

# Connections

Virginia Mennonite  
Conference &  
Board of Missions

August 2006  
Vol. 16, No. 10

## *Sending and receiving: globalization of mission*

*Fourth in a series of five articles on Doorways in Mission*

A recent week saw the convergence of two things at Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions. At a staff meeting, note was taken of a *Christianity Today* article pointing out that South Korea is now only narrowly behind the U.S. as a mission-sending nation—and will soon overtake us. Only a couple days later a South Korean mission agency asked for a meeting at VMBM to share their vision for recruiting mission workers in the U.S. for assignments around the world. Cost to the mission candidate is only the airfare.

These two bits of evidence are indicators of a rather huge shift that is going on in the world. It is now well-known news that the church of the two-thirds world is now the church of the majority world. North American Christians are now in the minority. The rest of the Christian world is now the majority. The next step to that shift could have been predicted. In light of the fact that the outreach capacity of a church is greatest in its early years, it should not surprise us that the mission impact of the global church is mushrooming. The movement of the Spirit is showing dynamic energy and growth in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

These two huge shifts, the emergence of the majority of Christians now in the majority world, and the explosion of mission passion from this majority church, predicts a third major movement as we are gaining a firm footing in the 21st century. North America will increasingly be considered a mission field.

Of course, North America as a mission field has been understood for some time. We have known that many persons who are not Christians, or who don't live like the Christianity they profess, live among us. We have witnessed the moral decline and bankruptcy of many segments of our own culture prompting concerned Christians to regard their own communities as needing the redemptive touch of God's saving grace. Also, immigration has brought to some of our communities a diversity of

backgrounds and faiths formerly encountered mostly by foreign missionaries.

What we will see increasingly is the presence of mission workers from the rest of the world working among us. Today, some of the largest churches in Europe are led by people of non-European origin. The largest church in Ukraine is pastored by a Nigerian. The same can be expected to happen in North America. Christian mission from the rest of the world will come to us, both to challenge us and to change us.

What then of North American mission agencies like VMBM? Obedience to a radical and New Testament faith will continue to compel us to call out and send forth workers from our North American Mennonite churches. That call is fundamental, and any decline in zeal is a measure of the decline of our own spirituality. But agencies will need to go further. VMBM is trying to gain the expertise and wisdom to receive missionaries, not simply send them. In addition, VMBM is learning how to cooperate with the sending of non-North American mission workers to non-North American locations. As one person has said, we are now seeing mission from six continents to six continents. The place of the faithful church in the global context will involve sending, receiving, and partnering together with others for the cause of the Kingdom.



• Loren Horst  
President, VMBM

# There is no script for this...

These were the words of a church leader facing some imponderable experience.

Matthew 14:24-33 is the story of Jesus walking toward his disciples on the water. The disciples were terrified! Only the reassuring voice of Jesus could calm them. And Peter makes a half-faithed effort on the same surface. This experience was nowhere in the frame of reference for the disciples. There was no script for it.

Our world seems to be running without a script. Change, change, change...we are promised nothing but change these days. And the problem-solving methods we have used to date may not be fruitful tomorrow. Yet we are called to be non-anxious and hopeful.

I am willing to assert that the only way forward is Jesus. How do we discover the presence of Jesus in the storm that seems to be our lives?

Our spiritual formation friends point us toward practices. If there is a document that takes us as close to the person of Jesus as we can get, a growth practice would be reading that document. It took me five years to read through the Bible devotionally this last time. As I am beginning again, I am finding new things—very likely related to the new life experiences I've had.

