

A glimpse of life and 'wealth' at Asia's margins

By CARMEN SCHROCK-HURST

Daily during her time in Indonesia, Carmen Schrock-Hurst shared reflections of all she was experiencing. Here she shares a window into the context in which her daughter Grace ministers with her husband Yugo and newborn son Jeremiah. They connect with members of displaced slum communities through Servants to Asia's Urban Poor in partnership with VMM.

Today Grace and I took an excursion into the trash heap village behind their house. Fresh trash is being brought in daily by hand carts. And more shanty houses are springing up all the time. The people who live here make their living by collecting the trash from the city, bringing it here, and sorting it to find recyclables and items of value, and then selling those to dealers who take them away. They make on average \$2 a day for their hot and filthy work.

It is nearly impossible to describe what this place is like, and to answer the philosophical question of why some people in the world need to live like this. Picture multiple fields of total wall to wall trash, with a few chickens and goats wandering around and barefoot children playing in the midst of it all. Picture tiny one rooms shanties made of hodgepodge pieces of mismatched plywood and cardboard and plastic and linoleum and tin. Picture open sewage and sticky mud, and motorcycles making their way through



People make a meager living by sorting through and collecting trash that can be recycled or reused in the trash heap behind the community where Grace and Yugo serve. Courtesy of author

the muck. Picture Grace with baby Jeremy strapped on her chest, making her way through the tiny alleyways, being greeted like a celebrity by all sorts of adults who are eager to see the baby, and children who are delighted to see their "teacher."

We made three stops for visits this afternoon. One to a home of a friend of Grace's who had twins two days after Jeremy, and one twin has already died. The second stop was to see a friend whose story made such an impression on me. Her husband was off trying to earn a living on an ocean liner. Now he is home, but sadly has been paid none of the money that he was promised. He told me that entire crew of 74 people have not been paid for their 18 months of work. They are currently trying to get this injustice righted somehow, but I am fairly sure it is a David and Goliath situation and I doubt that the slum dog will beat the millionaire captain in this story.

I asked Grace as we were walking home if she ever gets used to seeing this. She said she's not "used to it," but perhaps less overwhelmed. These are her friends, these are the parents of the children she teaches. These are the people who look out for her. The giving goes both ways.

I continue to lay awake at night trying to reconcile the intensity of my last semester with the reality of this world and it simply doesn't make sense. No one here hurries. They have so few things, but seemingly all the time in the world.

In the mornings and the evenings the neighbors sit outside and chat, what else is there to do? That is what God made the cooler parts of the day for apparently. Theirs is a wealthy community in a non-material sense of the word.



Grace and Yugo lead songs for the children at Rumah Harapan, which means "house of hope." Courtesy of author



Carmen is a member of Park View Mennonite Church.

Fruit of the Spirit

By CLYDE G. KRATZ



By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.

And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-25)

A key leadership text that I embrace to guide my work as the Executive Conference Minister is the identification of nine virtues commonly associated with the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23) My confession to you is *Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own!* (Philippians 3:12)

I challenge you as follower of Jesus to make this your goal as we embark on the most difficult task of living in a frenzied culture, polarized by a divided populace, and a Christian community seeking relevancy in a postmodern world.

As I envision the life of the church in the midst of tense time, I long for Spirit-filled leaders that are able to rise above the human tendency to engage competitively to be right, to change the future at all costs, or to label one's opponent in such a way that demonizes them in the community.

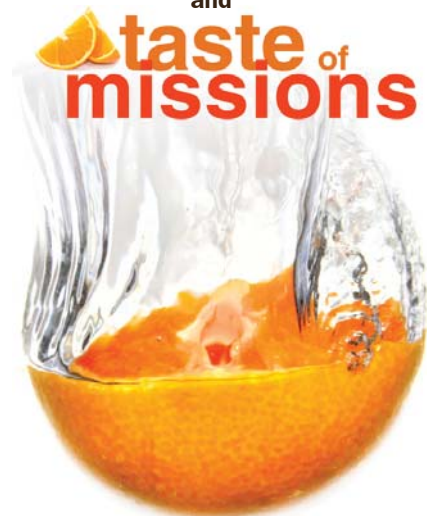
I want to challenge myself and others to move beyond these human behaviors to an authentic divine encounter that enables each of us to model the fruits of the Spirit. It is not achieved by human endeavor alone, but is the fruit of a person's abiding relationship with God that is seeking to live out the purposes of God not only in terms of social change, but also in relationship with all members of the body of Christ.

