

# Connections

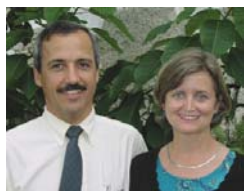
Virginia Mennonite  
Conference &  
Board of Missions

July 2005  
Vol. 15, No. 9

## Virginia Conference Assembly to be a time of fellowship

Join us for the 95th annual **Virginia Mennonite Conference Assembly** at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Va., July 28-30!

### Look for these VMBM workers:



Omar and Dolores Beiler, returned missionaries from Jamaica



Richard and Margaret Keeler on home leave from Trinidad



Phil and Marcia Lehman family on home leave from Italy



Allen Umble, returned missionary from Albania



MCTT President Ganese and Linda Gunpath, Trinidad delegates



Robert and Lois Wenger, appointed missionaries to Jamaica



### Also happening at Assembly:

There will be a **Commissioning** of teams and participants with

## Partners in Mission and

**transSend**  
a one-year mission program of VMBM

and new Virginia Mennonite Conference  
pastors and overseers

**Registrations are still being accepted.** Register at [www.vmconf.org/assembly](http://www.vmconf.org/assembly) or check with your church for printed forms. If you have questions, please contact [info@vmconf.org](mailto:info@vmconf.org) or (540) 434-9727.

# Piled up or sent forth?

The evidence of a successful church is not so much how many people we can pile up, but how many people we send forth. As a pastor, I once preached that message to my congregation. Such conviction is expressed near the end of all four Gospels and near the beginning of the book of Acts. "Sent" is the root meaning of "apostle." An apostolic church is the one that takes sending seriously.



**Loren Horst**  
President of VMBM

I recently attended the installation service of Howard Miller, the new pastor of Waynesboro Mennonite Church. At the fellowship meal after the morning service I spent some time talking to Mark Schloneger who has accepted the pastoral assignment at Springdale Mennonite Church. Just the day before that, I was in the home of Robert and Luann Yutzy who have accepted a pastoral assignment at Yoder Mennonite Church in Kansas. What do Howard and Carolyn Miller, Mark and Sarah Schloneger, and Robert and Luann Yutzy have in common? All six have been a part of Lindale Mennonite Church and are now being sent forth. Whether they remember or not, the church that heard that message some years ago is heeding the call.

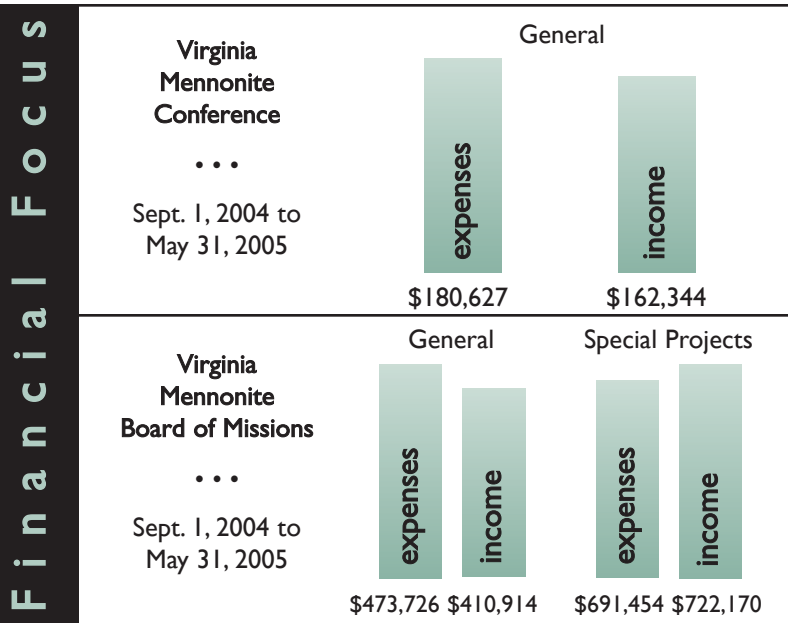
Our Anabaptist forbearers took sending seriously. For some time, their baptism liturgy included the Great Commission. By way of contrast, John Calvin thought the apostolic sending task was

largely finished in Europe. Martin Luther considered the Anabaptists "hedge preachers." Meanwhile, Anabaptists were going all over Europe sharing the good news. According to some reports, at one time Anabaptists outnumbered both Protestants and Catholics combined in the Rhine River valley.

