

Dwelling in unity in a divided land

By ERIC TRINKA
 Leader of Partners team to Israel/Palestine

This year's Partners team to Palestine and Israel embarked on a twenty day journey focused on studying the role of Christians in the realms of Empire. Through home-stays with both Palestinians and Jewish settler families, members of the group engaged poignant questions like: What are the roles of Christians in the midst of conflict? What is the essence of the concept of security? Ultimately, we worked to develop a response to this broader inquiry: How does the life of Jesus in first century Roman-occupied Palestine correspond with life in twenty-first century Palestine and Israel?

It is the chief role of Christians to be a source of unity in a place where division is the status quo. We arrive at this place by means of another paradox: The message and actions of Jesus are undeniably political in their manifestation but the impetus

The old city of Jerusalem.



of Jesus' message and actions are undeniably apolitical in nature. How are these seemingly oppositional claims reconciled? Sitting just a stone's throw from the Temple Mount, our team converses, recognizing that politics play a role in reaching an end to the conflict and that our actions as Christians in the region have political implications. Despite these realities, we discuss our personal reluctance to present political solutions. Instead, our choice remains to unyieldingly focus on the furthering of the Kingdom of God through building relationships with those we encounter.

To this end, we challenge each other with questions about our roles as believers through the stories of the individuals we have befriended along the way. Could it be that the Kingdom of God works toward its fulfillment as we spend time celebrating Shabbat in the homes of gun-carrying Israeli settlers or sharing in worship with the same folks in a make-shift shipping container synagogue? Is the Kingdom of



The Israel/Palestine group near the Temple Mount, standing on an ancient road through the market area. Jesus would have walked here. Photos courtesy of Phil Kniss

By PHIL KNISS
 Team participant to Israel/Palestine

This journey to Israel-Palestine, as a group of six new-found friends from the Harrisonburg area, fulfilled a life-long aspiration for Irene and me. This was no "Disneyland" tour of the Holy Land, like many busloads of Christians we saw, who swooped in and out of tourist sites and shrines with scant awareness of the local people and culture. We lived with West Bank Palestinian families for six days, lived with Jewish settler families for a weekend, visited a refugee camp, drove through war-ravaged Golan Heights, volunteered at organizations. We worshiped in churches and synagogues, and breathed prayers for peace upon hearing frequent Muslim calls to prayer. Once I shared a public bus seat with a young Israeli army commander, an M-16 rifle resting on his lap. My conversation with him was deep and mutual and lasted one-and-a-half hours, touching on family, faith, peace,

Let's *transForm* missions and transform the world



Loren Horst
VMM President

When Shawn and Laura Green first tested their call to long-term missionary service through a one-year internship with *tranSend*, they discovered that nearly 50% of the support needed for their serv-

ice was already in place. The *tranSend* grant fund was ready, covering up to 50% of the cost of one year internships for up to 10 persons per year. Shawn and Laura became involved in ministry in local churches, improved in language and became more acquainted with their host country and culture. God nurtured in their hearts a sense of call to long-term missionary service. They plan to return to Italy early this next year.

VMMissions' *transForm* program is a support initiative intended to provide up to 50% of the support for long-term workers similar to the way we now support *tranSend* internships. VMMissions is creating a hybrid support model, combining the best of the new and the old. VMMissions' *transForm* missions pro-

gram addresses a weakness in the current "relational giving" model, that longer-term workers may find increased challenge in their support network at precisely the time when their service is becoming most fruitful. I expect that *transForm* will play a part in transforming the world.

Transforming the world is an ongoing process, applying Holy Spirit and Biblical insight into current needs and contexts. As such it is always new, and yet probably never completely novel. West Liberty (Ky.) Mennonite Church was birthed as a Virginia Mennonite Conference congregation in 1980. Its predecessor congregation, Crockett, was birthed in 1949. Hardly new. What is new in the West Liberty congregation is a tornado that devastated the town and community on March 2, 2012.

Earlene and I visited West Liberty recently and saw the lingering affects of the tornado. Much of the town is still in ruins. The local elementary school is destroyed. We heard stories of members seeing neighbors homes "blow up." Miraculously, only 6 lives were lost, but still, six lives! The West Liberty congregation is working hard in response to the needs of their community. They also need help from others. MDS has responded. VMMissions has designated 50% of Penny

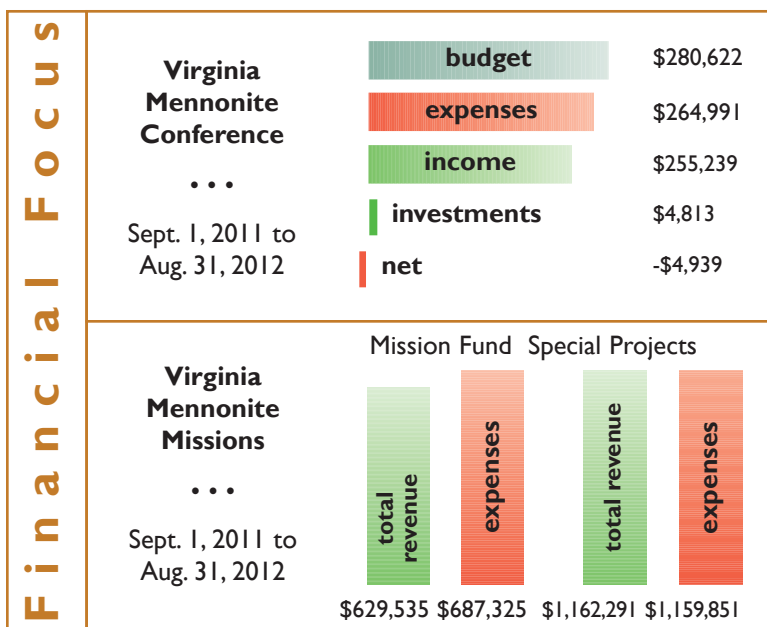
Power to assisting this congregation as well. Mutual Aid, we call it, and it too is a kind of hybrid, combining the gifts and abilities of a local congregation with the help of the larger church. In the process, this church and its community will experience transformation.