As we prepare our hearts and minds to be participants in Virginia Mennonite Conference Assembly, I invite you to commit yourself to an extended time of prayer, offer your hopes and dreams to God, and make a commitment to demonstrate the love of God to all people—not just those that represent your own point of view. The body of Christ, the people of Virginia Mennonite Conference, are called to a common purpose: *making disciples as we go!* We need all God's people modeling the fruits of the Spirit in order to demonstrate the authentic way of Christ in our world.

Clyde G. Kratz
Executive Conference Minister
Virginia Mennonite Conference

UPCOMING EVENT

tranSend commissioning
and



Thursday, July 17, 6-8 p.m.
Sunnyslope Farm, Dayton, Va.

(MST Dinner begins at 5:30.)

Enjoy a meaningful time of worship and sending for the new tranSend class at a commissioning service, followed by a *Taste of Missions*. Peter Eberly, pastor of Eastside Church, will speak at the commissioning and the Ears to the Ground Family will lead music during and after the program.

The following will be commissioned for service:

Jonathan Cranston
Caleb and Veronica Kiefer
Joshua Kirkman
Daniel Owolabi
Katrina Schmid
Whitney Specht



Making Disciples As We Go!

Registration is still open for Virginia Mennonite Conference Assembly, July 24-26, at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Charlottesville, Va.

Visit www.virginiacommunity.org/assembly for details and online registration (through July 3.) Our worship, work, and reflection will be guided by Jesus' *Great Commission* (Matthew 28: 18-20).

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Virginia
Mennonite
Missions

Reporting:
9/1/13 to 5/31/14

■ revenue
■ expenses

Mission Fund

Special Projects

\$430,910

\$951,383

\$526,311

\$1,001,036

Bible quizzing bridges Old and New Testaments

By MATT TROST

The weekend of March 21-23 saw hundreds of youth and volunteers from several states converge on the campus of Lancaster Mennonite High School, in Lancaster, Pa. Out of the more than 70 quiz teams at the tournament, three teams from Virginia Mennonite Conference congregations in the Harrisonburg area (Community Mennonite and Crossroads) competed with other teams from Ohio and Pennsylvania. By the end of the day on Saturday, with many tense and exhilarating quiz matches behind them, the teams enjoyed some relaxation, games, and ice cream together.

After spending the 2013 and 2014 seasons in the Old Testament (OT), focusing on the life of David and the story of Exodus, I was anticipating and wondering which part of the New Testament (NT) would be chosen for the 2015 season. The area coordinators met on Saturday night, and decided on a combination of books that would be studied over the next two seasons. For 2015, we'll study all of the gospel of Mark and the first few chapters of Acts.

Reflecting on our recent study of Exodus, it struck me again how important it is to consider both the OT and NT texts for use in Bible quizzing. The stories of Moses, the night of the first passover, and God's deliverance of the people of Israel tied right in



A Bible quizzing team comprised of youth from Community Mennonite and Crossroads Mennonite churches practices before a match. Photo courtesy of author

with the Easter story and subsequent story of the disciples traveling on the road to Emmaus. That story tells how the disciples were unable to fully comprehend what had happened to Jesus, and so their companion opened the scriptures to them beginning with Moses.

It is quite powerful to see how themes from the OT are resurrected in the NT, and how the OT stories give meaning and depth to the NT.

I'm thankful for the youth, parents, and congregations that have participated in Bible quizzing over the years. It has given many youth the opportunity to interact with

each other and forge friendships around the central activity of Bible study. Those that have participated in quizzing have been exposed to both OT and NT texts, allowing them to develop a greater depth of understanding of the scriptures.

