the closest town, it will be full by the time you get there. There may not be filet mignon, cracked crab, or other tasty delicacies, but if there is a pot of yams and dumplings on the fire and the cistern has water, no one hungers or thirsts.

On Christmas Eve we fixed five gallons of our homemade chili, fried festivals (cornbread), made Christmas cake and cookies, and got word into the community about the event. At least sixty people filled our house and yard. Every morsel of food was eaten or taken home, and the night closed with roasting bread dough twisted on sticks over an open fire. Had we been home in Virginia the same thing would have occurred, only with a somewhat more conventional menu and a different group of family and friends. But, hey, home is where the heart is, right?

The only problem for us has been the frequent wailing of a lively party in the village, where the music volume redefines the decibel. Even that is part of the culture; the music is intended to be shared with neighbors, not to keep them up at all hours of the night!

Life is different here, away from the resort. God’s people vary as we travel among them. They have customs that are hard to understand, enjoy strange foods and rituals, and see life from their own paradigm. But if you examine them closely you find some common threads: they are all trying to deal with life as it con-

fronts them, they are all made from the same stuff, and they are all precious in His sight.

Shirley and I are trying to learn from the example of the Hurons, a Native American people who were exterminated in the early 1700s after being forced into Christianity and having their entire way of life changed by the unknowing and unfeeling missionaries who “converted” them. Our mission, or responsibility, to God and to those folks who are so generously sharing as our mission partners is not to change life here, but to try in any way we can to make it more abundant.

Off of the resort, “abundant” has an altogether different definition. I personally believe it is closer to what Jesus meant when He said it. It is very similar to this: God knows what He is doing with His people, and as long as they believe in His name, there is “no problem, Mon.”

Danny & Shirley Trobaugh are members of Weavers Mennonite Church and have been serving in Jamaica since November.

We won’t plant corn today

The Martins have been farming in Augusta County, Va., for generations. Last spring they had it especially rough. The weather is often quite dry, but not that year. It rained and rained. For weeks on end the ground was too wet to work. “I can’t ever remember having trouble getting the corn planted,” one Martin remarked. Late one week, finally, the sun came out for a couple days. By Sunday things looked promising. Some suggested, “Why not plant on Sunday? They’re calling for rain on Monday.” The reported reply from the senior Martin: “No, we won’t do that.”

If you go to the mall on a typical Sunday afternoon, you are liable to get run over. It’s one of the busiest shopping days of the week. Companies and factories run 24/7, and employees need to be scheduled for Sunday work. The motor of modern life races along without pause. All of which might make the Martins’ decision seem quaint and foolish.

This is an excerpt from the first of Mark Wenger’s “Community Sense” columns, slated to be a semiregular feature of DreamSeeker Magazine. Mark is co-pastor of Springdale Mennonite Church and Associate Director of the Preaching Institute at EMS. Read the full article at www.pandorapressus.com/dsm/autumn03/wengma.htm

Glendon Blosser: an MC USA “backgrounder”

Anyone who knows what “backgrounder” means will know that Glendon Blosser, who recently retired from 44 years of ministry in



In August 2003, Glendon Blosser retired from 44 years of ministry in Virginia Mennonite Conference.

Virginia Mennonite Conference, can compare church work to farm work.

Blosser, now 73, farmed while he served as a pastor, conference leader, mission worker, evangelist and educator. He owns a 135-acre farm outside Harrisonburg, and for 30 years ran a Holstein dairy with his wife, Dorothy, where they raised four children. In 1981, he became a “backgrounder farmer” and still is today. He fattens Angus calves on Shenandoah Valley grassland and then ships them to mature at feedlots.

Milking cows and fattening calves while leading the church wasn’t easy, but Blosser kept his balance, he said. “A commitment and love for God and his church allowed me to prioritize,” he said. “I decided early on that I’d run the farm and not let the farm run me. When there was hay to mow and there was church work to do, the hay could wait.”

Blosser grew much more than hay through his ministry. One could say he was a type of “backgrounder” for Mennonite Church USA, as he helped Virginia Conference mature from the 1960s through the 1990s. He was moderator of the former Mennonite Church during its churchwide assembly at Bowling Green ‘81. That’s where delegates affirmed holding the first joint assembly with the General Conference Mennonite Church at Bethlehem ‘83 in Pennsylvania. Joint assemblies eventually led to the MC-GC merger, which Blosser supports and trusts.

