

## Grace Mennonite's mission to the Philippines

By JESSICA PEACHEY

Over thirty years ago, Larry Vitor, a young, hopeful Filipino pastor picked up an article written by Pastor Richard Early, and he decided to write a letter requesting that Richard be his prayer partner. Richard wrote him back, and this journey began.

Richard is now pastoring a growing community church, Grace Mennonite Fellowship, in Lacey Spring, Va. Grace is a congregation of people from all walks of life who have a keen desire to be agents of change and reach out to areas both local and abroad.

In 1989, the Men's Fellowship Group of Zion Mennonite Church in Souderton, Pa., (of which Richard was the pastor), sent financial aid to Larry so he could attend seminary. Larry pastored The United Church of Christ, Philippines for six years. In 1999, Larry and his wife started an early

learning center in Alipao. It was accredited in 2014 and is now called Mennonite SDN Learning Center, Inc.

It is here that the children are being taught about God's great kingdom while being academically nurtured and better prepared for school.

The center was established after identifying a need for public school preparation. Children were dropping out of school due to their inability to keep up. The center currently offers two preschool classes, with over 50 children in attendance. The percentage of children who have graduated from high school has soared above national averages. This center is a place of hope, love and progress.

After years of functioning on donations from Grace Mennonite Fellowship, it has become clear that this Filipino community would greatly benefit from generating its own source of income.



The front view of the Learning Center in Alipao, Philippines, started in 1999 by Larry and Ruth Vitor. Photos courtesy of author

On April 29, I, along with Richard Early, Carol and Skip Tobin, teamed up with Richard Rancap, a Filipino pastor and teacher, who served as a consultant, interpreter and guide as we explored funding options. He was of great help in logistics as well as solidifying deeper understanding between us and our Filipino counterparts.

Carol Tobin, Asia Regional Director for VMM, served as a facilitator during our meetings, asking hard questions with grace and spiritual direction. Her years of experience and cultural acumen helped our team grow as one body with one goal—to help Alipao further God's income.

**Philippines** continued on page 3



Richard Early and Larry Vitor



Richard Rancap



Pastor Richard Early, Pastor Richard Rancap, Adriano Leonor, Ruth Vitor, Larry Vitor, Jeric Vitor, Joji Pantoja, Carol Tobin, Skip Tobin.

# Will our faith have children?

By AARON KAUFFMAN



Genesis 15:5-6

[The LORD] brought [Abram] outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be." And he believed the LORD; and the LORD reckoned it to him as righteousness."

Outside of Europe and North America, the church is growing by leaps and bounds. In the Anabaptist family of faith alone, membership grew by almost a third in the past decade, from 1.3 million in 2003, to nearly 1.8 today. There are more Mennonites in Africa than in North America, more in Latin America than in Europe.

Not too long ago, *Mennonite World Review* announced, "Mennonite Church USA membership drops." Over the past dozen years, we have lost nearly one in five of our members. Virginia Mennonite Conference statistics show decline at nearly the same rate.

Numbers are only one measure of success, and maybe not the best one. Faithfulness—our primary aim—does not always yield impressive figures. But when Jesus compares the kingdom of God to yeast or a mustard seed, those metaphors imply growth. And basic biology teaches us that living things reproduce.

So when I see numbers decline in the church family, I have to wonder: Are we spiritually barren? What's the fertility treatment for a shrinking church?

We must acknowledge that our apparent "infertility," like Abram and Sarai's, is

no obstacle to God's purposes. God doesn't need the programs and plans we have to offer. The drama of salvation doesn't depend on human ingenuity.

According to sociologist Conrad Kanagy, Anabaptist churches in the Global South have a missionary passion for non-Christians, endure hardship and persecution, emphasize discipleship in life, teach a gospel for the whole person, and embrace the work of the Holy Spirit (*Winds of the Spirit*, p. 249). In other words, they have a basic trust in the good news of Jesus and its power to change lives and communities.

"The gospel," as Paul reminds us in Romans, "is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes." The potency of God's kingdom movement lies not in us, but in the message of Jesus we've been entrusted to share. And if we won't proclaim it, God will simply find someone else who will.

God may not need our worship services and programs, but God wants us to collaborate in this global kingdom movement. At VMM's Church Planters Retreat in June, I met young leaders with courageous, contagious faith who love God and their neighbors, live simply, and pray boldly.