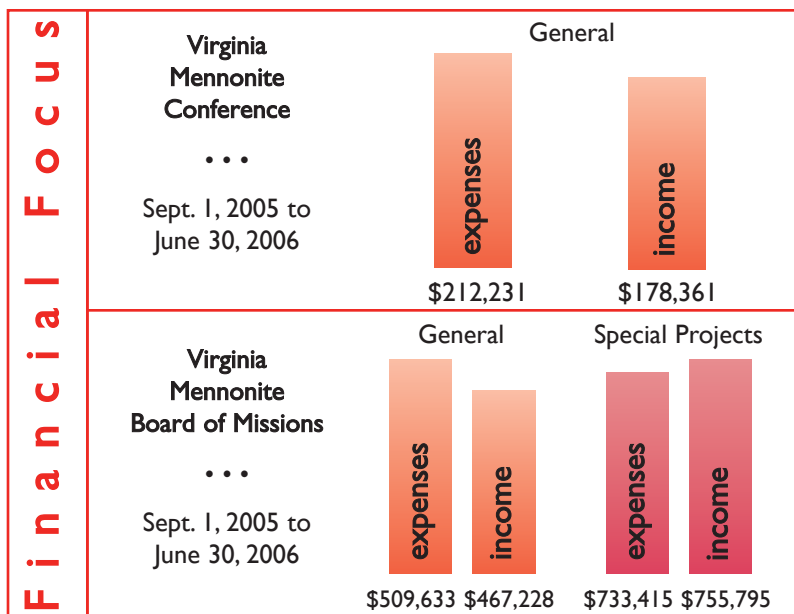


**Owen Burkholder**  
Conference Minister

Now, the Bible isn't saying anything about the latest technological advances. But as I have become familiar with the character and actions of God through the scriptures there can be some wise responses to these new challenges. There is even greater security in studying the scriptures together and pooling our life experiences.

We also cultivate the presence of the Holy Spirit by the practices of prayer and praise. Imagination can be rekindled as we wait expectantly. Out of that imagination may come a way that was up until now obscured.

There is no script for the lives we live. But there is a scripture that points us toward a reassuring presence. This Jesus, we affirm by faith, is the one whom we will meet at the end of our tumultuous lives. He can be trusted with the journey.



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## Ribbon cutting opens CrossRoads Welcome Center

### A four-year-old and war

*Note: This is a condensed version of an email Harvey and Alma Jean Yoder received from her sister Freda Zehr.*

My grandson Dax and I were talking recently about a picture in the paper of a football star planning to enlist in the army. Evidently four-year-old Dax had been worrying about people having to go to war and fight, so he asked, "Do soldiers just kill the bad guys?" Without waiting for an answer, he went on, "The reason I don't want to be a soldier is because I wouldn't know who the bad guys or the good guys are, so I might shoot the wrong person. And I wouldn't want to even shoot a bad guy, anyway."

Then he said, reassuringly, "There is never any war in this country. It's only over in countries where there are no children (his voice suggested a note of 'I hope so, I hope so'). Because the reason you can't have a war where children live is because you might kill them by accident." He then added, "Oh yes, I forgot, there was a war once in this country, but that was before any children lived here, because I saw the cannon down in Harrisonburg. They shot big things out of it, but it didn't hit any children because there were no children living here then. It was about a million years ago. And anyway, I could never be a soldier," he went on, "because you have to have millions of money to fly over in those jets and I don't have any money, and daddy and mommy don't have enough money, for me to do that. Besides, all the wars will be over by the time I grow up, right Grandma?"

To which I replied, a bit shaken, "Dax, I certainly hope so."

"And you know," he concluded, "I will be too short to be a soldier when I grow up, because my mom is short and my daddy is not tall."

Later, having by then scanned more of the article, I told him, "Oh, here it says this man didn't have to go to war after all, Dax. It says that he had a bad knee that got hurt in a football game."

"So I don't need to worry do I, grandma, because you have to have good knees, and I have a sore knee (no one had heard this before), and you have to have lots of money and you have to be real, real tall like Uncle Jay (who is 6'4") and anyway, there will never be any more wars by the time I grow up!"

"Yes, Dax, we hope so. And no, Dax, you won't have to go to war."

On the warm afternoon of June 18, Becky Hunter and assistants cut the ribbon to officially open the CrossRoads Welcome Center to the public.