It is a joy to work with the youth and coaches, and the staff who give of their time and energy to make Bible quizzing a reality.



Matt is the coordinator of Virginia Mennonite Conference Bible quizzing and a former champion quizzier.

Annual Church Planter's Retreat explores missional culture

By SARAH SCHOENHALS

The annual Church Planter's Retreat was held June 15-16 at the Highland Retreat Center. The retreat, hosted by

Virginia Mennonite Missions, in partnership with Virginia Mennonite Conference, was held as a way to bless and empower those associated with VMC who are actively

Church planters at the retreat engage in a session with J.R. Woodward. Photo by author



engaged in or exploring church planting and/or the launching of new missional communities. Over 25 participants along with their families enjoyed giving and receiving from each other and from God throughout the 24 hour retreat. Participants received input during sessions from J.R. Woodward, a lively communicator, experienced church planter, and author of *Creating a Missional Culture*. Pray that these church planters would be filled with the Spirit as they seek God's direction to be sent to the world that Jesus loves.



Sarah is Receptionist/Administrative Assistant for Virginia Mennonite Missions.

Working from a place of rest

By NANCY MARSHALL

This year, Mennonite mission workers in Central America gathered at our annual retreat in Jaguar Creek, Belize.

Amos Stoltzfus from Eastern Mennonite Missions spoke to us about learning to “work from a place of rest.” He based his lectures on the book by Tony Horsfall. Amos shared lots of insightful thoughts. The most vivid for me was the concept that we need to leave margins around our busyness. We need to allow for time for accidental encounters with people.

Jesus left a margin of time around his journey through Samaria. Because he was available, he was able to speak into the life of the woman at the well (John 11).



Participants at the EMM retreat in Belize share with each other. Courtesy of author

Full schedules also make us feel stressed out. I know that is true for me. It would be wise to plan my day with spaces (margins) between the “have-to-dos.”

Last week I went to visit someone in the hospital. There was another person visiting who asked for a ride home. I said I would gladly give her a ride, thinking about the margin of time I had planned, thankfully. Then just after I dropped her off, I noticed another woman on the side of the road. She is the mother of one of our Deaf Church members. Waving to get me to stop, she said her car was broken and asked for a ride to her home 20 minutes the other way. I was glad I had a bit of flexibility with my schedule. If I hadn't left the time margins, I would still have been willing to drive both women, but would have been feeling stressed out about being late for cooking dinner. If we don't work from a place of rest, we are working from a place of stress. Doing that too much really ruins my witness.

Each day after Amos' input session, we had some time to talk about the “issues” and prayer needs in our lives. Some of the missionaries were just starting. They wondered what shape their mission work would take. One couple will end their 22 years of mission work next month. They wonder if God wants them to stay in the US or return to Latin America to do something else. Many were asking questions about the future. Sulmi shared that she will go to high school this fall. She will be the only deaf person in the school. She will have a new interpreter. She wonders if she will have any friends, if she will understand the classes, and if the interpreter will understand her. It seemed to me that lots of people in our group had these invisible question marks floating about their heads. I did, too.

Specifically, I wonder if Nathanael and Spring will be able to raise all of their funds to come. I wonder if another person that I think God has tapped will come to interpret for Morine in August. I wonder who will help with our children's ministry after

Kathy and Chelsea return home.

Every morning we had an hour of quiet time. When I sat down at the picnic table near the road, I saw this image and received this reassurance from God:

Nancy, you see this road? You see the light along the path? That's my light. I will be with you wherever you go. Did you notice that you cannot see the road beyond the bend? Don't worry, I am already there. Once you approach the bend you will see to the next bend. What does the road look like there? There will be rough patches and muddy spots, but I will be with you. I will walk with you and shine my light on the way you should go.

Leaning on God, letting him direct my ways, trusting Him in the rough patches, this is how to find rest in God, true rest for the journey.



Nancy serves in Orange Walk Town, Belize, with VMM and Eastern Mennonite Missions.