To recover our spiritual vitality, we must humbly ask the Holy Spirit to rekindle our confidence in the transforming power of the gospel. Consider joining us in person or in spirit, when our staff gathers to pray every Wednesday at 10:00 a.m.

In Jesus, God is reconciling the world, and we're invited to be part of it. The first step is to follow Abram's lead, and believe.

Aaron Kauffman  
President  
Virginia Mennonite Missions



Martin Rhodes, VMM Short-term Missions Coach, presents journals to the tranSend class to write their future stories and testimonies in. The covers are woven in burlap and each contains a woven cross bookmark to symbolize how God has woven His story and call upon them, and to "bookmark" their life journeys centered on JESUS. Photo by Jon Trotter

Members of the new tranSend class were commissioned in a meaningful time of worship at On Sunny Slope Farm, near Dayton, Va., on July 17.

Peter Eberly, lead pastor of East-side Church, spoke both challenge and encouragement based on Isaiah 42. The Ears to the Ground Family led worship. Everyone enjoyed a beautiful summer evening with fellowship and international foods at a *Taste of Missions* following the commissioning service.

The following were commissioned for service:

- **Jonathan Cranston** to Mindanao, Philippines
- **Justin and Melanie Erb** to Lezha Academic Center, Albania
- **Caleb and Veronica Kiefer** to Maranatha School for the Deaf, Jamaica
- **Joshua Kirkman** to Lezha Academic Center, Albania
- **Katrina Schmid** to Lezha Academic Center, Albania
- **Whitney Specht** to Istog, Kosova


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 <b>Virginia Mennonite Missions</b>	
Reporting: 9/1/13 to 6/30/14	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 40%;"><span style="color: green;">■</span> revenue</div> <div style="width: 40%;"><span style="color: red;">■</span> expenses</div> </div>
<b>Mission Fund</b>	<b>Special Projects</b>
<b>\$483,337</b>	<b>\$1,060,816</b>
<b>\$586,036</b>	<b>\$1,124,380</b>

# Anabaptist Renewal Circles hosts national gathering in Pennsylvania

By BERYL JANTZI

A national gathering of MC USA pastors, agency representatives and interested church members took place at the Weaverland Mennonite Church in Lancaster County, Pa. July 10-12. About 160 registered for the event with 15 in attendance from Virginia Mennonite Conference. Participants came from many states and other parts of the church.

“For me, in a few words, this gathering was about our own repentance or realignment to God’s attitude and purpose. Instead of finger pointing, I experienced renewal, as God’s kindness invited me to change. While there was some excellent preaching, the highlight for me was spending Thursday evening together in prayer,” said Skip Tobin, VMM USA Ministries Director and leader of a workshop session entitled, “Launching Out with Jesus on the Disciple Ship.”

There were plenary sessions and workshops throughout the event along with one evening dedicated to prayer for the broader church and another service focused on youth. Aaron Kauffman, President of VMM, led a session on Life Transformation Groups. Myron Augsburg and Ervin Stutzman were two of the featured speakers during the worship gatherings.



The vision of Anabaptist Renewal Circles is to mobilize the Mennonite and Anabaptist community to bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The movement began in June 2011 as a conversation between several pastors and church leaders who were concerned about the spiritual health of the Mennonite Church. They were seeking ways to encourage each other in their common faith, ministry, and mission.

The focus has been on developing activities that produce life and vitality beyond some of the current cultural debates. The dream is to see a church where unity is inspired and shaped by the authoritative Word of God and a shared commitment to make disciples of Jesus Christ.



Beryl is Director of Stewardship Education for Everence and served on the listening committee of the Anabaptist Renewal Circles gathering.

**Philippines** continued from cover

kingdom by taking steps towards financial independence. She specifically guided our meetings by better organizing and identifying the Learning Center’s needs, purpose and function.

Skip Tobin, Global Ministry Associate for VMM, offered a broad view from his years of experience serving in missions. He aided in the problem solving process as we deepened our conversation. He utilized his vast expertise and cultural familiarities to lead discussion and analyze the needs, offering relevant ideas, direction, reflection and prayer.