Two kinds of transformation, and each plays its part in God's larger plan. Both give each Virginia Mennonite Conference member an opportunity to participate—for God's Kingdom and Glory!

Jan Liskey joins VMM as Director of Finance



Jan Liskey began as Director of Financial Services for VMMissions on August 13. Jan graduated from EMU. She has worked in financial services at EMU and Harman Construction. Jan and her family are active members of Mt. Clinton Mennonite Church.



These are preliminary figures, not final for the end of fiscal year 2011-2012.

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Election Day Communion seeks to unify a diverse church

By KEVIN GASSER
Pastor, Staunton Mennonite Church



Every day is filled with choices, some of which have a greater impact on our lives than others. Every day we must choose what to wear and what to eat. Every day we must choose whether or not to follow Jesus.

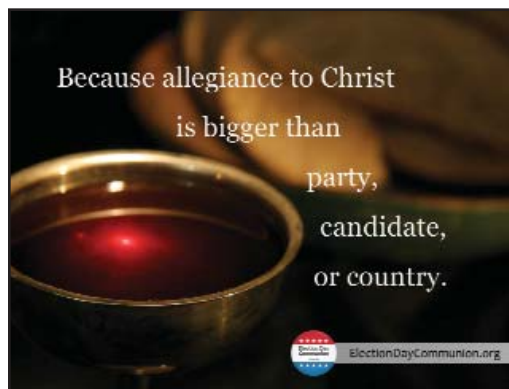
On November 6th, citizens of the United States will be invited to make another choice: they will be asked to make a choice for president of the United States.

Every four years we witness the power that politics has to divide this

nation. This division causes many of us to feel uneasy. Every four years we witness the power that politics has to divide the Church. This division causes many of us to mourn.

What kind of witness might it be for people of different political and theological persuasions to come together for a simple act of remembrance, to participate in a Communion service on Election Day? Yes, the issues that divide us are important; we would not care so much about them if they weren't. I'm not asking anyone to stop caring about these issues, nor do I remember Jesus asking his disciples to agree about everything all of the time.

But Christians have a higher calling. We are called to seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness. This is about something more important than a presidential election. This is about something bigger than our differences. This is about



our primary allegiance to a King and a Kingdom. And I believe that sharing in the bread and the cup is a political statement that proclaims the lordship and the reign of Jesus Christ.

I invite you to join me at the table on November 6 as a witness to the world that what unifies us is stronger than what pulls us apart. Will you choose to join me?

For more information, please go to www.electiondaycommunion.org

Jasmine Harris mentors girls through MCC service term

Excerpts taken from a blog post
By SUSAN WADEL
summerserviceworkers2012.wordpress.com

Jasmine Harris, a sophomore business major at Eastern Mennonite University, returned to her home congregation of Calvary Community Church this summer through Mennonite Central Committee's Summer Service Worker Program. Under the guidance of Denise Gibson, she helped with the overall summer program, working specifically with "God's Rubies," a club of girls in grades 4-6. Denise came up with the acronym for the group name - God's Righteous, Unique, Blessed, Influential and Elegant Sisters—God's Rubies indeed! One of the goals of God's Rubies is for girls to learn about the beauty of being a child of God.

Jasmine created a curriculum that included faith and life lessons. She helped the girls memorize eight statements of faith, such as "I am...a child of God," and led them in developing life skills. One



Jasmine Harris with two of her "God's Rubies."
Photo courtesy of author

such skill was etiquette, including proper table settings for a meal. Drawing from her experience working in the dining room at Eastern Mennonite University, Jasmine's concluding activity for the summer was an elegant lunch where God's Rubies practiced the many skills they learned.

"We are convinced that you don't have to go halfway around the world to make a difference. The need is right here and right now. We believe you have the gifts, talents and passions to change your world, to change your community."

- from Summer Service Worker Program webpage

The girls responded warmly to Jasmine by opening up and holding great conversations about their lives with her. Although her specific assignment at Calvary Community Church has concluded, Jasmine isn't finished using her gifts to empower girls to develop in faith and life. This fall she hopes to become a mentor through the Big Brothers Big Sisters program, an outreach of the United Way in Harrisonburg, Va.

transform missions

an initiative for the support of long-term mission workers

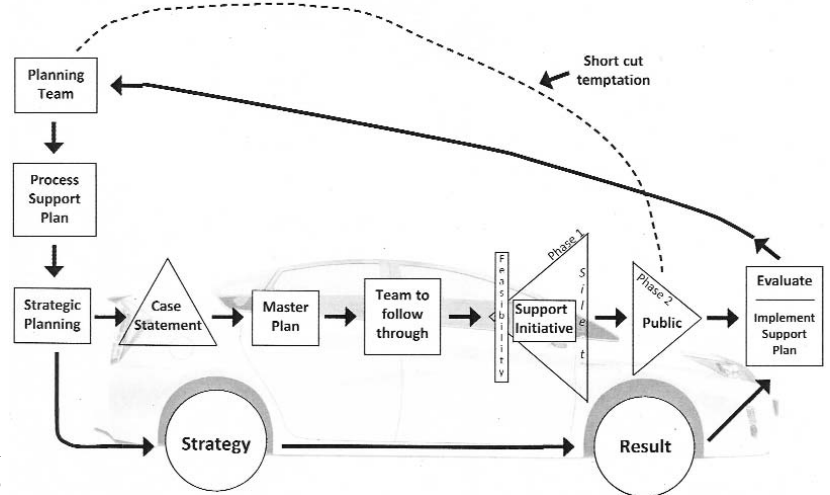
By JANET STUTZMAN
VMM Director of Development