That would change. Persecution took its toll. Prosperity too. Mennonites became "the quiet in the land." Our awakening of the last 100 years has been an awakening to the apostolic sending role of the church. Howard, Carolyn, Mark, Sarah, Robert, and Luann are not being sent overseas. They are nevertheless sent into new communities and into new settings in which they will be God's voice of good news to the world.

And this word of compliment. I overheard someone say recently, "It's good to see Lindale sending out some of her best." I agree—and note that they have many more!

*Loren Horst*



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## Stories of Peace

sponsored by the Peace Coordinators  
of the Virginia Mennonite Conference

If you have peace stories to share, please send them to  
Dave and Krista Powell at [ecopow@ecolc.net](mailto:ecopow@ecolc.net)



## A pacifist with a purple heart

I voluntarily joined the Marine Corps when I was in the tenth grade.

This was World War II. Everyone was angry with the enemy. If you (a young man) were seen walking down the street, people would wonder why you weren't in the service. Most young men went as part of the crowd, going with the flow.

I served in World War II and after that stayed in the reserves while I went to college. Then I fought again in the Korean War, where I was badly wounded from a mortar shell. I still have a purple heart on my license plate, because that is part of who I am. That doesn't mean that I approve of war.

During military training, they tell you that the American people are not killers, and that you have to learn to overcome your reluctance toward killing. The psychological toll to those in the service is terrible, and many never get over it. In combat situations, you become totally broken down, almost animal-like. This happens to a lot of good people.

War is not the answer to handling conflict. My father's generation served in World War I. They said then that it was the war to end all wars. But we had a second war because of that war. And now we have others. Violence does not end violence. I'm a criminal lawyer; I see that in the lives of people right now. Somebody will kill someone's uncle, and then three years later you'll see another murder come out of that one.

The people I served with didn't view Conscientious Objectors (COs) as yellow cowards. A lot of the people I was with did not really want to be there. I think we ought to treat service men and women well. You don't know if they're there because they want to be, or if they have changed their minds. Christian pacifists can provide an example of how Christ would have us to live, by treating everyone with love and respect. You're not going to bring anyone to Christ by not treating them like you would want to be treated. You can't help what other people do, but you can help what you do.

I am a pacifist now. I never even thought of questioning war until I came to the Mennonite

**A pacifist with a purple heart continued on page 3**



## Mt. Pleasant celebrates 100th anniversary

The Mt. Pleasant Mennonite Church around the time of its birth in 1905 (L) and today.

Mt. Pleasant Mennonite Church in Chesapeake, VA will celebrate its 100th anniversary the weekend of October 7-9, 2005. Its first service was held on September 17, 1905. The congregation has 298 members today.

The first Mennonite families who came to southeast Virginia were seeking inexpensive farmland. They did not come to join friends or relatives already living there, nor did they come with the expectation that a sizeable Mennonite community may develop. After the arrival of a few families, however, the idea of a new Mennonite colony emerged and then the immigrants began to convince friends and relatives from other Mennonite communities to come and share in the opportunities of the new frontier.

The people of Mt. Pleasant Mennonite Church are its history. Their story is not one of startling success or spectacular achievement, but slow, steady and determined progress in overcoming difficulties and developing resources inherent in Mennonite community life. The heritage and development of the congregation can be characterized by words such as faith, zeal, struggle, love, determination and hard work. This group of people has continued through the generations to make the Church the center of community life.

The Centennial theme is "100 Years of Building on Jesus Christ, Our Solid Foundation." The celebration begins on Friday evening with a music program. Saturday activities will include photo and artifact displays, a softball game, entertainment by the Hunt Family Fiddlers, and a program in the evening. The weekend will conclude with Sunday's worship service and a noon meal. We will all be challenged to anticipate God's faithfulness in the future. If you are interested in attending, you may call the church at (757) 482-2215 for more information and meal tickets.

• Linda Overholt

Mt. Pleasant Mennonite Church, Chesapeake, Va.

## Winchester to establish Immigrant Center

Edgar Sorto came to the United States in 1986 to escape his war-torn existence in El Salvador.

"I came without hope and without a future. That was the situation in my country," he said. As a new immigrant, Sorto settled in Arlington. "I was afraid, I didn't know where to go to get information," he added.

Nineteen years later, Sorto, now 36, lives a life he never dreamed of in El Salvador. Residing in a single family home in Winchester with his wife and two children, Sorto is the pastor of the Misión Cristiana Ciudad Deseada church near Berryville.