I was led to travel to the Philippines with my pastor because he saw tremendous opportunity for online business development. (See article on page 5.) For the past two years I have been growing my own Etsy online business.

We worked together to see what kind of product would make sense for this community. After many meetings, the Vitors liked the idea of developing a baby hammock made of various malong materials. The hammocks will be portable and also work as a sling and swing. A feasibility study is now being created for Hammocks of Hope. Our hope is to help them bring to life a source of income and business that will be all their own.



Jessica is an artist and entrepreneur, and member of Grace Mennonite Fellowship, Lacey Spring, Va.

## Ending on a high note

By SHERI HARTZLER

It was so rewarding for us to have “our children” sing for and with the EMHS choir. The ending benediction in which the children came out to the choir circle and joined hands had special meaning, as their benediction words were directed to the gypsy children they had played with all afternoon. As goodbyes were said, many choir members were in tears and one commented, “I don’t know how you can leave these children when we’re having trouble saying goodbye after only one afternoon.

After a “free day” in Sighisoara we were ready to move on to the towns of Cluj and Resita. The hosts in these cities were Baptist churches.

The service included two firsts for us: **High note** continued on page 4



Jay and Sheri Hartzler (seated, in center) with the Eastern Mennonite High School Touring Choir and the new Lezha Academic Center choir (directed by Lisa Mast, who is seated to right of Sheri Hartzler.) These two choirs performed together and learned from each other in a special concert. Photo courtesy of author

I (Sheri) directed the choir in a song and Jay preached!

An excerpt from his message: “This past year I learned that God didn’t require me to have extraordinary talents. God



Jay and Sheri Hartzler

didn’t require me to do anything I couldn’t already do. God wanted me to love as J e s u s

loved, regardless of who I was working with: church people, high school students, Roma children—they all responded to love. The choir came to Romania to sing; my wife and I came to serve. What we learned is that we are the ones who have been served. We are the ones who have been blessed by your love and by others who have touched our lives. We have been blessed as we share a common faith in God.”

*Jay & Sheri Hartzler are wrapping up a year of service in Romania. Recently, they traveled with the Eastern Mennonite High School Touring Choir, introducing them to the community and people they have been working among. Read the full blog post at: [romaniannotes.wordpress.com/2014/06/](http://romaniannotes.wordpress.com/2014/06/)*

## Teaching forgiveness

By JOEL

“Hurray!” the young children yelled in unison after receiving full points for class participation. It was a rocky day at our English day camp in this East Asian country. The class has one boy who seems to get into fights daily. As the children filtered into my classroom, I noticed one boy seething in anger with tears streaming down his face and another boy sitting defensively at the other side of the room.

After some chill time during our first game, we got the boys to do a high-



Rafael Tartari invites the five: Angelina, Fabiola, Irena, Anisa and Elisa to share their testimonies with the assembled church on the banks of the Mat River. Courtesy of author

## Five at Lezhe church baptized

By ALLEN UMBLE

An international group witnessed the baptism of five people from *Guri I Themelit* (The Cornerstone) Church of Lezhë, Albania.

Although the area had an unusually wet late spring, as the date for the baptism drew near, the day dawned with bright sunshine and comfortable weather. As we gathered in the shade and sun by the Mat River singing praises to God, we caught the attention of the local shepherd with his sheep and cows. A team from Germany, serving with Norma at the Joshua Center, sang “10,000 Reasons” in German, led by a Brazilian husband and wife living in Germany.

After Pastor Rafael Tartari preached on the theme of baptism, each of the five shared their testimonies. The stories told by the twin sisters, who grew up in the *Guri I Themelit* Church witnessed to the years of service from the Kropfs, Norma Teles, and

others. The testimonies of the other three witnessed to the more recent influence of teachers and staff at Lezha Academic Center (LAC).

Personnel from LCC International University in Klapeida, Lithuania, are leading a two-week English camp at LAC, and helped swell the group to around 60-70 persons. I invited two young men from Lushnje, who rode up with me for the occasion. Following a picnic lunch, some of us relaxed and talked in the shade while others played soccer or went swimming.

Please pray for Angjelina, Fabiola, Irena, Anisa, and Elisa as they continue to learn what it means to follow Jesus.