Following a welcome by Board President Robert Alley, Program Committee Chair Norwood Shank

gave thanks to the Myers family—and to God—for bringing us to this point in the journey of creating a heritage center.

The Daniel Myers family donated the Burkholder-Myers House and paid to have it moved up the hill, he said, adding, "Time would fail me to mention all who helped to make the Center a reality." He expressed a "heartfelt thank you" to all who contributed to the effort.

Representing the Shenandoah District of the Church of the Brethren and the Virginia Conference of Mennonite Church USA were James Miller and Steve Carpenter, respectively.

After a dedicatory prayer by Robert Alley, some 150 guests browsed the new displays in the Center, viewed a video on Brethren-Mennonite history in the Valley, visited other buildings on the site, reminisced over historic artifacts, and enjoyed refreshments.

The CrossRoads Center, 711 Garbers Church Road, Harrisonburg, Va., is regularly open to the public Wednesday through Saturday, 10 a.m.- 5 p.m.



(above) Becky Hunter cuts the ribbon to dedicate the CrossRoads Welcome Center.

(below) Ruth Stoltzfus Just signs the guestbook at the dedication.



• J. Allen Brubaker  
Marketing Director, CrossRoads (VBMHC)

If only we could, for certain, assure every four-year-old like Dax that there could never, ever be a war where there were children. Meanwhile, he has to make himself believe that no caring, sensible adults will ever let that happen.

• Harvey Yoder  
Family of Hope, Harrisonburg, Va.

## Bridging the centuries

In May, a group of 18 persons from Pennsylvania, Indiana, North Carolina, and Virginia spent a week in Nazareth, Israel, working in the Nazareth Village: a reconstructed first century Palestine working community. The village contains a threshing floor, olive groves and operating press,



The group of 18 that spent a week at Nazareth Village, Israel.

authentic houses and synagogue, vineyard, watchtower, and the original wine press which existed at the time of Jesus. Dressed in garb of the day, we pulled weeds and carried them out by donkey, moved rocks, built a roof, tended the sheep and goats, wove cloth and participated in the daily life of the

village, giving us a real appreciation for the culture in which Jesus was raised.

One day we took a bus tour around the Sea of Galilee and made stops at many biblical sites, sat on the Mount of Beatitudes, and waded in the waters of the sea and the Jordan River. The gospels come to life in a new way when one experiences the sights, sounds, and people of which Jesus loved and spoke.

After the week in Nazareth, we traveled down through the Jordan River Valley to the Dead Sea and then west into the mountains to Jerusalem where we spent one full day touring and experiencing the tensions and richness of the city of the three great monotheistic religions.

Sunday evening we drove through the wall and check point into neighboring Bethlehem, almost a suburb of Jerusalem, yet a world away. Here we experienced the Palestinian frustration of being controlled by an outside authority, much as in Jesus' day. In Bethlehem, we stayed at the lovely International Guest House by the Christmas Lutheran Church—just blocks away from the Church of the Nativity and the city square. Each morning we volunteered at the school and wellness center and spent each afternoon sightseeing, shopping, and talking with the local Christians and Muslims—shop owners, college presidents, tourist policemen, and those whose homes and livelihoods were being cut off by the ever-encroaching “wall” around them. Our hearts went out especially to the Palestinian Christians who could leave to join families around the world, but wish to stay to help keep hope and Christ's light alive in this dark time.

We returned home thankful to have never felt endangered during this journey and encourage others toward such experiences of bridging biblical stories of the centuries past with the current realities of life in this region.

• Mim Wenger

Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro, Va.

## Because of Jesus

(online version deleted by request)

### Storytelling Visits:

If you would like to schedule a storytelling visit from the Nazareth/Bethlehem Work Group for your congregation, please contact Dorothy Jean Weaver at [weaverdj@emu.edu](mailto:weaverdj@emu.edu) or at (540) 432-4276.