Silver linings on the clouds

By JANET BLOSSER

Part of missions are the surprises that you don't yet know about. Only God knows what is in store for us. On a recent trip to the Balkans with Lynn Suter, Director of International Ministries, and Ken Horst, outgoing Balkans Director, I wondered what I getting myself in for. However, I knew that we had bathed our journey in prayer.

The clouds abound in the region. Vince and LaVonne Ramella are in the usual throws of language learning and wonder when the gospel will take root in Istog, Kosovo. In Albania, Allen Umble took us to Goricaj to see a small church which flourished 10 years ago, but is no longer functioning. In another town, a family locked the doors to the building the church had been using, prohibiting anyone from entering. At the young Lezha Academic Center (LAC), the American teachers shared many frustrations of cross-cultural teaching. The Lezhe church was experiencing relationship struggles. In Montenegro, we sat with the Campbells enmeshed in discipling several men struggling with drug addictions. At each stop, we continued to pray. We knew the work was much larger than we could handle or accomplish. It was God's work.

However, amidst the clouds are the silver linings you never expect. It seemed that at each step, God was going before us, showing us things and opening the way. In Kosovo, we experienced the beauty of relationships the Ramella's already have with their neighbors. God opened our eyes to a suffering culture as we listened to a man who shared with us the horror of the war just 15 years ago. In Goricaj, just in front of that little church, we met Seni, who had come to faith when the church was flourishing and shared how he is now involved in ministry in the States and nurturing a vision to help his native Albania in the area of education. In Lezhe, the family of girl who has accepted Christ since becoming an LAC student took us to dinner and thanked us over and over again

Silver linings continued on page 5

Sharing cultures through singing and dancing

By LISA MAST

They were excited...*really, really* excited to have Touring Choir from Eastern Mennonite High School (EMHS) visit us in Lezhe, Albania. A few of the students remembered the choir's first visit in 2012, so they had a bit of a reference point for what to expect. But this visit was going to be very different—we were going to give a joint concert.

Music is definitely part of Albanian culture, but choir is not. Festivals and celebrations often include children, so many of the students had performed as a group with their peers during elementary or middle school, but singing in a choir with printed music and a rehearsal schedule was brand new. From what I've been able to learn, music, in some fashion, is part of the Albanian curriculum into middle school, though it bears little resemblance to what we might expect in an American school. They recognized some of the basic music symbols – quarter note, treble clef, etc., but of course they used different terms. And they knew solfege (Do, Re, Mi), though I quickly discovered they had been taught using fixed do – a system where middle C is always Do. We began after school rehearsals in early November and over the next few months, with attendance fluctuation and other growing pains, we slowly became the Lezha Academic Center Chamber Singers.

Everyone dances in Albania, *everyone*. From the time they can walk, they are joining the circle of the traditional dances called vallja. The rhythms are complex and the footwork sometimes equally so. It occurred to me that their dancing is like our singing. (Allow me a bit of latitude, please. I know this is not true for all Mennonites or Americans.) From early on, we sing togeth-



The Lezha Academic Center choir and the Eastern Mennonite School Touring Choir after a joint concert. Photo courtesy of author

er at school and church and our melodies sometimes grow to four part harmony. This comparison made sense to my students and they were excited to share part of their culture with EMHS. We knew the music skill level between LAC and EMHS would be very different, but this allowed us to turn the tables and give my students something to teach them.

They could not contain their excitement. The days we had been counting down to for most of the school year had finally arrived! Their smiles bubbled into joyous laughter with each new part of the weekend. They eagerly welcomed the Touring Choir students into their homes late Thursday night and by the time we said mirupafshim (goodbye) on Sunday morning, true friendships had been formed. We sang together and laughed together. We were all moved by hearing Dini Shahini's faith story about becoming the first believer in the city of Lezha and visited the local Mennonite church on a walk through town. We climbed steep hills to visit castles, walked along the shores of the Adriatic Sea, enjoyed vast quantities of fresh cherries from local fruit markets, discovered Albanian fast food called siflaqe (think gyro), visited numerous coffee bars, and took lots of selfies.