Allen serves in Lushnje, Albania, with Virginia Mennonite Missions.

five in front of the class because they had cooperated with each other in the game. The previous day, the counselors had been talking about how they hoped we would use the camp point system to encourage positive values. So, at the end of class when we gave out points for class participation, I said to them, “Your class had some problems today. It is important to cooperate with each other and not hurt each other.” The children pleaded, *It was only two classmates! We were so well-behaved otherwise!*

“However,” I said, “It is even more important to learn to forgive each other. Today I saw forgiveness between your classmates, so today you have earned a full 50 points for class.” The kids erupted in cheers. The two boys who were seen as the problem became the class heroes!



Joel serves in a sensitive location in East Asia with Virginia Mennonite Missions.

# Business as mission, expanding Gospel possibilities

By JESSICA PEACHEY

I was led to travel to the Philippines with my pastor, Richard Early, because he saw tremendous opportunity for online business development in creating a way for the early learning center in Alipao to become self-sustaining. (See cover story.)

For the past two years, I have been growing my own Etsy online business. I

*could you please carve out a little time and go to the Philippines?*

Years ago, I had considered developing a business called *Blankets of Blessing*. I had a vision to find a source abroad, import blankets, and customize them to appeal to the American consumer. I felt God bringing back this vision, but asking me to create this business without personally profiting from it. How could I do it and still help my own family support itself? It just didn't make sense, but I knew I had to go to the Philippines.

After spending almost two weeks in the most organically beautiful but poverty-stricken areas I have ever encountered, one thing was for sure, God had lit my fire. I could see how I could be of service to these amazingly talented people; so many of who are artists, just like myself. Their natural resources were endless; they just needed to know how to reach a broader platform to sell their wares.

This was my "a-ha!" moment. I now saw a completely different picture for my life. It no longer fit inside a nice, neat little box. My box was expanding with every minute I spent in the Philippines. I no longer felt satisfaction at the thought of simply growing a business for my family and myself to benefit from. My desire was

deepening as I felt the Lord speaking to my heart. *Think bigger*, He said. *Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Just go, I will be with you.*

I cannot describe the peace I felt the moment I realized my calling: to use my experiences to further God's Kingdom by helping others identify other's talents and available resources, create product that would appeal to the American consumer, and train communities to open storefronts online. It was clear that empowering others to succeed was my calling. It is what excited me most!

As numerous as my questions are, I am still very much at peace with what I feel God is leading me to do. This year, I turned 38-years-old, and I am just now understanding how big God is.

As I enter this new chapter of life, I am humbled by His mighty love for me. I can share His Spirit and Love in the process of helping others sustain and further develop their economy. The puzzle pieces that have been carved out over the many years of my life were now just starting to fit together. The picture of my life and future are taking shape and with every piece that snaps into place, my heart skips a beat.



Jessica Peachey (center) in the Philippines with Uncle Vitor, Jeric Vitor, Ruth Vitor, Richard Early, Richard Rancap, Larry Vitor, Skip Tobin, Carol Tobin, and Joji Pantoja. Courtesy of author

am both an artist and entrepreneur. I have a dual degree (BSW and BS) from James Madison in Social Work and Studio Art. I have steadily grown my shop, The Original Twig LLC, from May of 2012.

I felt God tugging at my sleeve as if He was saying, *Jessica, I know you are busy, but*



Jessica is an artist and entrepreneur, and member of Grace Mennonite Fellowship, Lacey Spring, Va.

## Sensing God's call to serve in short-term missions?



**Virginia  
Mennonite  
Missions**

*Called. Sent. Transformed.*

### Current opportunities to serve with Partners:

- **Albania** • Secondary teachers needed at Lezha Academic Center. Teachers of all subjects are desired, including English, history, social studies, sciences, maths, foreign languages, etc. Current secondary teaching license required, TESOL experience preferred.
- **Belize** • Work with Vacation Bible School  
Work on construction projects in Orange Walk Town
- **Costa Rica** • Serve and grow in discipleship alongside Latin Americans at Pura Vida
- **Lithuania** • English teachers needed at LCC International University

• **North Carolina** • Work at Rutba House in Durham, doing Bible studies and construction work

