

My search for spiritual reality

By ANNA DE GIGLIO
As told to EVA EBERLY

“What do you want out of life anyway? Don’t you have everything you need? You have me, our son Francesco, a good job, our apartment!” Thus my husband Pino approached me for my despondency.

My mother tried to help by giving me a rosary to put under my pillow. The images I had of various saints did nothing to relieve my growing sense of emptiness and restlessness. To hide my insecurities, I created a mask of exterior perfection with makeup, jewelry, and beautiful clothes. I had no idea how to satisfy my intense desire for deeper realities and values.

Thirteen years ago, driven by this spiritual thirst, I began searching in earnest. I meditated and wrote my thoughts in a journal. Reading them now, I realize that God was already working to bring me to Himself.

Three years later we received a page-a-day Scripture calendar from a believer who said it would perform miracles in our lives! This was my first contact with God’s Word. Then my good friend was converted through her neighbor’s witness! Besides giving me a Bible, she was a fountain of truth for my thirsty soul as she passed on what she was learning.

As I surrendered to Jesus, He showed me what was missing, what needed to change, and began filling me with everything my heart desired but never had. God’s grace is transforming my life, and that of my entire family—the greatest gift of all!



Anna and Pino De Giglio in their home where they host an evangelistic Bible study.
Photo by Willard & Eva Eberly

Through much prayer, Francesco was liberated from a dangerous lifestyle of wild entertainment and drugs to live for Jesus! Little by little the miraculous change in me and Francesco won Pino’s heart. God healed our marriage, rescuing us from the brink of divorce. Now there’s true love, unity, and understanding between us as we serve God together at Centro Koinonia.

I want to encourage you who are reading my story to seek God with all your heart and invite Jesus into your life. Humbly admit your failures, your restlessness, anxieties, and insecurities. This gives Jesus permission to make you a new person and transform your life—the most wonderful thing that can ever happen to you!

Pino & Anna De Giglio are members at Centro Koinonia, Bari, Italy, where Pino is treasurer and council member. Anna joyfully serves God with her gift of evangelism and intercession. Francesco who works in Rome, prepares for marriage to a Christian girl!



Anna (center) with her sister (right) and her friend she met and evangelized on the beach.

Photo by Willard & Eva Eberly

Pace of change



Loren Horst
President of VMM

I thought my father saw unprecedented change in his lifetime. Born in 1916, dying in 2002, he plowed with horses and later owned cars, remembered seeing his very

first airplane and then owned and flew one, experienced the Great Depression and the Great War, and then was taught how to use email before he died. He handled it all with grace, more or less.

I am told the pace of change is accelerating, meaning the changes my father saw hardly hold a candle to what I will see in my lifetime, or my grandchildren will see in theirs. I got a sobering reminder of that recently. My children laughed when I said, "I still use email." This accelerated pace of change has many downsides. I experience some of them as I struggle to keep up with technology, language, and the speed of life in general. For every possibility for good there seems to be an equal and opposite opportunity for evil.

Still, I think the present holds some great possibilities.

- Almost everyone I meet has an awareness of the world (God's world!) that exceeds anything known 50 years ago. Many have seen it personally.
- While exposure can deaden emotion, it can also prompt unprecedented compassion and response in God's people (who love God's world). Witness the response to the disaster in Haiti.
- Almost every church I know really does try to live unselfishly in this world, serving God before themselves. Some are more successful than others.
- Communication possibilities allow personal interaction multiple times per day with our friends around the world (also God's family). Today I extended condolences to two friends, one on the other side of the U.S. and the other part way around the world. One responded within minutes.
- The sheer potential for Christian witness has grown phenomenally with the possibility of communicating in seconds with the number of people formerly touched in generations.

I recently witnessed one more little picture of this accelerating change, this time in our own conference.

Thirty years ago I remember church planter retreats, attended by white folks of germanic background. True, we were

doing our best and some were reaching people of color, but those folks weren't present and witness was mostly one-way, or so we thought.