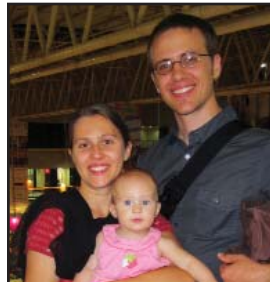
Mission Support Teams provide mission workers with great spiritual, emotional, and material support. **But long-term funding is a challenge.**

Therefore, VMM is projecting a plan...

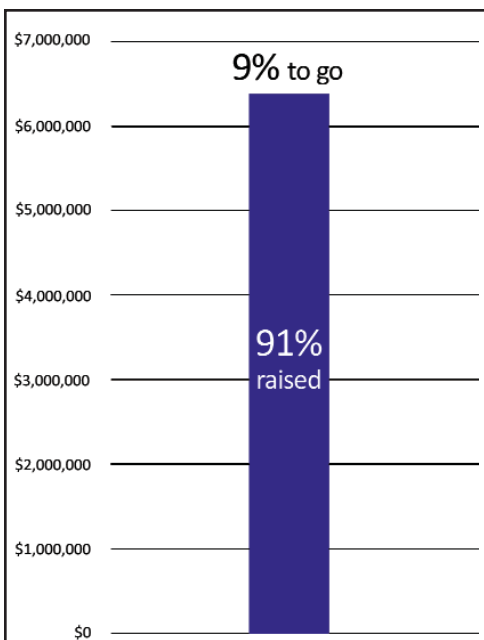
Building a Hybrid



...to create a **hybrid model** of funding long-term mission workers...



...a model that has proven **very helpful** in the way we have funded workers who go out under *tranSend*.



Concept: Provide long-term workers with up to 50% of their support through a more robust general Mission Fund, grants, and endowments. Endowment earnings supplement the support provided by the Mission Support Teams.

Goal: Establish a “family of endowments” totaling \$7,000,000.

Where we are today:

- \$3,000,000 In hand on October 15, 2011
- \$1,500,000 Committed as of October 15, 2011
- \$1,876,000 Added Gifts and Plans through August 31, 2012
- \$624,000 Still needed to complete this goal

An invitation: You are invited to contribute to the goal of providing support for long-term workers, through an immediate gift, a monthly or annual plan for adding support to the work of missions, or an estate plan that contributes a portion of your estate to missions.

Mission in the middle

By THERESÉ WITMER

Served in Colombia with VMM / Mission Network

Always remember what you have been taught. Don't let go of it. Keep safe all that you have learned. It is the most important thing in your life. Proverbs 4:13

If I were to tell you a story of Colombia, would you choose to hear about our runaway kitten that was secretly replaced by a concerned neighbor, or about the time we went swimming in the Amazon River and fled the water when something bit our friend's leg and drew blood? Would you like to know how the sunset and moonrise look in the Llanos (plains) when your back relaxes into warm pavement in the middle of a deserted highway, or how it feels to hear someone whisper into your ear through a hug, "I came to know the Lord because of you"?

Two years ago my husband, sons and I were preparing to leave our community and farm in Virginia to serve in La Mesa, Colombia, with VMM's *tranSend* program and Mennonite Mission Network. It was an exciting and frightening time for us. In my journal two weeks before our departure I wrote, "When will this cease to feel surreal?" Oddly enough, now that we have been back in the States just over a month,

I am asking myself the same thing. What seemed so intimidating and unfamiliar two years ago now brings feelings of love and longing. Colombia.

When people ask me how our time in Colombia was, I tell them we got to know small town life in a way that would be hard to do in the U.S.

While we learned what Colombians did for safety in the midst of a political context of ongoing violence in remote regions and high levels of internal displacement, we, like most other La Mesa residents, had a relatively peaceful life in a community where people know who you are no matter where you go. We walked to school, church, and the grocery store, and stopped to talk to neighbors along the way. We played group games in the streets at night without fear. We formed deep



The Witmer family and their Colombian friends say goodbye in the airport. Photo courtesy of author

friendships, explored diverse regions of the country, and were challenged and grew into new ministries and new ways of being. From our Colombian sisters and brothers we learned the high value of relationships and how to maintain them with intentionality.

Finally, we came to understand mission as living God's love *in relationship*, wherever we are. In that light, we know that we continue in God's mission even as we resume life on our dairy farm. For where God's love and human relationships intersect, we have learned to want to be in the middle of it.

Dwelling in unity (Trinka) continued from cover

God realized partly in conversations with Israeli soldiers who command platoons of "warriors" against new friends and families we have encountered during our times in the occupied cities of Bethlehem and Beit Sahour? Likewise, is the Kingdom furthered as we spend time in the homes of families who know individuals who have acted violently against the Israeli military and civilian presence in the region?

Each sounding returns with the definitive answer that it undoubtedly is. The Kingdom of God is realized, in part, through the building of community between those who are perceived enemies. The ministry of Jesus is rooted deeply in authentic encounters with people of all kinds who need to hear the same message; Jesus is Lord. This proclamation

both challenges and supersedes political ideologies and actions past or present. It reorients the discussion of a solution to one of salvation and as a result, allows for the recognition of all people as creations in the image of God.