"When I came to the United States, I had time to reflect and to think about the spiritual area (of my life). When people talked to me about God, it was easier to open up my heart and accept God. And it's not just me, the majority of people I know have the same experience," he said.

"What I want to say is that not everyone comes here with bad intentions. The majority come here with needs. It's my experience, with the people in my church, most have changed their lives when they came to this country. This country becomes like a new start."

Examples such as Sorto, along with a growing immigrant population, have prompted an interfaith group of churches and the Latino Connection, a group of representatives from service organizations addressing the issues of the area Latino community, to consider opening an immigrant resource center in the Winchester area.

One of the organizers of the pending center, Maria Clymer Kurtz, member of Stephens City Mennonite Church, is very familiar with the immigrant population in Winchester. Kurtz works for Winchester Public Schools as the parent liaison for the English as a Second Language program. Stephens City Mennonite Church is one of the area churches involved in developing the resource center.

"Those of us who have been here a long time recognize the need in our community," Kurtz said. "Our community is changing, and change will continue to happen. On a personal level, it's important for us to show we want our immigrant neighbors here, to welcome them to our community, and to help them in their efforts to become established here."

The immigrant resource center is not a new idea. Kurtz said a similar center already exists in the Harrisonburg area and the Winchester center

could be modeled after the NewBridges Immigrant Resource Center in Harrisonburg.

In addition to helping immigrants, Kurtz said one of the goals of the proposed center is to also help educate residents in the area about immigrants. "We would really like to help our community learn about the immigrants and open their eyes to what life is like for an immigrant in our community. This program will benefit the whole community," she said.

• Melanie Mullinax, Special to the *Winchester Star*  
Adapted for *Connections*

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### A pacifist with a purple heart continued from page 3

Church. We weren't supposed to question it in the military. At first, the whole idea of pacifism was shocking. It takes some real courage to say that you don't favor war. What worries me is whether there will be any legal provisions for COs anymore.

It seems like Mennonites used to talk more about peace. It used to be when you said Mennonite, people knew where you stood. Now we're just like anyone else. The Mennonite Church had such a strong sense of moral responsibility, that they didn't take part in war. They had tremendous moral strength, but I fear that they have lost it.

• Story told by Gordon Poindexter  
Springdale Mennonite Church  
Waynesboro, Va.

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## Penny Power 2005 benefits children

Penny Power this year will help children minister and be ministered to in two countries, Italy and Bolivia. The VMBM project will benefit the ministry of Crystal and Christopher Lehman in Bari, Italy, the children of VMBM missionaries Phil and Marcia Lehman. Children play an important part in ministry—in their friendships with local children and the many opportunities they have for reaching out to them. Penny Power will assist them in this important, ongoing ministry. The MCC project will benefit an organization called PRONATS in Bolivia that helps working children with education and a positive place for fun and friends. This ministry helps "the least of these" and also helps their communities by providing a place for kids to be kids, instead of places of negative influences and crime. Support these ministries with your pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters, and dollars!

# Prince of Peace Revival

Members of at least six different Virginia Conference (Southern District) congregations attended a Sunday evening (May 29) “Prince of Peace Revival” held at Waynesboro Mennonite Church in Waynesboro, Virginia. After some rousing hymn singing from the amassed group, Ervin Stutzman, the Dean of Eastern Mennonite Seminary, provided a spiritual and informative message concerning the Anabaptist view of peace-making. He began with a view of the kingdom of God, focusing on the text from Matthew 4. He shared many more verses and stories that demonstrated the way in which Christ would have us live as people of peace, and then finished with the importance of putting Christ first in all that we do.

Calvin Shenk, a Bible professor at Eastern Mennonite University, then provided practical and challenging peace stories from his experiences in Ethiopia, Jerusalem, and here in the U.S.

After the service and refreshments, a small group of around 40 persons chose to remain to field questions to both Ervin and Calvin for nearly an hour. Participants were then encouraged to take these discussions to each of their churches. This meeting was also attended by local Amish Mennonites, as well as visitors from the community.

This was the second “Prince of Peace Revival” to take place in the Southern District in the past six months. Since the first Revival, an Augusta County Anabaptist Peace Fellowship has begun meeting more regularly to support each other and discuss further ways to promote this Christ-like view of peace.

Joe Arbaugh was instrumental in organizing this event at Waynesboro Mennonite. The Virginia Mennonite Conference Peace Coordinators encourage other churches and/or districts throughout the Conference to consider sponsoring similar events. This is one way of reaching out to our communities to teach the ways of the Prince of Peace, as well as encouraging our own membership toward a deeper commitment to a life of discipleship. If you would like further information on planning such an event, contact Dave and Krista Powell at (540) 941-3798, or at [ecopow@ecollc.net](mailto:ecopow@ecollc.net).