At a more recent church planters' retreat I witnessed 34 people of various hues, including 6 or 7 languages of prayer, and 10-12 countries of origin. And we called this "USA ministries!"

This change too is upon us, the globalization of the church and the acceleration of ministry from the world back to us. Fifty years ago we were all pretty much the same and thought witness was pretty much one way, from us to them. Today we have no such illusion. Some we send. Many we receive. The Gospel is proclaimed in wonderful diversity. And the church looks more and more like Pentecost!

Loren Horst



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	Sept. 1, 2009 to May 31, 2010			
	Virginia Mennonite Missions	Mission Fund	Special Projects	
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A season of remembering

By **NICHOLAS DETWEILER-STODDARD**

Summer is a season of commemorating sacrifices. Memorial Day and the July Fourth are set aside to honor those who suffered loss hoping to better the world through military means. As Anabaptists, we have often disagreed with the premise that violence can yield a better society and find ourselves in an awkward position during these months. But, if Memorial Day is really about those who suffered great loss to protect a way of life and the Fourth is partly about freedoms, let us use this season to remember those who understood and pursued freedom differently because of Jesus.

In their more than 175 years, numerous Virginia Conference Mennonites

found it impossible to cross religious beliefs with military service and many suffered for it. In one instance as the US fell into bloody Civil War, the Confederacy continued Virginia's practice of mandatory conscription but removed the exemptions allowing Mennonites to opt out. Virginia Mennonites were faced with a great conflict between their religious beliefs and the laws of the Confederacy—neither had room for compromise.

By spring 1862, VMC included this in their Confession of Faith: “[We] are ready and willing, as loyal subjects to submit to and obey government in all things lawful, and that does not oppose the doctrine of Christ and the dictates of [our] conscience...But when we are demanded to take up the sword, and go to war against

our enemies and slay them, we think it our highest duty in this to obey God rather than [humans].” With this conviction, 72 conscientious objectors abandoned farm and home, fleeing to Ohio in the night. They were captured in West Virginia by Confederate cavalry and sent to languish in prison in Richmond. After long months, legislators finally granted CO exemption but not before the Mennonites had lost their horses, life savings, and a season of crops.

May these summer months be a time of commemorating those VMC forebears who resisted militarism, suffering for a better kingdom through Christ-like means.

Zion celebrates 125 years with special homecoming

By **MANDI STOLTZFUS**
Zion Mennonite Church

May 30 marked the 125th birthday of Zion Mennonite Church in Broadway, Va. On Sunday, May 23, Zion welcomed those from near and far to worship and fellowship for an historical homecoming celebration.

Sunday school was replaced by a worship hour with everyone gathered in the sanctuary. Elwood Yoder presented a picture slide show of Zion from 1960-1980. An anniversary video, created by Clay Showalter, showed interviews of current members talking about Zion's impact on their lives.

After a short break, the second worship hour included the children's choir led by Dorothy Hartman and Patty Baer shared a “birthday party” children's story. Scripture was read by Betty Byler, whose late husband, Jesse, was lead pastor from 1961-66. Clyde Kratz, though currently on sabbatical, rejoined the congregation to deliver the morning message. A special part of the service was the recognition of Elwood Yoder, for his dedicated and indus-

trious completion of the book, *We're Marching to Zion: A History of Zion Mennonite Church, Broadway, VA, 1885-2010*.

The fellowship was energetic and animated as the congregation moved from the sanctuary to the fellowship hall where the noon meal awaited. A display area included items such as old Zion directories, pictures and stories written by longtime Zion members. Elwood was available with copies of his book for purchasing and signing. Especially important were the conversations and memories shared with former members who came to celebrate. After the meal, Welby

Showalter recognized Jim Rush for his outstanding organization of the day's events. Then anyone who wanted to share stories and memories from the past could do so, with many laughs resulting! Despite the rain, a red oak tree, donated by Elwood & Joy Yoder, was planted outside by the children as a symbol of hope and new growth, a fitting way to end a celebration of devotion to our Lord.