# Because of Jesus

(online version deleted  
by request)



From left to right: Richard Keeler, Linda Gunpath, Ramesh Jaimani, Reena Mohammad, Nate Yoder.

## Leaders awarded degrees

This spring two leaders from the Mennonite Churches of Trinidad and Tobago (MCTT) were awarded bachelors degrees from the West Indies Theological College, Santa Cruz, Trinidad. Ramesh Jaimani, who is pastor of the Charlieville Mennonite Church and president of the General Church Council, earned his degree in theology. Reena Mohammad, who is a member of the Hope Mennonite Church and secretary of the General Church Council, earned hers in Christian Education.

As the culminating project to four years of study, each student completed a thesis. Brother Ramesh wrote on “First Generation Christians: The Struggle of Hindu Converts to Christianity.” His research included personal interviews with fifty-five persons who have been involved with the five congregations making up the MCTT. Ramesh preached at the Thursday night opening session of the Virginia Mennonite Conference Assembly in July. Sister Reena developed a “Vacation Church School Manual” as her thesis project. Leaders in the MCTT look forward to applying what she has learned in the annual Bible schools which are important parts of the church’s nurture and outreach.

The Mennonites hosted this year’s baccalaureate service on Sunday, May 21, at the Diego Martin Mennonite Church with Nate Yoder from the faculty of Eastern Mennonite Seminary delivering the sermon. The graduation ceremony followed later in that week. Mennonites have been collaborating in training Christian leaders with the WITC, a school sponsored by the Church of God (Anderson, Ind.) for a number of years. Richard Keeler, longtime VMBM missionary in Trinidad who has taught ten years on the school’s faculty, was honored with a plaque for his service on his retirement. Linda Gunpath, the acting dean of WITC, is the wife of Mennonite pastor Rawl Gunpath.

• Nate Yoder

Mt. Clinton Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

# Collaboration and co-therapists at FLRC



Matt Brill and “co-therapist” Larry the Cucumber.

I am the latest staff addition to the Family Life Resource Center in Harrisonburg, Va. I serve in Jesus’ name as a therapist with adolescents and their families. At times I work exclusively with the

parents and occasionally invite the child into the session. In other instances, the entire family is involved in the process. I don’t treat the child while the parents are in the waiting room. I engage the parents as part of the “treatment team.” They are, after all, the experts when it comes to knowing the child. I find that my “co-therapists” benefit from being included instead of excluded. Most importantly, the child and the entire family benefits from the collaboration.

I am a firm believer in family traditions and consider family rituals as a part of the “foundational cement” that keeps families together. Many of the folks who come to spend time with me eventually relate some breakdown in the family routine. One current trend is that families rarely eat an evening meal together due to conflicting schedules. I recall a family didn’t “break bread together” because they all had televisions in their bedrooms

and watched their favorite programs on different channels during dinner. I’m mindful of how families create their sacred space.

I’m a stickler for parents being the adult authority in the home. This perspective rubs a few folks the wrong way for some reason. My clinical background is rather rigid in this regard: the parent is the adult authority in the family. They need to keep that role solid in the early years of having children. As the child develops into adolescence, the parenting style needs to adjust to be more flexible, even though the parent has the final say. More sophisticated methods of parenting the adolescent are required. Parenting a sixteen-year-old like a five-year-old is a setup for failure on the part of the parent and child.

Foster parents and their children in temporary or permanent foster care, parents with children who have different forms of autism as well as those with different levels of mental retardation, and counseling parents who have a child that has been labeled as “gifted” are other areas that I serve. It would be an honor and a privilege to meet you and your family and serve in His name. You may contact me at Family Life Resource Center by calling (540) 434-8450.