We departed from Jerusalem, considering the call of the Great Commission, asking ourselves what the next step in this adventure might be. How might we continue to partner with those we have met; to do more than simply tell others their stories? How might we best represent the Kingdom of God to those who live in the place where the story of Jesus took place?

In many ways, these questions remain unanswered aside for this semiole acknowledgement: The kingdom of God is this, to engage the people of all empires in the way of the Cross and to act in benevo-

lence on behalf of all parties to share its message of hope. Our facilitation of unity in the face of hopelessness, anger and division is nothing short of the work of God among the nations. Through it, we challenge empires and individuals to consider the sanctity of human life, the value of different cultures and the promise of God's redemption of the world. We recall the words of Psalm 133 and echo the Psalmist's assurance, "How good it is for brothers and sisters to dwell in unity."

Dwelling in unity (Kniss) continued from cover

warfare, and the relationship of religion and politics. I returned grateful for the opportunity to see this beautiful and complicated land up close, and to make new Palestinian and Israeli friends. How I absorb the daily news will never be the same.

In Ecuador, an amazing reunion

By **DAVID SHENK**
VMM / Mission Network worker in Ecuador

The fifth man that I interviewed came into my office like everyone else. He began to explain his situation and we talked for about 10 minutes before I asked him the question, “what kind of work did you do in Colombia?”

He opened his jacket and showed me the t-shirt that he was wearing that had a picture of a clown on it and the title *Ecopayaseando por la tierra* (Eco-clowning around the world). “I was a clown,” he said.

My heart skipped a beat. I recognized that clown in the picture and I recognized that title. “I met you in Colombia,” I said. “You were at a meeting that I attended while I was on a Witness for Peace delegation. Our group was wearing blue t-shirts and I talked with you and you gave me a free DVD of your clown show. Do you

remember me?” I asked excitedly.

“Of course!” he responded as he fell to his knees giving thanks that he had run into someone familiar. The tone of our conversation changed after that. We were both taken back by feelings of joy caused by the unexpected coincidence.

I had met him just one year earlier in August during the Witness for Peace trip at a community organizing meeting to help displaced people. Since then his work with the displaced population and the local police force had gotten him into trouble. After a car bomb went off at the police station in his hometown earlier this year and he was threatened, he was forced to leave



The Colombian man, a clown, who David met as a refugee in Ecuador. Photo courtesy of author

Colombia and came to Ecuador.

Now living in a homeless shelter, he is trying to make a new life in Ecuador and we will be accompanying him. It was an amazing coincidence. The world seems to shrink with these experiences and the community of solidarity seems to grow, and I’m thankful for these stories.

Something different

By **CHRIS RIDDLE**
VMM worker in Bari, Italy

Thirty-two people from various churches around Italy came together for “Family Camp 2012,” August 18-25. It was a week of relaxation, study, prayer and fellowship with other believers.

Our theme was “Extreme Makeover II: Radical Transformation in Christ.” Pino Arena (Palermo), Giovanni Greco (Vasto), Nicola Cippone and Willard Eberly (Bari) taught on how we are different when we are transformed by Christ living in us. These lessons not only had an impact on the participants of the conference, but also



The group that gathered for Family Camp 2012. (Below) a worship time. Photos by author

returned to their work. It was as if they were finding something that they had been seeking and needing in their lives.

When we were preparing to leave, the director of the hotel said to Willard,

on other guests and staff in the hotel where we stayed.

As the week progressed, members of our group were engaged in conversations with other guests, staff and tour guides. Members of the hotel staff passed through our meetings held in the dining room and paused to listen to what was being said. The kitchen staff came to the door and listened to the worship, then

“We have never had a group like you all here before. How you treat each other and others—there is something different about you all.”

When people hear, see and feel the presence of Christ, it is something different. The world is starving for this difference. They hunger for it and it is up to us to show the world that things can and will be better. It is our hope that people can always look at us and say, “There is something different about you.” *There is!* It is Christ who lives in us!



“The Church in Jubilee”

MCTT annual meeting celebrates freedom in Christ

By **GLORIA L. LEHMAN**
VMM Caribbean Regional Assistant

The Mennonite Church of Trinidad & Tobago (MCTT) held its 28th annual general meeting, August 11-12. The theme, “The Church in Jubilee,” reflected the national 50th anniversary of independence for Trinidad & Tobago. While the country celebrated freedom from foreign control, the church celebrated fellowship, worship, service and witness through freedom in Christ.



Arthur & Linda Campbell brought greetings from JMC to MCTT. Photos courtesy of Galen Lehman

Fraternal guests, pastors and spouses and members of the General Church Council enjoyed dinner together in the Mennonite Church of Chaguanas on Friday evening. Warm fellowship abounded as persons shared together.

Arthur & Linda Campbell represented the Jamaica Mennonite Church (JMC) as delegates to MCTT’s annual general meeting. Linda serves JMC as the acting president of JMC. In addition to bringing greetings from JMC, Linda preached in the worship service on Sunday morning.

On Saturday, delegates gathered in the Charleville Mennonite Church to discuss various parts of the church’s business; reports were interspersed with words of inspiration and songs. At the end

of the meeting, officer elections resulted: Richard Keeler as president, Liza Raganooth as vice-president, Timothy Sam as secretary, and Daniel Moonsammy as treasurer for the General Church Council.