Jim Rush plays a tape during the time of sharing and memories.



Courtesy of Mandi Stoltzfus



The group attending the annual Church Planters Retreat at Highland Retreat. Photos courtesy of Ed Bontrager

Church planters own their call

By **ED BONTRAGER**
VMM USA Regional Director

It was an amazing cacophony of sounds as participants at our second annual Church Planters' Retreat offered grace for our Monday lunch in seven languages. It was noted that none of the languages was German or Pennsylvania Dutch!

Virginia Mennonite Missions' USA Ministries hosted this year's 24-hour meeting Sunday evening through Monday evening June 6 and 7 at Highland Retreat. Thirty-three persons attended, including two families.



Kirk Hanger and Juan Carlos Malvaez

for many years as a missionary. Because some attendees were Spanish-only speakers, Kirk provided simultaneous translation through headphones.

Skip and Carol Tobin, Global Ministry Associates for VMMissions, who served in Southeast Asia for twenty years in church planting and discipleship, made it clear that our work cannot be successful unless we follow Christ's example of truly loving those we try to reach. We all enjoyed Carol's get-acquainted games, as well as their meaningful devotionals.

Church planters took their turns, telling about the challenges and the rewards of serving Korean, Lao, Hispanic, English-speaking, and Hmong people, as well as the homeless. They have found that the key for being effective and successful in developing a strong church is possessing a virtuous character. Kirk Hanger said, "We can easily destroy by our character what we have developed with our gifts."

CrossRoads celebration lays first logs of 1829 house

By **ALLEN BRUBAKER**
CrossRoads Marketing Director

A ceremony to mark the placing of the first logs for the 1829 Weaver-Brunk Log House drew 80 persons to celebrate this historic event on May 28.

Raymond Martin, a member of the Old Order community who lives near Bridgewater, Virginia, is overseeing the reassembly of the logs. He expects to have the house under roof by late fall. The house was taken down in 1999 to make room for a new elementary school near Weavers Mennonite Church.



Ron Deputy, Dick Good, Ray Martin, Emery Yoder and Cal Redekop lay the first log. Photos courtesy of Allen Brubaker

The house takes its name from Samuel Weaver, the first sexton of the church, who built it. His daughter married a Brunk and thereafter the house's owners were Brunks. The house and an adjacent (ca.1800) Cobbler Shop to be reconstructed near the house, will form the center of stories regarding the early Mennonite and Brethren pioneers who first settled near Luray, Virginia, and then in the Flat Rock area in the 1770s. These stories include the one of Preacher Johns Roads. His family lost eight members during an Indian attack in 1764. They gave their lives in peace rather than kill their attackers.



Diane (Good) Weaver shares memories of growing up in the log house.

Introducing the 2010-2011 class of



Note: BLESS (Biblical Lands Educational Seminars and Service)



Emily Gingrich
Serving in Prague, Czech Republic

Emily will work with teaching English, mentoring youth, a karate club, and Bible teaching. Beginning December 2010, in partnership with Eastern Mennonite Missions.



Betsy & Philip Fisher Rhodes
Serving in Nazareth, Israel

Philip and Betsy will serve at Nazareth Village, with the Jesus Trail, and the BLESS program. Beginning September 2010.



Marsha Kanagy
Serving in Kaiserslatten, Germany

Marsha will join a church planting team, work with Bible studies, and children's and immigrant ministries. Beginning Dec. 2010, in partnership with Eastern Mennonite Missions.



David Shenk
Serving in Quito, Ecuador

Working with Colombian refugees, in partnership with Mennonite Mission Network. Beginning November 2010.



Malerie Plank
Serving in Siguatepeque, Honduras

Malerie is returning to Hospital Evangelico, Siguatepeque, Honduras, in August to serve as a nurse.