• Matthew C. Brill, L.P.C.  
Family Life Resource Center

## Congregational Resource Center

### Adult Education

[That the World May Know - Faith Lessons](#), now on DVD! "Filmed on location in Israel, an in-depth video tour of the buried, distant, or otherwise forgotten places where the stories of the Bible actually happened. Teacher and historian Ray Vander Laan challenges long-held Western assumptions about even the most well-known Scripture passages. You will simply never read the Bible the same again." DVD Lessons include:

- The Promised Land
- Prophets & Kings
- The Life & Ministry of the Messiah
- In the Dust of the Rabbi
- Death & Resurrection
- Early Church
- Walk as Jesus Walked

- The True Easter Story
- The True Christmas Story

### Missional Church and Pastoral Leadership

- [Missional Leadership: Equipping your church to reach a changing world](#) by Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk
- [The Sky is Falling: Leaders lost in transition](#) by Alan Roxburgh.

### Worship

- [Homiletics](#): periodical with resources to assist with preparation of sermons and worship services.

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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.



# Connections Prayer Calendar August 2006

## Sunday

This month's prayer calendar is sponsored by

**Dick and Wanda Good, who serve in various ways as a response to the call of Christ in their lives. They provide "a cup of cold water" where and when it is needed.**

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

## Monday

**6** The Stephens City Korean Mennonite Church is taking the first steps in establishing a congregation. Pray for James Rhee as he gives leadership to this in addition to working full time.

**7** On this Canadian Civic Holiday, pray for our Canadian neighbors. Ask God to bless our cooperation and commonality both as the larger Mennonite church's shared goal of sharing the Good News, and as nations.

## Tuesday

**1** This week Nancy Marshall is holding VBS for deaf children in Orange Walk Town, Belize. What an awesome new experience for the students! May they learn that Jesus loves and cares for them.

**8** Pray for the Chris and Melody Riddle family who were recently appointed to serve as missionaries in Bari, Italy. May God bless this step of faith with an outpouring of prayer and financial support.

## Wednesday

**2** Laura Kauffman, VMBM *TravelSend* participant and MMIN worker, plays a key role in putting together health kits and designing health workshops for families as a ministry of the La Mesa MC in Colombia. Pray for this budding project.

**9** The junior youth of the Jamaica Mennonite Church is meeting this week on the campus of Maranatha School for the Deaf. Pray for this week of fun, fellowship and worship that nurtures young people in faith.

## Thursday

**3** Pray for Francesco and Martha Picone and Andon and Angelina Rrapokushi as they return to Italy and Albania following their visit to Virginia and participation in the Virginia Conference Assembly and Missions Festival.

**10** "I was in prison and you visited me"—pray for the caring persons who share Christ's love to those incarcerated. Is there a way for you to be involved?

## Friday

**4** The "family reunion" of the Virginia Mennonite Conference is over, and the warm fellowship, inspirational messages and challenging Bible studies remain fixed in our minds. Thank God for this good Conference Assembly!

**11** Pray for the new friends Willard & Eva Eberly have made through an English conversation class they held in their home in Bari. May these friendships be bridges for sharing Jesus Christ.

## Saturday

**5** Many seeds were planted in children's lives during "Happy Week" activities (VBS) in various Italian churches. Pray that they will spring to life and produce faith in many hearts.

**12** Lord, help us to have a healthy balance of work and leisure so that we may be effective servants of Yours.

**13** The five churches of Mennonite Church of Trinidad and Tobago are meeting together this morning as the culmination of the Annual General Meeting. Thank God for the good spirit of work and worship at this gathering.

**14** Two youth from the Mennonite Church of Trinidad are attending the senior youth camp in Jamaica. Ask God to bless this exchange and to help them build bridges of fellowship across the Caribbean region.

**15** Today Paul and Esther Kniss and Orval and Dorothy Shank leave their ministries in Trinidad and return to Va. Thank God for the mutual learning and sharing that happened as they were involved in ministry there.

**16** Intercede for Ron and Blanche Nyce who've begun a meat packing business in Montenegro in order to encourage economic development and share God's love. Many obstacles challenge these objectives.

**17** Richard and Margaret Keeler have returned from the UK where they visited with family to Trinidad. Ask God to bless them as they re-engage in the Bible teaching and leadership ministries they have with the church in Trinidad.