Sunday morning a group of almost 200 people gathered in the Hope Mennonite Church in Esperanza, where Pastor Navin Benny opened the service and a lively worship team led songs of praise. The church building has been in process for six years, and now it is a fine facility for a large group to gather for worship. The installation of Sis. Sheriza Sookharry was conducted by Overseer Ganese Gunpath. (see article at right) Following the service, a fine meal was



Rawl Gunpath, overseer of MCTT (left), installs Sheriza with husband Rajin. Photo courtesy of Galen Lehman

Pastoral Mentoree installed in Trinidad

On August 12, during the joint service of the Mennonite Church of Trinidad & Tobago, Sis. Sheriza Sookharry was installed as the first female pastoral mentoree of this conference.

Sheriza and her husband, Rajin, have served the Mennonite Church of Chaguanas as lay leaders for some years. Sheriza has experienced the call of God on her life, and she embraces the role of pastor for this congregation. Both Sheriza and Rajin are taking courses at West Indies Theological College this year to gain further training.

Two other pastoral mentorees, Ramon Goodridge of Sangre Grande Mennonite Church, and Ronald Latchman of Diego Martin Mennonite Church were installed earlier this year. Ramesh Jaimani has been named the mentor for the mentorees, and will coach each of them, especially in their role as preacher.

enjoyed by all.

Former president, Joseph Sookram stated, “Let’s ask our God to kindle the fire in us and install the desire to shine our lights to bring honor and praise to our God.” MCTT is headed into the new year, taking the joy of jubilee with them!

Members of all five congregations gathered for the joint service on Sunday morning in Hope Mennonite Church.



Take me to the waters: God's Love Flows in Colotlan, Mexico

By **JUAN CARLOS MALVAEZ**
Pastor of Manantial de Vida

The week of July 20-28, Manantial de Vida (MDV), a Harrisonburg District congregation conducted a missions trip to Colotlan, Mexico. This was a mission geared toward reaching children of all ages in a high crime, drug cartel-riddled geographic area. MDV sent four missionaries to minister hope and God's love to Casa del Padre (The Father's House). MDV fully translated into Spanish the MennoMedia's Vacation Bible School curriculum for 2012 titled, *Take me to the Waters: God's Love Flows*.

Approximately 45-50 children attended the daily events. Most of these children come from poor homes where the single mother could be one that is rescued from prostitution by this ministry.

Casa del Padre, like the first century church in the book of Acts, meets for fellowship in the comfortable and hospitable



Manantial de Vida mission trip participants with children at VBS in Colotlan, Mexico. Photo courtesy of author

home of the Rosales family.

Casa del Padre was founded by the Rosales family. This couple migrated from Colotlan, Mexico to Harrisonburg more than 30 years ago. The Rosales became born-again Christians as a result of the Christ-love testimony they received. Betty and Aaron King were neighbors to

the Rosales at that time and they witnessed to them by leading a life of love, acceptance, and hospitality. Presently, four of the Rosales' adult children and their families are committed and active members at MDV.

Manantial de Vida is committed to supporting Casa del Padre by providing orientation, resources, discipleship, and spiritual and prayer covering to the Rosales family as church planters in a location plagued by drug-war violence. As a result of fervent prayer, we believe that Colotlan is entering a new season.

Give the gift of

SPONSORSHIP




Sponsor a child this year and spread health, happiness and hope in young lives!

Children ages 3-5 at the Joshua Center (Albania)
Students ages 4-18 at Maranatha School for the Deaf (Jamaica)

\$40 per month for 10 months or \$400/year
A good project for a family or SS class for alternative Christmas giving or any time.

Your prayer and financial support encourages the children and gives them the opportunity to hear the Gospel.



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Contact Virginia Mennonite Missions for more information:
info@vmmissions.org / (540) 434-9727 / (800) 707-5535 / vmmissions.org



Photo: Heather Cooper Baker

The Sidewalk Prophets gave the culminating performance at the second annual Back to School Bash, organized by Eastside Church in Harrisonburg, Va.

Approximately 2,000 attended this free concert on August 19 held in the Commons at Eastern Mennonite University, who co-sponsored the event.

Eastside's vision for the Back to School Bash is to inspire young believers to be courageous in sharing and living out their faith as they return to the classroom. In addition to the Sidewalk Prophets, popular Christian artists KJ-52 and Jamie Grace also shared music and testimonies.

McFarland to speak at Kennel Charles Lecture



Colleen McFarland will deliver the Kennel-Charles Anabaptist Lecture in the Eastern Mennonite School auditorium, October 27, at 11 a.m. McFarland is *Archivist and Interim Director of Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee*, Goshen, Ind. McFarland's lecture is entitled

“When faith meets flickr,” in which she will speak about access to and preservation of Anabaptist historical research materials in the digital age. The Kennel-Charles event includes a Photo Harvest from 9-11 a.m., in the EMS auditorium lobby. History students will scan your photos of EMS life or of Mennonites in Virginia. With donor permission, these digitized photos will be included on a new internet digital repository of photos about Virginia Mennonites.

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Visit to give peek into Mindanao peacebuilding

At Grace Mennonite Church, at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, October 3, we have the



rare opportunity to host MCC Canada Witness

workers, Dann and Joji Pantoja, in Harrisonburg from Oct 2-Oct 6.

As a young man raised in a church planting family, it was the radical communism sweeping through the Philippines that fired Dann's imagination; later, it was a purge within those ranks that led to Dann's emigration

from the Philippines to Canada. After 9/11, God led Dann to eschew violence and embrace a theology of peace. A gifted communicator and effective organizer, Dann has returned to the Philippines, founding Peacebuilders Community in conflict-ridden Mindanao. Dann's wife Joji left a successful career in the financial industry to join Dann in ministry in Mindanao.