“I didn’t go to the Nashville and Atlanta assemblies,” said Blosser. “I felt it was important to let the younger people shape the future church. As an insider, I’ve seen the

integrity of our church structures, and I really trust my church. I don’t need to be there all the time to know God is at work.”

Blosser’s father, Mahlon, modeled for him what it means to “let go” and let young people lead. Before “cultivating a culture of call” was a theme, congregations used the “lot system.” For this practice, several young men—predetermined by the congregation as candidates—each chose a book. The man who chose the book that held a paper slip became the pastor, based on the belief that the Holy Spirit led that choice.

In 1959, Blosser picked the paper slip at Weavers Mennonite Church and was ordained. Ten years later, Blosser was chosen to be a candidate to become an assistant bishop in Central District, where his father was senior bishop.

“My father had turned 65 and felt it was time to let a younger man be trained,” Blosser said. “He asked the district to begin looking for an assistant. But since I was a candidate, he asked that the district, which had stopped ordaining bishops by lot, to reinstate the practice in this case to erase any feeling of nepotism.

“I chose the book with the slip of paper and became the last ordained bishop in the conference. I served as his assistant until Dec. 16, 1974, on his 70th birthday. That’s when he wrote me a letter, telling me that he was officially retiring from his position.

“His writing that letter modeled to me what it means to let go and to trust. He didn’t look over my shoulder and trusted me. That gave me a real positive view of leadership—what it means to both take hold of it and also how to let it go.”

That modeling proved to be important for Blosser, who needed flexibility to heed many callings. He followed God into ever-widening circles that led from the congregation to the conference to the denomination to the world.

During the ‘60s, he served as pastor at Zion Hill Mennonite Church in Singers Glen and

Three books by Glendon Blosser are available for purchase at the Virginia Mennonite Conference Center for \$4 each.

To order, call 540-434-9727.



In Search of Faithfulness: Virginia Mennonite Conference in a Changing World: 1835-2003

I Trust My Church: Forty Years of Ministry Experiences: 1959-1999

The Church Made Simple: A History of the Birth and Growth of the Mennonite Church in Trinidad: 1967-2002

became involved in evangelistic meetings throughout the region. He let go of the pastorate in order to serve as assistant bishop, and then bishop, of Central District.

During the 1970s and '80s, he was involved in committee work that led to restructuring of the denomination. The denomination moved away from attempts at regionalizing. Instead, it gave area conferences more representation on the General Board and strengthened the role of congregations within the conference. Those years also brought a new openness to leadership by women and laity.

The church also focused more intentionally on its Christ-centered Anabaptist theology that gave much focus to discipleship and community in the '70s and '80s, he said.

"Mennonites don't have a systematic but a practical theology," Blosser said. "I believe the deep attraction to our church for those who didn't grow up Mennonite is that we keep things 'simple.' "We don't look at church as an institution. We look at it as the family of God. We don't have complicated dogmas, and our views are simple enough for everyone to understand. Everyone needs love, and that's what God sent to us in Jesus."

The Blossers felt called to share this gospel with others, and in 1983 and 1984, Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions (VMBM) sent them to Trinidad to train national leaders. When the family returned home, Blosser became the director of home missions for VMBM and administered an explosion of new conference-based church plants.

Nearing 60, Blosser wanted to study. Earlier, he'd received a bachelor's degree in Bible at Eastern Mennonite College (now EMU). In 1990, he returned to receive a master's in evangelism and church planting. To fulfill the program's practicum, he developed a curriculum for theological education by extension for Trinidad and Ghana and became an adjunct professor in Trinidad.

In his retirement, Blosser believes that mentoring is his ministry now—a ministry that keeps him in the race as he passes the baton of his faith into new hands. He fully supports Mennonite Church USA's focus on "cultivating a culture of call," he said. He's taken several young people to ministry inquiry banquets and encourages his children and 13 grandchildren to remain faithful to the Lord and to the work of His church.

"I didn't retire because I am burned out or down on the church or tired," Blosser said. "But it's because I have a passion to see younger leaders come into the roles I so loved over the years. And that can't happen unless I step aside."