The concert was held in the courtyard at LAC on Saturday night with perfect weather. The audience included LAC families and students, local church members, area VMM workers, and even several famous Albanian musicians. Each choir sang their own section of the program, with a

joint performance directed by Jay Hartzler. Knowing laughter, followed by rhythmic clapping, broke out among the audience during the last song, which was an Albanian folk song sung in Albanian. It was clearly the crowd favorite! And as promised, we ended the night with dancing. Lines and circles of LAC and EMHS students wove through the yard to the beat of traditional songs as they celebrated in true Albanian style.

The presence of God was real and present in our time together. Music was the medium that brought us together, but it was almost secondary to the sharing of cultures, personal and faith stories, and relationship building that we experienced. Thanks to Facebook and modern technology, the friendships will continue. To quote one LAC singer, "I loved it! I loved every single second of these days!" Another said, "We had the time of our lives and undoubtedly I will never forget this experience." I've used a quote from the musician Bono as a theme this year. "Music can change the world because it can change people." I think it's fair to say we have all been changed by singing, dancing, and sharing together.

See photos and read some LAC student journals at goatsandmusic.wordpress.com (Lisa's blog) and visit the "Europe 2014 Touring Choir-EMHS" Facebook page.



Lisa has served this year as Director of Music at Lezha Academic Center through *Partners in Mission*.

Silver linings continued from page 4

for helping to bring LAC to Albania. We experienced God's redeeming work as broken relationships are being mended. And we saw the ways both LAC and the Joshua Center Day Care are impacting young lives.

In Montenegro, the Campbells have found a wonderful young couple who have become their cultural mentors and Christian friends.

I came away with so much *hope*, knowing full well that God had gone before us in amazing ways and is at work. God is doing far beyond what we might imagine, trans-

forming not only those where we serve, but our own lives as well.



Janet is the newly-appointed Mediterranean Director for Virginia Mennonite Missions.

Virginia Mennonite Relief Sale gearing up for October 3-4

By LISA LEHMAN

Mark your calendars now for the 48th Annual Virginia Mennonite Relief Sale on Oct. 3-4 at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds! All your favorite foods and activities will be back again, so you can already be looking forward to the delicious food, 5k Race for Relief, sporting clay shoot, auction, farmer's market, children's activities, silent auction, craft items, and of course catching up with friends and family!

This year the sale will benefit the following organizations and projects (in addition to MCC): *Bridge of Hope*, working with local congregations to provide mentors to single mothers helping to give them financial stabilization and provide housing, *Supportive Housing for Women*, a part of the Waynesboro Area Refuge Ministry which provides supportive, traditional housing for women with children, *Penny Power*, which will help fund MCC's Global Family program, and two VMM projects: the Joshua Center in Albania, and Maranatha School for the Deaf in Jamaica.

Now is the time for you to get involved! Start collecting coins for Penny Power, fin-



Auctioneer Jack Bowman takes bids for a quilt at the 2013 relief sale. Photo by Jim Bishop

ish those projects to donate to the live or silent auctions, form plans to make some baked goods with friends, volunteer with applesauce making or apple butter boiling, or help with set-up and tear down. There are numerous volunteer opportunities for all!

If you have questions about how to get involved, please contact your church Relief Sale representative.

Pictures of auction items will soon be on the website, so check for updates frequently. You can also now sit front and center at the auction on a padded seat! Reserve your seat online for just \$15. For more information or to sign up to receive a monthly e-newsletter update, go to www.vareliefsale.com and follow us on Facebook.

Lisa serves as Publicity Committee chair of the Relief Sale Board.

Singing in the presence of God

By MARY GOLDEN HUGHES

The 40 member EMHS Touring Choir enjoyed life-changing experiences as they traveled to Albania, Bulgaria and Romania this June. The following quotes taken from student journals illustrate the powerful ways in which God was present to them. We thank everyone who made this experience possible for our students through prayer, encouragement and financial support. To read a complete account of their journals and to view their performance videos and photos, find them on Facebook at "Europe 2014 – Eastern Mennonite High School."