Dann and Joji will also be sharing in the following venues: EMS Chapel, Tuesday, Oct. 2, EMU Chapel, Wed, Oct. 3, EMHS Chapel, Thursday, Oct. 4. For more information, please contact Carol Tobin at (540) 434-9727 or carol.tobin@vmmissions.org

Upcoming educational tours

Visit the Balkans (Albania & Montenegro) on a Mission Fellowship Tour, May 6-16, 2013. Led by Ed Bontrager, and with Virginia Mennonite Missions President Loren & Earlene Horst, the tour will visit mission workers, the new Lehza Academic Center, Shkodra, Tirana, Berrat Village, old castles, stunning Adriatic coastlines, ancient monasteries, Lushnje, Durres, and much more! Price (incl. taxes and fuel surcharge) only \$2498 from D.C. Contact Ed at (540) 438-8304 or eebontrager@comcast.net for a brochure.

Join Myron & Esther Augsburg for **Footsteps of Paul's Journeys**, May 25 - June 7, 2013. This trip of a lifetime will include eight days in Greece with visits to Athens, Corinth, Thessalonica, Philippi, Berea and Dephi. The trip will conclude with a four-day Aegean cruise with stops in Mykonos, Ephesus, Patmos, Rhodes, Crete and Santorini. For full details, contact Travel Counsellors at (540) 434-1796 or (800) 572-4049.

The British Isles, a trip to England, Scotland and Wales is planned for Sept. 13-25, 2013, with hosts Dave & Joyce Eshleman. This trip planned by TourMagination will include points of interest in the lives of Charles Spurgeon, C. S. Lewis, John Bunyan and John Newton. Other points of interest will include: Snowdonia National Park in Wales, the Lake District of England, the cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh in Scotland and much more. For details go to: TourMagination.com or call (800) 565-0451.

A Middle East Tour will be May 2013. Registration is open for “Places, People, & Prayers, 2013,” a study tour to Israel/Palestine from May 2-25, 2013. The tour will be co-led by EMS professors, Dorothy Jean Weaver and Kevin Clark. For more information contact Dorothy Jean Weaver at weaverdj@emu.edu / (540) 432-4276.

Congregational Resource Center

Join the many small group and Sunday School teachers/leaders who have been visiting the Resource Center for fall study materials. We have dozens of adult study books, videos and DVDs suitable for young adults through oldest adults. Some examples:

1. **Couples' Night Out** (a one-time program to assist couples with communication skills or relationship-building.)
2. **Boundaries With Kids** (geared for parents of young children)
3. **Parenting Your Teens**
4. **Biblical subject or book studies**
5. **Fruit of the Spirit** (each “fruit” studied in a separate 6-session book)

A box of new resources is currently in Hartzler Library for cataloging and will be available soon. These include a number of new children's books, an adult Bible student on Paul, booklets on “hot issues,” worship & story ideas for children, and more.

A checkout card for the Congregational Resource Center continues to be FREE to anyone in the community, so please don't hesitate to get yours.

KEEP IN MIND:

1. The CRC ships resources anywhere, as long as you ship them back!
2. You can see what's available by going to the Hartzler Library Catalog - “Sadie” - from the emu.edu website. All items in this collection have CRC as the first three call letters.

3. Personal assistance in finding what you need is available from Linda Alley, Director, either in person or by phone: (540) 432-4219. Linda is generally in from 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. on weekdays.

4. FREE resources save you money.

5. Donations of good, usable resources are always gratefully accepted. Those that cannot be added to the collection are sold on an ongoing Book Cart and the proceeds also help the resource center.

As you plan ahead for fall and winter events and training, keep YOUR resource center in mind!

Contact info: crc@emu.edu / (540) 432-4219

Location: Eastern Mennonite Seminary Building, 1181 Smith Avenue, Harrisonburg, VA

Roberta Webb Center to debut 'music sensory garden'

By **ANGELA LAWSON**
Director of Roberta Webb Child Care Center

A child plays with a drum at Roberta Webb Child Care Center & Preschool. Photo courtesy of author

At Roberta Webb Child Care Center & Preschool (RWCCC), the sound of music can be heard throughout the day, all in the name of fun, creative expression and brain development. Integrating music into the preschooler's day develops important school readiness skills. Many instruments have roots in other cultures, and thus can assist in multi-cultural studies and acceptance. RWCCC wishes to capitalize on the young child's process of play by adding a 'music sensory garden' to the outdoor playground.

Due to grants from *The Richard & Caroline T. Gwathmey Memorial Trust* and the *Community Foundation*, RWCCC has been excitedly preparing for the arrival of a permanent outdoor preschool music

station. The handcrafted music station features four popular instruments in one unit: a pentatonic soprano metallophone built back to back with a pentatonic soprano marimba (playing one octave higher), a rain wheel at one end and a set of two thumb drums at the other. While meandering up the kid-friendly landscaped path, there will be three free-standing instruments: bongo drums, a marimba drum, and rain wheel. To complete the area, the music station will be housed under a permanent outdoor shelter for further protection from the elements along with seating for the "audience."



Telling a different Civil War story

By **JOAN L. DAGGETT**
CrossRoads Executive Director

One hundred fifty years ago, Mennonites and Brethren in the Valley experienced the horrors of the Civil War along with their friends and neighbors. No one escaped the struggles that enveloped the Valley at that time. Indeed, the experiences of both groups during those years

have shaped who we are now and how we live out our faith.