• Laurie L. Oswald
Mennonite Church USA



Showalter honored for 22 years of ministry

The churches in Southern District presented gifts to Richard and Bertha Showalter in honor of Richard's 22 years of ministry as overseer.

Approximately 200 persons joined for a festive "Celebration of Ministry" on Sunday, November 30, 2003, to mark the retirement of Overseer Richard H. Showalter. For more than 22 years, Richard served as an overseer for the Southern District of Virginia Mennonite Conference. He retired from this ministry on December 31, 2003.

Representatives from each of the eight congregations in the district spoke words of appreciation and presented gifts to Richard and his wife Bertha in gratitude for their dedicated service to the church. Owen Burkholder and Steve Carpenter attended on behalf of Virginia Mennonite Conference.

Richard was commissioned as overseer on August 8, 1981, to assist Bishop Roy Kiser. After Roy passed away in 1989, Richard assumed the full responsibilities for the district. At that time, this included 10 congregations located in Augusta County, Nelson County, and South Boston. For periods of time Richard shared oversight responsibilities with Earl Monroe and John Kiblinger.

During much of his tenure as overseer, Richard also taught math full-time at Stuarts Draft Middle School. His retirement is an occasion of significant transition in the leadership of Southern District. His successor as overseer is Howard Miller, Associate Pastor of Lindale Mennonite Church. Howard begins his responsibilities on March 1, 2004.

• Mark Wenger
Springdale Mennonite Church



Franco Arena (R) was ordained by Francesco Picone (L), President of the Italian Mennonite Church, at their annual conference in November 2003.

My thoughts, not your thoughts

“Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will... freely pardon. ‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ declares the Lord. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts’ ” (Isaiah 55:7-9).

I still vividly recall that evening in Floyd Blosser’s home when I argued and defended myself before the truth of the Gospel, declaring that I was not a sinner. The incredible fact that now, 16 years later, I am an ordained minister helps me understand Isaiah’s words more fully. My conversion to Jesus Christ was the key that opened my heart to the work God wanted to do in my life and in that of my family, according to His thoughts.

Since I was the first person in a family of six children to accept the Lord, I was convinced that none of them would ever join me in this adventure. Happily my wife was already beside me! Only a few years passed, however, before all my brothers and sisters (as well as those of my wife Ina) opened their lives to the Gospel. They are all still following the Lord faithfully. Furthermore, one of my brothers, Pino Arena, has been a pastor for six

years in one of our Mennonite churches here in Palermo. God’s faithfulness far exceeds my own thoughts and dreams!

Through the years I felt the hand of God upon me, helping me understand His will for my life. His plan was to shape and prepare me for ever-increasing service for Him. I served on the leadership team of the Capaci Church for 10 years and more than six years on the team at Centro Agape where I was recently ordained to the ministry. Our team consists of the pastor and the church council. We thank God frequently for the spirit of unity that binds us together. My wife and I will be focusing our ministry on pastoral care and counseling to which we both feel a deep sense of call.

I would like to cite three things that have contributed to my spiritual formation. The first is certainly God’s faithfulness. The next would be the good training and discipling I received from Floyd and Janet Blosser, who committed themselves to that during their missionary service in Sicily. Last is the support and encouragement of our church fellowship in general, but especially of Willard Eberly with whom I often share my thoughts.

It is amazing to consider how God’s thoughts and ways of accomplishing His purposes in our lives go far beyond the limits of our human thinking!

• Franco Arena
Palermo, Sicily, Italy
translated and revised by Eva Eberly

Congregational Resource Center

Journey with Jesus during this Lent/Easter season. The Congregational Resource Center has resources to enhance your worship, children’s programming, and personal devotional time during this season of reflection and alleluia.

Stephen Shank’s nine-minute dramatic rendition of the passion of Christ is a lot different than Mel Gibson’s feature movie!

From Iona Community:

- **Stages on the Way:** Worship Resources for Lent, Holy Week, and Easter
- **The Courage to Say No** - songbook and CD

Other books:

- **Shadows to Sunrise:** Worship Resources for Holy Week
- **Returning Home:** Worship Resources for Lent based on the Prodigal Son

The “Reformed Worship” and “Church Worship” periodicals have a number of worship service suggestions and supplemental ideas.