"None of us had ever sung a full concert in a building with such good acoustics, and I could sense our excitement. We sang probably the best concert of this year, and hearing the notes ring for several seconds was incredible. We decided to sing #606 for

them as the finale. I could feel God's presence as we sang and the sunlight started shining through one of the windows directly towards me during the last song." (Jeremiah Shultz '15)

"I know with confidence that in giving up my control to God, all things will turn out well. I want to be called. I want to use my gifts and talents for the betterment of people in need. I long to see where God will lead me. Today I longed for the future." (Lillian Hughes '15)

"As we held hands with the kids and each other, God's presence was very real



The Touring Choir enjoyed singing at the Church on the Hill in Sighisoara, Romania. Courtesy photo

and very close. As we said our goodbyes, and reluctantly returned to the church as the kids went home, sadness and memories lingered. We shared our experiences with each other, but many questions remained. How can we find beauty and happiness in a suffering people

and joy in a place where there is no hope? How do we respond to the experience we had today when we get back home?" (Sylvia Mast '15)

Mary is Director of Advancement at Eastern Mennonite School.

JULY 2014

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| <p><i>Prayer calendar sponsored by</i></p> <p>Irv Hershey</p> <p>in honor of Michael & Ruth's ministry in South Asia.</p> | <p>1 Pray for Chelsea Kobylarz, Jordan Shettler and Justin Rittenhouse as they return home from their transSend assignments. Thank God for the contributions they have made to the kingdom.</p> | <p>2 Pray for Michael Shenk III, a co-overseer of Northern District, as he provides leadership to equip pastors to lead healthy congregations.</p> | <p>3 Pray for a refreshing time of connecting with family and friends for Steve, Laura, Ruth & Esther Campbell as they are on home leave. Pray that God will give them the words to share with congregations about their growing outreach.</p> | <p>4 Pray for Joel as he prepares for a team to join him this summer in China. May God grant them creativity and wisdom as they plan. Pray for the seeds of the gospel that will be planted in this time.</p> | <p>5 Pray for Kevin Gasser, pastor of Staunton Mennonite Church, as he provides leadership to a congregation that seeks to provide love, hope and light into the community.</p> | |
| <p>6 Pray for the Strobe family as they settle into life in Thailand. Ask God to strengthen their team bonds and be gracious in language acquisition.</p> | <p>7 Pray for the transSenders gathered for ten days of orientation. Pray for Martin Rhodes as he gives primary leadership to this time of formation and training.</p> | <p>8 Remember Rafael and Solange Tartari and their children. Pray especially for good health, restful nights and strength and energy for their growing ministries.</p> | <p>9 Pray for Harold Miller, pastor of Trissels Mennonite Church, as he provides leadership to a congregation seeking to know Christ, be transformed, make Christ known, whereby God's grace, healing, and hope flow through them to the world.</p> | <p>10 Pray for Peter Nguyen, pastor of Vietnamese Christian Fellowship, Falls Church, Va, as he provides spirit led leadership to the congregation.</p> | <p>11 Skip Tobin and Aaron Kauffman are presenting workshops at the Anabaptist Renewal Circles event this weekend. Pray for fruitful connections to come from this gathering.</p> | <p>12 Pray for the Riddle family as they work in Italy. Pray that their sons will sense God's loving presence in a new and tangible way this day.</p> |
| <p>13 Remember the Knepp family as they end their assignment in Jamaica. Pray that God will give Rodney and Eve the words and the energy to help their children transition from the place they have considered their home over the past three years.</p> | <p>14 Pray for Dave Brubaker as he leads sessions on transforming conflict for the VMM workers preparing for new assignments. Pray that these skills can be used to mitigate misunderstandings and challenges workers may face.</p> | <p>15 Thank God for the gifts and contributions that Lisa Mast and Cindy Moyer have made at Lezha Academic Center. Pray for them as they transition into new work and reconnect with family and friends.