Phil & Terry Witmer and family
Serving in La Mesa, Colombia

Phil will work with agriculture and Terry will work at the school. Beginning November 2010, in partnership with Mennonite Mission Network.



commissioning

tranSend participants
& mission workers

Thursday, July 15, 2010

7:00 p.m.

outdoors between shady oak
& weavers mennonite church
2501 rawley pike, harrisonburg, va



a taste of missions

- margarita pizza
- baklava
- pineapple
- quesadillas
- obstkuchen
- pita and hummus
- coffee

Enjoy music by
Root Side Up
a contemporary group
from Grantham, Pa.

Thursday, July 15
after the commissioning service



The EMHS touring choir performs.
Courtesy of Mary Golden-Hughes

Filling big shoes (and bus seats, too)

One of the school's strategic goals is to bolster the academic, co-curricular program and community reputations of EMES, EMMS and EMHS. As Jim Collins says in bestseller *Good to Great*, this involves getting the right people on the bus and in the right seats. Last year, the economic recession forced significant staff cutbacks across the school.

Through this belt-tightening, and the subsequent re-framing of several open, unfilled positions, the school's administrative organizational structure has been modified to provide more classroom support for our teachers and students. We have also been able to restore cutbacks in our library, personal and academic counseling services. Finally, the Advancement Office has been restored to a full staff to allow in-house development, marketing communications, public relations, alumni relations and admissions counseling.

A thumbnail sketch highlighting our new administrative model is below:

Head of School: Paul Leaman

Director of Academics: Patsy Seitz

Director of Advancement:

Mary Golden-Hughes

Associate Director of Development:

Diana Berkshire

Director of Business Affairs:

Mike Stoltzfus

Business Office accounting:

Susie Hardy

Elementary School Principal:

Maria Archer

High School Principal: Sherman Eberly

Additional teaching faculty changes are in place.

Other faculty and staff changes, expected as budget and personnel allow, include the recruitment of a new Admissions Counselor as well as the part-time appointment of a Middle School Principal.

Eastern Mennonite School has long been blessed by a remarkable team loaded with talent, passion and commitment on every bus seat! Please join the school community in welcoming and supporting these new appointments as we all strive to fill shoes, stay on mission and charter our bus on paths that best represent the premises on which the school was founded.

By MARY GOLDEN-HUGHES

Director of Advancement
Eastern Mennonite School

J. Ernest Martin's retirement this year leaves huge shoes to fill. Because it is impossible to replace in full the insight, know-how and passion that such a pivotal educator brings to an organization, Eastern Mennonite School announces a new organizational structure that strategically positions the school while strengthening its mission.

Working with the aftermath of the earthquake

By GLORIA L. LEHMAN

VMM Caribbean Regional Assistant
Adapted from *Daily News-Record*, June 4, 2010

On May 17, Lonnie Yoder, associate dean of Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Eldon Stoltzfus, former MCC country representative in Haiti currently in Goshen, Ind., Shelley-Ann Peart James, lay leader in Jamaica Mennonite Church, Joe Arbaugh, long-time worker in Haiti currently in Verona, Va., and Elizabeth Showalter, a cheese shop worker in Stuarts Draft, Va., went to Haiti to provide support and resources to church leaders. The team was organized by Virginia Mennonite Missions and partially sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee.

The group offered four days of seminars with quake survivors in Port-au-Prince. These sessions were designed to help Haitians deal with grief and despair

brought on by the January 12 disaster by sharing their stories of the catastrophe, which claimed an estimated 230,000 lives.

The team heard incredible stories of pain, suffering and death. Ninety participants attended the seminars held at Quisqueya Chapel, an interdenominational church in the city's northeast section. They opted to gather on a lawn outside the building, instead of meeting inside.

In a setting where tents serve as houses and rubble rules the landscape, Lonnie marveled at the residents' unnatural grit. "I was amazed by the ability of the Haitian people to go on with life, in spite of the incredible challenges," he said.