There are a variety of monologues and dramas for this season. Don’t miss the ideas in the filing cabinet. The “Hymnal Subscription Service” 2001:2 includes resources for Lent/Easter.

The Resource Center is open 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Contact Kathy Weaver Wenger at 540-432-4219 or wengerkw@emu.edu to make arrangements for evening use.

Visit our website at www.emu.edu/mrcr to browse our catalog.

March 2004 Prayer Calendar

Sunday

By their fruit you will recognize them.

Matthew 7:16a (NIV)

Monday

1 The Worship Committee for Charlotte 2005 is holding its first meeting this week. Pray that Conference Youth Minister Kimberlee Greenawalt and others will think creatively and hear God's voice as they plan for this exciting event.

7 Keith & Tami Nice use the Serendipity Bible and the Gospel of John to lead Sunday evening Bible studies in Graham, NC, with neighbors and friends not involved in church. Pray that God will continue to guide their outreach efforts.

8 Willard and Eva Eberly have recently returned to their work in the Mediterranean region. Pray for them as they resume their responsibilities of giving leadership to the missionaries serving with VMBM.

14 Pray for Pastor Nana Sarfo and a group of believers from Ghana, West Africa, who are beginning a church in Alexandria, Va. They have been engaging in conversations about possible affiliation with Virginia Conference.

15 Pray for Joe Longacher and Jan Showalter as they represent VMC at the Constituency Leaders Council meeting in Missouri today and tomorrow. Pray for wisdom and discernment in their deliberations.

21 Pray for John & Marilyn Bender, co-pastors of Raleigh Menn. Church, who plan to move on this June after 18 years of fruitful ministry there. Pray for the congregation as they begin a pastoral search process.

22 Danny & Shirley Trobaugh know many people in the Ridge District around the Maranatha School in Jamaica. They are "beams of light" in this community. Ask for God's protection to cover them each day as they serve.

28 Pray for Steven and Karla Francisco as they give leadership to a new church plant by Calvary Community Church in Isle of Wight, Va. Pray for unity in the leadership team and for effective witness in the community.

Tuesday

2 Pray for Spanish-speaking immigrants who are coming to Durham (NC) Menn. Church to learn English. Pray for church members who offer the classes, provide a listening ear, and make computers available.

9 Pray for Ken Weaver and Steve Carpenter, Conference Coordinator, as they drive to Goshen, Ind., to learn more about COMB's transition to a Health Savings Account health plan for pastors and church employees.

16 Pray for Eastern Carolina Urban Ministries Director, Paul Godshall, as he explores church planting options in the city of High Point and elsewhere in the region. Pray also for the Church Planting Support Team he represents.

23 Pray for Eva Eberly and her Italian assistants as the final draft of the translation of "Exploring Worship" by Bob Sorge goes to press. Pray that there would be no delays and that publication and distribution would go smoothly.

30 Vernon Moyer of Hickory, N.C., plans to go to Jamaica to work on the wiring for the parsonage at Salters Hill. Your prayers are invited for him during his travels and work at the parsonage.

Wednesday

3 Pray for Francesco Picone as he teaches the final sessions of "Types and Shadows in the Old Testament" in the Leadership Training School of the Italian Menn. Church. Pray for the students as they apply these teachings to their lives.

10 In a small ice cream shop close to the Maranatha School in Jamaica, Philip Rhodes plays his guitar for the youth that gather for fellowship on Wednesday nights. Ask for Christ's presence to enrich these times together.

17 Continue to pray for Omar & Dolores Beiler as they meet the medical needs of various persons in Jamaica. Thank God for Omar's recovery from illness in January, and pray that God will enable them for their tasks.

24 Richard and Margaret Keeler are introducing Jesus to a family in Esperanza, Trinidad. Thank God for their eagerness to read the Bible, and pray also for their health and employment.

31 Pray for June Kropf, EMM missionary in Albania, who has faced the stress and grief related to the declining health of her elderly mother. Pray for Paul & June as they carry many responsibilities in Albania.

Thursday

4 The Jamaica Mennonite Conference is taking place this weekend. The worship through word and song is lively and powerful! Pray that Christ will be lifted up through everything that is said and done.

11 Thank God for Rajin and Sheriza Sookharry's willingness to preach in their congregation, Mennonite Church of Chaguanas, Trinidad. Ask for God's direction for them as they see His leading for training in the future.