Today, as reenactments and battlefield tours commemorate the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, the Valley Brethren Mennonite Heritage Center seeks to share a different story. This crossroads story of faith and conscience is told through the experiences of individuals and families as they dealt with issues of slavery, non-resistance, and confrontation with government authorities and neighbors who did not understand their beliefs. The

Burkholder-Myers Home and our recent production of *Jordan's Stormy Banks* have helped tell this differing story.

Now, another piece of this crossroads story can be seen on our campus.

Several years ago, the Heritage Center was given charred timbers from a barn in Mt. Solon that survived General Sheridan's "burning" of the valley. These timbers have been stored and now, for the Civil War sesquicentennial, they have been brought out for display. A temporary log structure has been constructed to house the charred timbers until a permanent structure can be built. The timbers illustrate in vivid terms the horrors of the war and its impact on the people and agriculture of the Valley.

We invite you to visit our campus, view the new exhibit, listen to the stories and reflect on your own crossroads of faith and conscience.

CrossRoads Heritage Center displays charred timbers from a barn in Mt. Solon that survived the burning of the Valley by Gen. Sheridan. Photo courtesy of author



OCTOBER 2012

Connections

Prayer Calendar

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

1 Chris & Melody Riddle will begin teaching conversational English at the local middle school in Carbonara, Italy. Pray that this work continues to open doors and hearts in the local community.

2 The Gospel spread throughout the known world after Jesus ascended into Heaven. In tonight's *Perspectives* (H'burg) class, Andrew Fuller teaches how the Gospel surged through the peoples and places of the world.

3 Hickory Hmong Community, and Mountain View Mennonite are the VMC congregations in Hickory, NC. Pray that God will give them wisdom and boldness as they minister in their unique setting.

4 Today Willard & Eva Eberly travel to the US to bring closure to their missionary tenure with VMM in the Mediterranean region. Pray for safe travel and for them in this time of transition.

5 The Virginia Mennonite Relief Sale is held this weekend to benefit Mennonite Central Committee. Pray that attendees will give generously as they support the auction and enjoy the food and festivities.

6 Many jugs of *Penny Power* coins and bills are being emptied and counted at the Relief Sale today. Thank you to all congregations who promoted the giving projects and gathered funds for the needs at home and abroad.

7 In-home Bible studies happen on Wednesday evenings in Bari, Italy. Pray that new people are empowered to come and hear the Gospel in a new way! Pray for the enrichment of the believers due to these studies.

8 Pray for the Maranatha School teachers and students as they continue into the school year. Ask God to give them motivation for learning a variety of things. Pray especially for Eve Knepp as she teaches the upper level students.

9 David Meeks teaches "Pioneers of the World Christian Movement" in the *Perspectives* (H'burg) class this evening. Students will learn about some of the great missionaries of the past and will gain insight for carrying on the vision.

10 Pray for the four teachers who serve through VMM at the Lezhe Academic Center, Albania. They can use all the patience, stamina and creativity that God will give them! May they experience this daily.

11 Last month a prayer team of persons from Va., Pa., Italy and Albania traveled through Albania and Montenegro and prayed earnestly for the spiritual needs in these places. Thank God for their commitment to prayer!

12 Pray for Myron & Esther Augsburgberger, who travel to Albania today. Esther will teach art at Lezha Academic Center and Myron will relate to the Mennonite Church, especially with Rafael Tartari, pastoral leader.

13 Alumni and friends are gathering at Eastern Mennonite University for *Homecoming & Family Weekend*. Attendees will reflect on the theme of EMU's role in God's cross-cultural mission.

14 Centro Koinonia will be a part of showing the film "Courageous" at the local middle school this month. This is a ministry to the community to encourage parents and improve relationships between parents and teens.

15 Pray for Ramon & Kamla Goodridge as they attend class at the Trinidad Bible Institute on Mondays. They give pastoral leadership to Sangre Grande MC. Thank God for their continued interest in learning from God's Word.

16 "Eras of Mission History" is the topic Loren Horst teaches in the *Perspectives* (H'burg) class this evening. The last 200 years has seen an explosion of mission activity. Are you part of this dynamic outreach to others?

17 Sam Scaggs is the resource person for leadership seminars being held in Trinidad the rest of this week. Thank God for Pastor Ganesh Kalloo's motivation to arrange for these seminars; may the Lord be lifted up.

18 Pray for the newly ordained leaders at Centro Koinonia, Bari: Nicola Cippono, elder and Lia Semilia, deaconess. For some time they've both been faithfully serving with their gifts.

19 Attendees at Eastern Mennonite School's Homecoming gather around the theme "Led by His Hand." Sam and Sarah Weaver, whose long service extends throughout VMC, will be honored as Lifetime Service Award recipients.

20 Conference Council meets this weekend to confer and discern how God's Spirit is moving within VMC. Pray for our conference leaders as they receive input from district representatives and seek to be faithful to God's leading.

21 Today the Organic Church Planters' Greenhouse event ends. Pray that those who attended will carry through with the principles they learned about relating with God, the family of God and those who do not yet know God.

22 Shawn & Laura Green, VMM missionary candidates, depend upon your prayer and financial support as they prepare to serve in Italy, where the church still struggles to survive. Pray earnestly for them.

23 Carol Tobin leads the *Perspectives* (H'burg) class this evening in "How then Shall They Hear?" emphasizing the intercultural communication of the Gospel, with relevance to the worldview of the hearers. Pray for sensitivity.

24 Rajin & Sheriza Sookharry attend class on Wed. evenings at the West Indies Theological College. They have a desire to learn more theological principles for their leadership roles at the Mennonite Church of Chaguanas.