• **South Asia** • Participate in a discipleship and learning tour

• **Trinidad** • Teach Bible school alongside Trinidadian Mennonites

Contact **Martin Rhodes**, Short-term Missions Coach, at [martin.rhodes@vmmissions.org](mailto:martin.rhodes@vmmissions.org) or (540) 434-9727 • (800) 707-5535. For longer-term service opportunities, visit [vmmissions.org/serve/](http://vmmissions.org/serve/) or [vmmissions.org/tranSend](http://vmmissions.org/tranSend)

## Menonite Hispanic Initiative: developing leaders with IBA

By SKIP TOBIN

Wouldn't it be wonderful if immigrant church leaders had a place to gather and grow together in understanding how to live into the good news in their new Virginia contexts? This is what actually happens through Menonite Hispanic Initiative's *Instituto Biblico Anabautista* (IBA) study center.

IBA's purpose is to promote theological-biblical training of Spanish-speaking leaders who will serve Menonite Church USA in various ministries.

Liz Hernandez coordinates one of the two IBA study centers in Harrisonburg. Every Monday evening the IBA's Christology II class meets at Eastern Menonite Seminary.

A diverse group of students from Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras and Cuba, and four different churches, gather around the classroom to engage in a deep biblical study of the gospels of Luke and Mathew.

"We all participate in the discussion as we navigate the Gospel stories and their voice for us today as followers of Jesus. More than a theological discussion, our class is a mutual 'meaning-making' conversation about the biblical teachings.

We then work together on how can we contextualize and incarnate the Gospel in our ministries and communities today," Hernandez said.

A second class, led by Marvin Lorenzana, VMM Racial/Ethnic Ministries Coach, is about to start in the month of August. This group is made up of leaders from two Spanish-speaking VMC congregations, Enciende Una Luz and Iglesia Discipular Anabautista. The new course focuses on the book of Acts and marks the

transition of these students from certificate level to a diploma level.

Students will be recognized during the upcoming MHI Friends Dinner in September for having finished the first part of their journey with IBA.



Skip is USA Ministries Director for Virginia Menonite Missions.

**MHI Menonite Hispanic Initiative Annual Friends Dinner 2014**

**Table hosts are needed** for the upcoming MHI Annual Friends Dinner, Friday, September 26, 7-9 p.m., at Park View Menonite Church. Hosts contribute \$100 to sponsor the table and invite six or eight friends to enjoy the evening program with them. Please contact Marvin Lorenzana at [marvin.lorenzana@vmmissions.org](mailto:marvin.lorenzana@vmmissions.org) if you are interested.



## BEING HUMAN, BECOMING CHRISTIAN: *an embodied reconciliation of heaven and earth*

Four presentations in Harrisonburg by **Cherith Fee Nordling**  
September 15-17, 2014



Is our embodied humanity a temporary curse or permanent, glorious reality?

Does salvation seem to imply getting out of our bodies, or is it about finally being at home in our bodies and getting to be truly human forever?

Too often, Christians are deeply ambivalent, or silent, about our embodied lives and whether they really matter in the end. Ironically, if we take Jesus' humanity seriously, then we will begin to see that "in the end" God's gift and goal is to give us our truly human, truly sexual, truly Christian lives back, then and now!

**Public Presentation:** Monday, September 15, Park View Menonite Church, 7pm  
*"Being Human, Becoming Christian: Embodied (for) Reconciliation"*

**Pastors' Breakfast:** Tuesday, September 16, The Fireplace Room, 7:30 am  
*"Jesus, Sex and the Church: How Our Heresies Disembody the Incarnate Word and his Gospel"*

**Seminary Chapel:** Tuesday, September 16, Eastern Menonite Seminary, 11:00 am  
*"The Glory of the Children of God: Spirit-Empowered Resurrection or Immortality of the Soul?"* based on Romans 8:1-4, 9b-11, 16-24a

**EMU Chapel:** Wednesday, September 17, Eastern Menonite University Lehman Auditorium, 10:00 am

*Cherith Fee Nordling is Associate Professor of Theology at Northern Seminary in Lombard, Ill.*