• Dave and Krista Powell  
Virginia Mennonite Conference Peace Coordinators



## Abundance and need

The mission of Gift & Thrift and MCC is to help the Christian community to recycle its abundance in order to be able to help those in need in the name of Christ. For this reason MCC encouraged us to relocate and “build bigger.” In our new location at 731 Mt Clinton Pike, with increased donations and sales, our net income has grown in 2004 by 97% over 2003.

A recent survey revealed that 50% of our customers shop weekly, 70% are looking for books, and 65% want housewares and/or women's clothing. Eighty percent believe the prices are fair. The Donor survey responses were no less interesting. Eighty percent know that the work of the Mennonite church benefits from the giving of their abundance.

So what's happening differently? Some of it is location. More of it is the faithfulness of volunteers and donors, and the untiring work of the interim managers. Most of it is the response of Christians who have a vision for meeting need in the world in the name of Christ.

We exhibit a “holy restlessness” when we look for ways to grow the mission. We obey Christ's command when we pray for more workers/volunteers to join the harvest. We proclaim the jubilee of our Lord for those in need in the recycling of our abundant resources. All of us at Gift & Thrift, and our partners in MCC, give thanks to our Lord for your faithfulness in letting us help you use your abundance for the needy in our world.

• Herb Swartz  
Gift and Thrift board member and volunteer

Inside A World of Good Thrift Shop, where volunteers give of their time to benefit MCC. The net income of Gift and Thrift, Inc., as the three organizations sharing the space are collectively known, has grown by 97% in a year thanks to increased donations and sales.



An example of “abundance” that Gift and Thrift, Inc. received from donations.

# EMHS promotes other cultures with Global Ed.

One of the distinctive features of Eastern Mennonite School is the Global Education program begun in 1992. The program was established to promote a positive view of other cultures and countries, to encourage awareness of changing economic and political situations around the world, to support a vision for worldwide mission and to develop an understanding of God's kingdom around the world.

The 2004-2005 Global Ed theme focused on the Middle East. The annual theme works best when implemented by many teachers in natural and appropriate curricular settings, including chapels.

The past year's Middle East theme was brought to life in a number of ways. One of the highlights was a Global Ed Fair, an annual event that showcased projects and presentations done by students on various topics surrounding the Middle East. Science students presented energy alternatives to oil; social studies students completed country reports; Food Science & Nutrition class made baklava, a Middle Eastern dessert, and shared it with the school. Other students made food, brought in artifacts and shared their experiences as part of the fair.

"Rare is it to walk into a high school or middle school, where students are actively studying another part of the world with the focus on

'how can we help make things better?' In the post 9/11 world, EMHS certainly is helping to further the dialogue so needed in this climate of hostility and fear," said Margot Kons, mother of a student in 7th grade.

"I am grateful for EMHS's international focus because of the interest graduates show in serving in relief and development and exchange programs around the globe...Students develop a vision for living and working internationally. Last year a new graduate joined MCC's Serve And Learn Together (SALT) program and is now in Indonesia working in a preschool and teaching English," said Ann Hershberger, board chair for Mennonite Central Committee East Coast and mother of two graduates and a current student.

Eastern Mennonite School invites you to visit the chapels throughout next year to get a feel for the international aspect of the school, meet students with international experience and talk with faculty about their own experiences. Next year's Global Ed theme is "Borders and Boundaries" to help students examine issues of immigration and getting along with our neighbors.

• Ben Bixler  
EMHS Communications

## Congregational Resource Center

### • Peace

**Thermostat**, a curriculum for high school age youth about war, peace, and Christian conscience, was recently released by Mennonite Central Committee. The curriculum features a DVD and study guide with Bible studies, role plays, stories, dramas, hand-outs, background reading and other activities. Topics include: peacemaking 101, imagination, allegiance, security, terrorism, camouflage and nonviolence. This kit may also be used in combined settings where youth and adults participate together.

Don't forget that the CRC has (nearly) all of Mennonite Central Committee's videos and kits available for use.

### • Drama for worship

**Old Testament Bible Sketches for Children** has twenty-four interactive scripts for youth and adults to perform for children. Great for VBS, Sunday School, kids club, children's church and more. **New Testament Bible Sketches for Children** is also avail-

able at the CRC. I've used the New Testament sketches and found that these are also appropriate for children, grades 3+, to perform.