25 Pray for Nancy Marshall as she prepares for the input that she shares every weekend—Girls' Night Out, Young Men's Night Out, Sunday morning worship and visiting in homes. Ask God to give her His strength.

26 VMC historians gather this weekend in Harrisonburg to consider how records are preserved in a digital age. Praise God for new technology that allow greater access to resources documenting our faith heritage.

27 As the Faith and Life Commission meets this weekend, ask God to be present among overseers, members at large, and new chair Judith Trumbo. FLC gives leadership to the spiritual, doctrinal, and ministerial areas of VMC.

28 Skip Tobin visits with the Hickory Hmong Mennonite Church today. Pray for him and for the congregation as they continue to craft a lively congregation without pastoral leadership.

30 In the *Perspectives* (H'burg) class this evening, Joe Steinitz teaches "The Task Remaining" which describes the work to be done in reaching "unreached people groups." Are you called to witness to an unreached group in your neighborhood?

31 During this election season weighted with partisan politics, may we unite as members of God's kingdom. Pray for the witness of the VMC congregations in DC: Christian Conquest Word of God Church and Washington Community Fellowship.

"Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble."

1 Peter 3:8 (NIV)

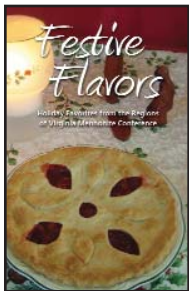
To sponsor the calendar, please send a message to
Gloria Lehman at
gloria.lehman@vmmisions.org
or call (540) 434-9727.



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

Announcements

Attention VMC delegates: Minutes from the July 27-28 delegate sessions are now available online at virginiaconference.org. Click on the DELEGATES tab. You can print or save the minutes to your computer. Hard copies will no longer be mailed to delegates; contact the VMC offices at (540) 434-9727 if you cannot access them online.



Festive Flavors: Holiday Favorites from the Regions of Virginia Mennonite Conference is again available for holiday gift-giving. With 56 attractive pages featuring recipes, photos and stories, this unique

cookbook is a wonderful way to experience the diverse geographical and cultural flavors throughout VMC. Order for \$10 each, available at virginiaconference.org or by calling the VMC offices at (540) 434-9727.

You are invited to **A Taste of the Mediterranean**, a meal hosted by Shawn & Laura Green, who along with their son Lucas are VMM appointees to southern Italy. Come hear what God is doing in and through the Mennonite church in Italy Thursday, October 11, 6 p.m. at Weavers Mennonite Church's Shady Oak fellowship hall. An opportunity to participate in the work will be given. Please RSVP to Melanie Eby, MST chair, at (540) 810-6315 or melanie.eby@gmail.com.

Eastern Mennonite High School Homecoming is October 19-21. Details available at easternmennoniteschool.org or contact berkshired@emhs.net or (540) 236-6024.

Registration details for the Greenhouse Intensive Training with Neil Cole can be found at vmmissions.org at "Organic Church Planters' Greenhouse" under LEARN tab. The training will be October 19-21 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church. Contact Skip Tobin with questions, (540) 434-9727 (office) or (540) 560-9107 (cell) or send a message to skip.tobin@vmmissions.org

A Taste of Albania dinner and program will be held Friday, Oct. 26, at 6 p.m. at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church fellowship hall, 1552 S. High St., Harrisonburg. Enjoy typical foods from Albania, hear about Norma Teles' ministry with Roma children, see a video about the local Mennonite church, and support this important outreach to the "least of these." To reserve your space, contact Earlene Horst at earlene.horst@vmmissions.org or (540) 833-6556.

Join in singing "**David the Shepherd Boy**," directed by Marvin Miller, October 26-28 at Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center! Music Weekend guests receive choral music instruction, meals and snacks, lodging, and a terrific weekend filled with fellowship. For more information and registration go to www.wcrc.info or call (757) 566-2256.

Eastern Mennonite High School presents **The Sound of Music** on October 19, 20 & 25, 26, 27 at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium, 801 Parkwood Drive. Tickets are available at www.tix.com or by calling (540) 236-6024. Reserved seating \$15 for all ages. General admission seats: \$12 adults; \$10 for students & senior citizens.

Free screenings of **Weaving Life: A Documentary on the Life and Death of Peacemaker Dan Terry** will be held in the MainStage Theater at EMU on Thurs. Oct. 25 at 4 p.m. and at Park View Mennonite Church on Friday, Oct. 26 at 7:30 p.m. The screenings will be followed by a talk back, followed by a reception and book signing. *Weaving Life* will be airing on ABC-TV stations from Oct. 21-Dec. 16.

Come support VMRC Auxiliary fundraisers this fall! On October 27, Homemade Soup & Breads Supper at Village Hall, 5-7 p.m. On December 2, the Chuck Wagon Gang will give a concert at Park View Mennonite Church at 2:30 p.m. Contact VMRC Auxiliary President Ruth Rittenhouse at (540) 564-1578 with questions.

Hear men's harmonies in the 11th annual **Festival of Praise**, Sunday, Nov. 4, at 4 p.m. at Eastern Mennonite School auditorium, 801 Parkwood Dr., Harrisonburg. Men's groups perform and then join in a mass choir directed by Jay Hartzler. Offering project supports Norma Teles, who will share about her work with the Joshua Center, serving Roma children in Albania. For more information, contact Gloria at gloria.lehman@vmmissions.org or (540) 434-9727.

College students are invited to **Urbana 2012**, a student missions conference in St. Louis, Mo., December 27-31, 2012. Transportation from Harrisonburg will be available. Contact Skip Tobin at skip.tobin@vmmissions.org or (540) 434-9727 to learn more.