# AUGUST 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>31 Pray for Duane Beck, pastor of Raleigh Mennonite Church (Raleigh, NC) as he provides leadership to a community seeking to grow as disciples of Jesus, the Christ.</p>	<p>This month's prayer calendar is sponsored by <b>Rosalie &amp; Robert Eshleman</b> in loving memory of their son Lee Edward whose birthday was August 28, 1963.</p>			<p><b>He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."</b> Matthew 16:15-16 (NRSV)</p>	<p>1 Pray for Whitney Specht as she begins her term of service with tranSend in Kosova, relating to farm families in Istog. Pray that her experience with dairy farming will be an entry point of connection for her ministry.</p>	<p>2 Thank God for Justin Rittenhouse's two years of service in Albania. Pray for him as he returns to Lezha Academic Center to continue to teach math after time with family this summer.</p>
<p>3 Pray for Craig Maven as he provides creative leadership to fulfill Harrisonburg Mennonite Church's vision of <i>presence in worship, caring in growth, and global in mission.</i></p>	<p>4 Pray for tranSender Jonathan Cranston as he begins his assignment in the Philippines. Pray for the connections he will make and his re-engagement with the culture.</p>	<p>5 Remember Allen Umble as he prepares to return from Albania for a month of time with family. Pray for refreshment and reflection in this time of sharing about his work with his friends and church family.</p>	<p>6 Pray for Yugo and Grace Prasetyo as they find balance in caring for baby Jeremiah and giving leadership to their preschool ministry in Indonesia.</p>	<p>7 Give thanks to God for the ministry of Kathy Miller in Belize. Pray for her as she returns home today from her time of service.</p>	<p>8 David Shenk continues his intense work with refugees in Quito. Pray for him as he listens to many difficult stories. May God provide comfort and healing.</p>	<p>9 Pray for VMM Receptionist Sarah Schoenhals as she and Austin Showalter are joined in marriage today. May God bless their commitment to each other and the kingdom.</p>
<p>10 Pray for Paul Leaman, Head of School at Eastern Mennonite School, along with the faculty and staff as they seek to guide the faith formation of children and youth for life in the world.</p>	<p>11 Remember Katrina Schmid as she travels to Albania to teach math at Lezha Academic Center. Pray for confidence and wisdom for Katrina in her first year of teaching.</p>	<p>12 Give thanks to God for the many years of service Galen Lehman has given to work in the Caribbean and as Deaf Ministries Specialist. Pray for him as he transitions into retirement.</p>	<p>13 Remember Jay and Sheri Hartzler as they return from a year of service in Romania. May God grant them the words to share the stories etched in their hearts.</p>	<p>14 May God's Spirit fill Joshua Kirkman as he begins his service in Albania. Pray for patience and wisdom as he is immersed in a new culture and language.</p>	<p>15 Pray for safe travels and a warm reception for Caleb and Roni Kiefer as they begin their service at Maranatha School for the Deaf in Jamaica.</p>	<p>16 Pray for Phil Kanagy, pastor of Weavers Mennonite Church, as he provides spiritual leadership for people to be transformed by worship, nurtured, equipped, and carry out mission in the world.</p>
<p>17 Pray for Sam Scaggs, pastor of Mount Pleasant Mennonite Church (Chesapeake, Va.) as he provides Spirit-led leadership to a congregation that desires to be a Christ-centered family of God empowered by the Holy Spirit.</p>	<p>18 Pray for the ministry of Nancy Marshall in Belize. Pray for energy as she tutors deaf children and nurtures a church plant in the community of Orange Walk Town.</p>	<p>19 Pray for Bong Gi Choi, pastor of Peace Fellowship Church (Fairfax, Va.) as he provides compassionate ministry to his congregation.</p>	<p>20 Pray for Dimi Shahini as he serves as project manager for the Lezha Academic Center and assists with various aspects of ministry in the Lezhë church.</p>	<p>21 Pray for the 14 VMM staffers in the Harrisonburg office, supporting the workers around the globe. May God continue to provide the resources for the call to make disciples in the way of Christ.</p>	<p>22 Pray for Chuck Hostetter, pastor of Mountain View (Hickory, NC) and overseer of TCK District, that he may experience the presence of God's spirit in his various responsibilities.</p>	<p>23 The 17th annual Bike Shenandoah is less than a month away. Pray for the planners as the final details come together. Pray for the seven agencies that partner together for this event.</p>
<p>24 Pray for Kathy Hochstedler, pastor of Big Spring Mennonite Church, who is seeking to provide leadership whereby people live their lives of peace and hope in the light of Jesus' resurrection.</p>	<p>25 Remember Norma Teles as her ministry to Roma children through the Joshua Center in Albania has expanded to include educating the mothers in various life skills and good practices.</p>	<p>26 Pray for Director of Finance Jan Liskey as the VMM fiscal year end draws near. Pray for patience and productivity in the midst of many demands on her time.</p>	<p>27 Pray for the Campbell family as they return to Montenegro after two months of time with family and visiting churches in Virginia. Pray that Steve, Laura, Ruth and Esther return to the field feeling refreshed.</p>	<p>28 Pray for Aaron Kauffman as he shares about his call to mission and ministry with students at Eastern Mennonite High School. May God's Spirit stir and call more to the kingdom.</p>	<p>29 Remember the Stutzman family's ministry in Germany. Pray for wisdom as they discern into what to put their time and energy.</p>	<p>30 Pray that Jacob, Hosanna and their children will be like fruitful trees in the community they serve. May grace be the mark of their lives, overflowing into their relationships with others.</p>