**The Lamb and the Wolf:** readers theatre for worship has an array of New Testament scripts in the form of drama, readers theatre and monologues. Discover Jesus and his stories in a new way through these innovative writings.

**Sermon on the Stage:** more sketches and monologues based on familiar Bible Characters include fifteen 2-4 page scripts which look at Old and New Testament people. From the life of Lot to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, these dramas bring Biblical stories and events to life.

The Resource Center is open 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Contact Jill Landis at 540-432-4219 or [crc@emu.edu](mailto:crc@emu.edu) to make arrangements for evening use. Visit [www.emu.edu/semisary/crc](http://www.emu.edu/semisary/crc) to browse our catalog.



# Connections Prayer Calendar July 2005

## Sunday

**31** First Mennonite Church of Richmond is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the beginning of their church. Let us join them in thanking God for this milestone.

## Monday

This month's prayer calendar is sponsored by

**Galen and Gloria Lehman**  
in memory of their parents' tireless service in "home missions" that impacted lives for Christ for many years.

If you would like to sponsor the prayer calendar, contact [gloria.lehman@vmbm.org](mailto:gloria.lehman@vmbm.org), (800) 707-5535.

## Tuesday

**3** VMC and VMBM are serving as geographic hosts for Assembly, gathered in Charlotte, N.C. under the theme Can't Keep Quiet! Pray that the gospel will be proclaimed throughout NC, North America and around the world.

**4** Independence Day can remind us to be agents of God's peace in the world in which we live. Today "show and tell" someone how the Prince of Peace asks us to live.

## MC USA Assembly

**5** Keep MC USA's Moderator, Duane Oswald and Moderator-elect, Roy Williams in your prayers as they lead the thousands of gathered delegates in prayerful deliberation of the many issues facing our church.

**6** Pray for the hundreds of table group leaders as they facilitate delegates discussions and discernment. Today's topics include: speaking to government and the partnership between MC USA and MC Canada.

**7** Some topics for the delegate sessions tomorrow will include: approval of a new Mountain States Mennonite Conference, interaction with youth, and relationships with other Christian churches.

## Wednesday

"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Hebrews 10:25 (NIV)

## Thursday

## Friday

**1** Remember Phil and Marcia Lehman who are on "home assignment" this summer, visiting many churches, family and friends. Pray for adequate financial and prayer support as they return to Italy for their third term of service.

**8** MC USA's Assembly ends tomorrow. Pray for the Listening Committee as they report on God's leading this week and where they discern His direction for the Mennonite church.

## Saturday

**2** Pray for traveling mercies as church and conference representatives gather from all across North America for MC USA's 2nd biennial delegate assembly which begins on Monday in Charlotte, N.C.

**9** Families often go on vacation during July. Pray that family bonds will be strengthened and that they will find spiritual and physical refreshment in the time away from usual responsibilities.

## Sunday

**10** Thank God that the junior youth at Charlotte '05 made school kits for the Albanian children that Norma Teles works with. These kits will encourage them to go to school. Pray for Norma as she interacts with children.

## Monday

**11** This week will be the "Settimana Felice" (VBS) at Centro Koinonia (Bari). Pray that it will be an effective means of touching the children and their parents with God's word.

## Tuesday

**12** A team of 6 from Sicily will assist with the "Settimana Felice" (Happy Week) in Bari. Pray for spiritual unity and good team work; for a spirit of joy and cooperation among the children.

## Wednesday

**13** The LEAP program opens today at EMS. Pray for the high school youth who are doing theological and vocational reflection. Avi Jaimani from Trinidad is a participant along with 39 other young people.

## Thursday

**14** Ask God how you can reach out to your neighbors, in keeping with the theme of the VMC Assembly. Listen for His direction and seek ways of being involved in your community.

## Friday

**15** Pray for Willard and Eva Eberly as they give leadership at Centro Koinonia (Bari) this summer in the absence of missionaries.

## Saturday

**16** Highland Retreat and Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center offer camping experiences for children and youth that open eyes and hearts to God's nature and to His Word. Pray for the campers and staff as they interact.

## Sunday

**17** Richard and Margaret Keeler will share this morning at Valley View MC, Criders, Va. Their work in Trinidad is bearing fruit in the lives and hearts of those who seek the Lord. Thank God for the Keelers' ongoing ministry.

## Monday

**18** A team for VBS teaching is in Jamaica assisting the churches with this outreach. Pray that God will bring many children and youth to the Bible school sessions, and that they will respond to the Gospel message.