18 Thank God for the gracious love extended to creation, including every human being. Ask how God may want to show that love through you today.

25 Pray for those persons who carry responsibility for the financial well-being of our church ministries. Development persons from a variety of Virginia Conference agencies are meeting together tomorrow morning.

Friday

5 Marion Bontrager is leading a Bible seminar in Eastern Carolina District tomorrow. Pray that the persons who attend will be strengthened and equipped for witness.

12 Pray for the Mennonite Mission Network board as they meet in Harrisonburg this weekend. This evening the VMBM board and staff will meet with the Mission Network board.

19 Conference Minister Owen Burkholder is speaking at the Leadership Conference of Steinbach Bible College in Manitoba. Invite God's grace for Owen and the leaders of congregations who attend.

26 Tomorrow Loren Swartzendruber is being inaugurated as president of Eastern Mennonite University. Pray that God would bless Loren, his wife Pat, and the entire EMU community.

Saturday

6 The MC USA Missional Church Team is meeting with the VMC Missional Church Team tomorrow evening in Harrisonburg. Invite God's blessing on outreach endeavors of our conference and denomination.

13 "Peaceful Rebellion," a peace workshop for youth, is being held this weekend in collaboration with VMC and Warwick District. Pray that the youth will be open to hearing the teaching by the speakers and workshop leaders.

20 Donovan and Maxine Smith pastor Salter's Hill Mennonite Church in Jamaica. Pray that they will have strength and perseverance as they relate to the people of this rural community and as they share the Good News there.

27 The Hmong Ministries Advisory Committee meets this evening in Asheville, N.C. Thank God for the good progress of this ministry in Hickory and pray that the committee will make decisions that will move the ministry forward.

This month's prayer calendar is sponsored by **Park View Federal Credit Union**, which provides full financial services to the Mennonite community with commitment to our shared values of mutual aid, integrity, efficiency, service, and innovation.

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Announcements

The sixth annual **Hymn Sing for Peace** will be held on May 22, 2:00-3:30 p.m., at the reflecting pool steps on the west side of the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. Come for a time of singing, listening, experiencing, and encouraging peace in our world. For more information, call 804-359-1308, e-mail leshorning@aol.com or visit peace.mennolink.org/hymnsing.

Turkey canning for MCC will be held at the Mennonite Relief Center, Hinton, Va., March 1-5. The designated day for members of Virginia Mennonite Conference to volunteer is March 2, but you are welcome to help on any day.

Due to the case of Mad Cow disease in the U.S., which has made exporting beef impossible, we will process turkey instead of beef.

Funds are needed to purchase turkey for processing. Please send your contributions to Mennonite Relief Center, P.O. Box 519, Dayton, VA 22821.

For more information, contact Leon Rhodes at 540-867-9751.

Missions Celebration

An evening of stories and song brought to you by Mennonite Mission Network and Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions.

March 13
7:00 p.m.
Park View
Menn. Church,
Harrisonburg

- >> **Video clips** from Mennonite Media and VMBM
- >> **Stories** by Rob and Celah Pence, Greg Lamb, Barbara Borntrager, Beryl Jantzi
- >> **Message** by Mission Network and VMBM presidents Stanley Green and Loren Horst
- >> **Music** by Daphna Creek, Shekina, Mike Eberly and Rick Picone

Spirit led!

Virginia Mennonite Conference Assembly and YouthFest

July 8-11, 2004

on the campus of
Eastern Mennonite University

spiritual inspiration... fellowship... workshops
... delegate sessions... lots of youth...
missions festival... children's activities
... and more!

www.vmconf.org/assembly

Celebration of Ministry Banquets—VMC and VMBM are pleased to celebrate the ministries of these great church leaders: Truman & Ruth Brunk (May 14 in Newport News, May 15 in Harrisonburg) and Harold & Arlene Eshleman (June 26 in Bridgewater, Va.). Letters of invitation will be forthcoming, but mark your calendars now and plan on attending these festive and inspiring events.

Loren E. Swartzendruber will be officially inaugurated as president of Eastern Mennonite University in ceremonies on March 27. The inauguration, to be held at 2 p.m. that day in the University Commons main arena, will take place nearly three months after Dr. Swartzendruber took office on Jan. 1 as EMU's eighth president.