"As long as there are Haitian people,



(left to right:) Shelly-Ann Peart James, Kerby (Haitian translator), Elizabeth Showalter, Eldon Stoltzfus, Joe Arbaugh, and Lonnie Yoder

there is hope. The Haitian people have gone through hundreds of years of suffering. It's going to be very hard work [to rebuild] but I trust that as a people they will work through that," said Eldon Stoltzfus.

There is a call to repeat these seminars which were deeply meaningful to the persons who attended.

Sunday

This month's prayer calendar is sponsored by



Monday

4 Peace Sunday:
In our noisy world full of tough rhetoric, let's pray today for peace in all sectors of life. We can encourage each other to find the "third way" [see page 3].

5 A team from Mt. View (Va.) MC is assisting with VBS at the Ridge MC in Top Hill, Jamaica. Ask God to give them the energy needed each day as they teach Biblical lessons to community children.

11 Pray for Jason Gerlach, VMC's half time Conference Youth Minister, as he takes youth from Community MC on a trip to New York City. Jason works half time as CMC's Pastor of Youth Ministry.

18 Today Norma Teles and Allen Umble will share with the Mt. Clinton congregation about ministries in Albania. They are both committed to God's Kingdom work in this country. Pray for them.

25 Today a *Partners in Mission* team is in Trinidad, ready to assist the Carlson Field and Charlieville congregations with VBS. May all who participate see Jesus in a new and dynamic way.

Tuesday

"For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding"
Proverbs 26

6 Jamaica Mennonite Church members ask us to pray for peace in Jamaica and for the protection of all people from the violence that recently flared in that country.

13 Willard & Eva Eberly share "Components for Long-Term Service" in the *TranSend* orientation today. Their years of experience qualify them to provide this information. Thank God for them.

20 Ask God to give Mark and Sarah Schoenhals, VMM/EMM workers in Bangkok, courage to continue talking with people as they are learning the Thai language.

27 Pray for the leaders of Mennonite Church of Trinidad & Tobago as they plan for the Annual General Meeting of the church, Aug. 6-8.

Wednesday

1 Thank God for an uplifting VMC assembly last week in Raleigh, N.C. The workshops and worship services inspired the delegates sessions informed, and God was honored throughout the assembly.

8 Summer can be difficult for congregations as many members are on vacation. Pray for the church leaders who may struggle to provide meaningful worship services and pay their staff during this time.

15 *Taste of Missions* is held this evening after the commissioning program at Weavers MC. Come and taste foods from places where VMM has ministries and meet persons who are commissioned for service.

22 Tomorrow Chris, MaryBeth, Mynor and Mario Moore travel to Belize to assist Nancy Marshall with VBS for the Deaf community. Thank God for their creative gifts and their willingness to serve in this way.

29 Rodney & Lindsey Nice are in Va. for rest from their diligent work at the Maranatha School for the Deaf, Jamaica. Pray that they and their children will be restored in this setting.

Thursday

2 In May, Michael & Ruth welcomed baby son, Gabriel, into their family. Ask God to bless the family, including big sister Lia, as they continue to serve in Metal City, South Asia.

9 Skip Tobin asks us to pray for Pastor Joi in Southeast Asia as he encourages others in the Life Enrichment center. Ask for spiritual fortitude and protection from every evil hindrance as he serves Christ daily.

16 David Yoder meets with each pastor in the Mennonite Church of Trinidad & Tobago monthly. Thank God for his keen interest and clear communication in these settings.

23 If you have reserved, come and enjoy "Mid-Summer Night Mediterranean Celebration" at Dayton MC, 6:30 p.m. Hear Willard & Eva Eberly's ministry stories and support them with your presence and contribution.

30 Willard & Eva Eberly have returned to Bari, Italy, for continued service there. Their lives give witness to our resurrected Lord, and many are touched by this. Pray diligently for them.

Saturday

3 Shirley Roth has returned to the US from her service as director of Nazareth Village, Israel. Ask God to bless her transition to a new community and job.