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



## Announcements

A **Women's Community Bible Study** is being offered at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church using Beth Moore's study: *The Patriarchs: Encountering the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*. Explore how concepts of blessing, covenant and promise affect our lives as NT believers. Sessions will be Tuesdays, September 9 to November 18. Morning sessions are 9-11 a.m. and evening sessions are 6:30-8:15. Registration and a \$20 fee are due by August 24. After that, you will need to order your own book. For registration details, contact Jeannie Smith at 540-434-4361.

Looking for missional church resourcing with an Anabaptist perspective? Join us for the **"Church and Post-Christian Culture" Conference**, Sept. 19-20, in Carlisle, Pa., at Carlisle Brethren in Christ Church. Speakers include Anton Flores, Greg Boyd and Nelson Okanya. Jesus, community and mission are the broad themes for plenaries and breakouts. Mennonite Church USA is a partnering denomination. Contact Skip Tobin for details regarding travel and hotel details at [skip.tobin@vmmissions.org](mailto:skip.tobin@vmmissions.org) or (540) 434-9727 • (800) 707-5535. Learn more and register at [missioalliance.org/event/church-after-christendom-christian-witness-in-the-way-of-jesus/](http://missioalliance.org/event/church-after-christendom-christian-witness-in-the-way-of-jesus/)

The **Virginia Mennonite Relief Sale** will be October 3-4 at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds, Harrisonburg. The relief sales offers a little bit of everything—quilts, artwork, homemade food, antiques, crafts, music and activities for the whole family. We hope you'll join us! Proceeds go to the work of Mennonite Central Committee. Keep collecting for *Penny Power* and consider matching your church's total! Learn more at [www.vareliefsale.com](http://www.vareliefsale.com) and [vmmissions.org/support/penny-power/](http://vmmissions.org/support/penny-power/)

Everyone is invited to **Mennonite Women of Virginia annual Fall Retreat** at the Richmond Marriott West in Glen Allen, Va., (Richmond) on November 7-9. Registration starts at 4 p.m. Our speakers will be Brenda Walton, Mabelle Bender, Sharon Miller, Marian Buckwalter. Our theme for this year's retreat is "Being a Positive Woman in a Negative World," based on Proverbs 31. There will be a prayer room for everyone to use, as well as a professional counselor on hand. Come and see what the Lord will do among us!

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**Virginia Mennonite Missions** seeks volunteer receptionists who can volunteer one morning or afternoon each week to sit at the front desk answering phones, greeting visitors, and assisting the administrative assistant with occasional office tasks. If you are interested in supporting the work of VMM in this way, please contact Sarah Schoenhals at [sarah.schoenhals@vmmissions.org](mailto:sarah.schoenhals@vmmissions.org) or call (540) 434-9727.



**17<sup>th</sup> annual**  
**bike shenandoah**  
**saturday, september 20, 2014**

**location: 801 parkwood drive, harrisonburg, va**  
**(540) 434-9727 • (800) 707-5535 • [bikeshen@vmmissions.org](mailto:bikeshen@vmmissions.org)**



**Scan to learn more and register**  
**[bikeshenandoah.org](http://bikeshenandoah.org)**

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**100-mile, 62-mile, 30-mile, 15-mile and 5-mile**  
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**seven local and regional agencies working at**  
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