**18** Remember Sonya Harnish as she returns to Albania for another term of missionary service, this time in the capital city, Tirana. Thank God for her willingness to share her life in this way!

**19** Pray for those who have yet to receive the Good News. Consider going online to <http://www.global-prayer-digest.org> to learn how to pray for unreached people.

**20** Pray for pastors and lay leaders in the congregations of Virginia Mennonite Conference. May they be led by the Holy Spirit as they strive to lead God's people.

**21** Thank God that the Mennonite Church of Chaguanas has found a space to rent that facilitates church meetings and activities. This is an answer to earnest prayer.

**22** Pray for the Mennonite elementary schools in Va. Mennonite Conference as they are opening this week. Ask God to bless and guide the teachers, students and volunteers as they begin this new year. May great things happen in the months to come!

**23** Jamaica Mennonite Church is seeking leaders for several congregations. Ask God to direct them in the search for capable people to serve.

**24** Believers in the Congo ask us to remember them in their trials and turmoil. Pray for their well-being.

**25** Ask God to direct VMBM as the Board and staff seek to reach into frontiers where the Good News is desperately needed.

**26** Materialism creeps into every aspect of life for us American Christians. Let's encourage each other to combat its prevalence.

**27** The end of the church year means that some Sunday school teachers are ending their service. Ask God to bless their faithful work.

**28** The fiscal year of VMC and VMBM ends this week. Can you help to reach the budget goals? Thank you.

**29** Dini and Klementina Shahini, Albanian believers who live in the US, have a vision to return to Albania to establish a Christian school. Pray for clear guidance and wisdom as foundational plans are made.

**30** Classes begin today at Eastern Mennonite University and Seminary. Pray that the administration, faculty, staff and students will be energized for a year of spiritual and academic growth.

**31** Pray for young people across the U.S. who are going into MVS, Service Adventure, YES, *TravelSend* and other types of service at this time of year. May God enlarge their understanding of His work and world.

**For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.**

*Psalms 139: 13-14 (NIV)*

## Announcements

Come to the **Virginia Mennonite Relief Sale**, Oct. 6-7, 2006, at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds. Enjoy auctions, booths, great food and fun, all while supporting the work of Mennonite Central Committee.

### Pastoral Transitions

**Carolyn Lyndaker** was ordained at Crest Hill Mennonite Church, Wardensville, W.Va.

**Brett Perrett** was licensed towards ordination on June 15 for ministry at Stuarts Draft Mennonite Church, Stuarts Draft, Va.

**Dennis Kuhns** was installed as pastor at Lynside Mennonite Church, Lynchburg, Va., on July 9.

### Service Transition



**Sharon Kniss** will be serving with the Bridge Builders Programme at London Mennonite Centre in England. She is serving in partnership with the *transSend*

program of VMBM and Mennonite Mission Network. She is a member of Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

## 2006 Penny Power



We are hoping to raise \$22,000 for this year's *Penny Power* projects. In 2005, congregations contributed **\$22,834.09!** We hope to continue the effort and momentum from last year.

- Collect jugs for your church from the Conference Center, 901 Parkwood Dr., Harrisonburg.
- Highlight *Penny Power* during your Sunday morning worship service. Involve the children in your church. Ask for a DVD of Nancy Marshall's deaf ministry from VMBM.
- Contact Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions at 540-434-9727, 800-707-5535, or [info@vmbm.org](mailto:info@vmbm.org).

## Join the annual Bike Shenandoah 2006 Saturday, September 23, 2006

Begins and ends at Eastern Mennonite School  
801 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Registration information:  
[www.bikeshenandoah.org](http://www.bikeshenandoah.org)

Choose between five courses from 5-100 miles  
and benefit the following agencies:

Mennonite Central Committee  
Mennonite Media  
Roberta Webb Childcare Center  
Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions



Contact Laura at  
(540) 434-9727  
or toll-free  
(800) 707-5535

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