10 Orientation for VMM's *TranSend* participants begins today. Ask God to be very present and to give Ken Horst, director, insight and wisdom as the orientation continues through July 15.

17 This month, Rose Jantzi, RAD and *TranSend* participant, returns to Va., having completed her service in San Lorenzo, Paraguay. Thank God for her work there, and ask Him to bless her transition.

24 Tomorrow Dr. Myron Augsburger will speak at Warwick River Mennonite Church as part of VMC's 175th anniversary celebration. Pray all may rejoice in the Godly heritage they have received.

31 As the heat of summer envelopes you, pray that sinners may repent, as it says in Acts 3:19: "Repent and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord."



Connections (USPS 007-205)
 Virginia Mennonite Missions
 Virginia Mennonite Conference
 901 Parkwood Drive
 Harrisonburg, VA 22802-2498

Announcements

You are invited to a **Mid-summer Night Mediterranean Celebration**, Friday, July 23, 6:30 p.m., Dayton Mennonite Church Fellowship Hall. Taste panzerotti and focaccia, enjoy Mediterranean music, and get acquainted with God's people in the Mediterranean region. Opportunity will be given to contribute financially to Willard & Eva Eberly's ministry in Italy. Reserve your place by July 19 by contacting Willard & Eva at (540) 434-9727 or at willard.eberly@vmmissions.org

Music Weekend will be October 22-24 at Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center. Participants will focus on Harmonia Sacra selections. The weekend will culminate in a performance at Warwick River Mennonite Church on October 24 at 3 p.m. Visit www.wcrc.info or contact Jenn Hill at (757) 566-2256 for more information.

A 45-minute **Vespers service of music and meditation** will be held each Sunday evening during July and August in the amphitheater in the woods at CrossRoads, 1921 Heritage Center Way, Harrisonburg. The public is invited. Each service begins at 7 p.m. Bring a lawn chair. In case of rain, meet in the nearby Whitmer School. www.vbmhc.org, (540) 438-1275.

Experience a **"Wonders of Greece and Turkey"** tour, November 3-14, 2010. See the world of the the Apostles Paul and John as we visit Troas, Pergamum, Smyrna, Ephesus, Patmos, Rhodes, Crete, Athens, Corinth, and present-day places like Istanbul, Kusadasi, the island of Santorini, and more. For a brochure, contact Ed and Edie Bontrager at eebontrager@comcast or call (540) 438-8304. Visit the web site at www.travelventuretours.com



You are invited to attend a celebration at **Warwick River Mennonite Church**, Newport News, Va., on Sunday, July 25. Festivities begin with worship at 10:30 a.m. with Dr. Myron Augsburg speaking. It continues with a fellowship meal at 12:30 and concludes with a "Heritage Celebration" at 2 p.m. featuring: a recognition of the 1910 VMC meeting at WRMC, a tribute to Bishop Truman and Ruth Brunk, scenes and music from *Pieced Together* and a large centennial photo display.

As the celebration of Virginia Mennonite Conference's 175th anniversary continues, **Valley View Mennonite Church**, in Criders, Va., will host a celebration of the history of the four churches in the Highland Cluster of VMC's Northern District, on Sunday, August 1, 2-4 p.m. There will be displays from each congregation (Big Spring, Crest Hill, Valley View and Zion) and light refreshments will be served. All are invited to this free event. Those interested in learning more about Valley View's history may also attend their morning worship service that day at 11 a.m. with Sunday school beforehand at 10:00. Questions should be directed to Michael Shenk at (540) 434-0578.

PENNY POWER

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2010

Matching funds multiply jug contents!

Spare change makes a difference!

Bring jug to:
Virginia Mennonite Relief Sale
 Rockingham County Fairgrounds
www.vanreliefsale.com

Projects are ministries of:
 Mennonite Central Committee www.mcc.org
 Virginia Mennonite Missions www.vmmmissions.org