## Tuesday

**19** Pray for Willie and Barb Keener who returned to Albania for the summer with their family, to assist in the leadership of the church in the villages near Lushnje.

## Wednesday

**20** The Charleville Mennonite Church in Trinidad is holding VBS this week. Pray that the teachers will have the energy and wisdom for teaching the eager children that come.

## Thursday

**21** If you are a grandparent, you have the privilege of influencing two generations. May God grant you wisdom and grace.

## Friday

**22** Jason Martin family will terminate their missionary service in Bari around this time. They need your prayers as they say goodbye to the people of Centro Koinonia and their many friends.

## Saturday

**23** Skip and Carol Tobin and three daughters are preparing to go to SE Asia on August 3. Hold them up in prayer for a smooth transition into their assignment and for full financial provision.

## Sunday

**24** Pray for Robert and Lois Wenger as they prepare to go to Jamaica to assist with classes at Maranatha School for the Deaf, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica. They will be commissioned in their home congregation, Riverside MC, Harman, WV

## Monday

**25** Thank God that Bro. Rawl and Sis. Linda Gunpath will be at VMC Assembly, arriving today. Bro. Rawl is president of MCTT. Sis. Linda teaches theology and counseling classes.

## Tuesday

**26** Today Monica Unzicker and Krista Swartztruber return from nine months of service with the Maranatha School for the Deaf, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica. Pray for them as they make the transition back to the US.

## Wednesday

**27** The VMC Assembly gathers tomorrow at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. Ask for the anointing of the Holy Spirit on Moderator Beryl Jantzi as he brings the message at evening worship.

## Thursday

**28** Pray for Conference Minister Owen Burkholder as he leads those gathered at VMC Assembly in Bible study from the Gospel of John under the theme: Sent! Across the Street Pray too for speaker and pastor Natalie Francisco.

## Friday

**29** MMA's Stewardship Minister, Lynn Miller will address VMC's delegates in closing worship tomorrow. Pray that his message will be used of God in the lives of all those gathered.

## Saturday

**30** Thank God for the gathering at Conference Assembly and the fellowship of the churches in the Conference. Pray for safe traveling as many return home today.

## VMC Assembly

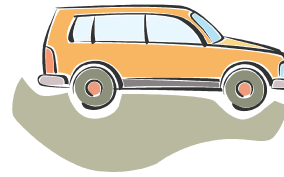
# Announcements

**New Hope Fellowship** of Alexandria, a church planting effort headed by Pastor Kirk and Marilyn Hanger, celebrated their first anniversary of public meetings in Bryant High School on April 24. Approximately 100 persons, including representatives from Virginia and Franconia Mennonite Conferences, a district overseer and local Hispanic pastors, attended this celebratory service honoring God's work in their midst. Congratulations on achieving this milestone!



Experience the beautiful Shenandoah Valley and ride in the eighth annual **Bike Shenandoah 2005 Cycle for Service**, September 24. The proceeds will benefit four organizations: Mennonite Media, Mennonite Central Committee, Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions and the Harrisonburg Pregnancy Center. Register now by visiting [www.bikeshenandoah.org](http://www.bikeshenandoah.org) or call Laura Moyers at (540) 434-9727.

**Books Abroad** is still looking for money to purchase discontinued hymnals for the Jamaican Mennonite Church. They would like to meet a need of 800-900 books, at a cost of \$2 each, which covers postage. Can you help meet this need? Contact **Books Abroad** at 901 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 or call Melba Heatwole at (540) 828-2999.



**Virginia Mennonite Conference** is accepting donated cars. If you have a used car or truck that you no longer need, why not

give it to the Conference? VMC will go through the hassle of selling it and you will receive a tax deductible receipt for the full selling price. It's a great way to recycle an underused car while supporting the ministries of the Conference. Contact Steve Carpenter at (800) 707-5535 or (540) 434-9727 or [steve.carpenter@vmconf.org](mailto:steve.carpenter@vmconf.org).


## Pastoral Transition




**Howard Miller** was installed as lead pastor of Waynesboro Mennonite Church on June 12. He previously served as Associate Pastor at Lindale Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, for 10 years. He and his wife Carolyn have a daughter, Hannah, and a son, Josh.

# 2005 Penny Power


**Collect coins for Penny Power!**




a project  
of MCC



This year's projects will help children from Italy to Bolivia.



a project  
of VMBM



**Help us raise \$16,000!**

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