</p> | <p>16 Remember workers Michael & Ruth and their young family. Pray for boldness and open doors as they continue to develop relationships with their neighbors.</p> | <p>17 Pray for the transSend workers being commissioned today for the coming year. Give thanks to God for their courage in answering the call and their commitment to make disciples in the way of Christ.</p> | <p>18 Thank God for the energy and passion of Skip Tobin, VMM Director of USA Ministries. Pray for the witness of multiplied missional communities within VMC and across our nation.</p> | <p>19 Remember Nancy Marshall and her ministry at Jesus' Deaf Church in Orange Walk Belize. Ask God to provide her with patience and creativity as she ministers to deaf children.</p> |
| <p>20 Pray for Laura Amstutz, a leader of The Table, as she provides leadership to an authentic community of Christ where followers nurture wholeness, practice hospitality, and foster participatory worship while engaged in the biblical narrative.</p> | <p>21 Remember the Green family as they settle into life and ministry in Italy. Pray for their two young boys as they find routines. Ask God provide support and connections through parenting.</p> | <p>22 Pray for David Shenk, VMM and Mission Network worker in Ecuador, and fiancée Eliana, as they prepare for their upcoming wedding. Pray for safe travels for his parents, Keaton & Betty as they go to Quito to be part of this celebration.</p> | <p>23 Remember the VMM Board as the gather to meet. Pray for their time of discernment as they give leadership and oversight to the growing ministries of the organization.</p> | <p>24 "Making Disciples As We Go" is the theme for VMC's Assembly meeting, in Charlottesville, Va. Pray for Clyde G. Kratz, VMC Executive Conference Minister, as he brings the evening message.</p> | <p>25 Pray for the delegate sessions and discernment happening at VMC Assembly. Pray for Aaron Kauffman, President of VMM, as he preaches at the evening worship gathering.</p> | <p>26 Pray for traveling mercies for those returning to their homes and congregations following VMC Assembly. Pray that the words of inspiration and encouragement they have heard will enliven their communities.</p> |
| <p>27 Pray for David Lehman, pastor of Williamsburg Mennonite, as he provides leadership to members as they seek to walk with God and seek to know Him more and make Him known.</p> | <p>28 Remember the Ramella family in Kosovo. Pray for their studies in language acquisition, that they would be encouraged this day as they grow in their skill.</p> | <p>29 Give thanks to God for the signs of the kingdom in the ministry of Mark & Sarah Schoenhals and their connections with the Life Enrichment Church. Pray that the Spirit would continue to be manifest in the lives of the believers.</p> | <p>30 Pray for the ministry of the Prasetyo's ministry in a slum community in Indonesia. Pray for the cohesion of their team as well as wisdom as they adjust to parenthood.</p> | <p>31 Pray for Joshua Fyffe, pastor of West Liberty Mennonite, Kentucky as he provides spirit led leadership to the congregation.</p> | <p><i>The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."</i></p> <p>John 4:36-38 (NRSV)</p> | |



Connections (USPS 007-205)
 Virginia Mennonite Missions
 Virginia Mennonite Conference
 901 Parkwood Drive
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Announcements

Anabaptist Renewal Circles will have its **National Conference 2014**, July 10-12, at Weaverland Mennonite Church, East Earl, Pa. Aaron Kauffman, president of VMM and Skip Tobin, USA Ministries Director, will both lead workshops at this event. There will be 20-plus workshops, child-care for ages 3-12, a concert of prayer on Thursday evening and a youth revival on Friday evening. Learn more at anabaptistrenewal.org



Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center's **Family Retreat**, August 3-6, is specifically designed to help you and your family connect with each other and with God. You'll enjoy our peaceful, wooded facility, comfortable lodging, great food, fun activities and recreation options, worship times and devotions to help your family focus on God. Register by July 20 and receive a \$20 discount. For more information or to register, visit www.wcrc.info.

Anabaptists, neo-Anabaptists and evangelicals will gather to explore Christian witness in the way of Jesus at a **"Church and Post-Christian Culture" Conference**, Sept. 19-20, in Carlisle, Pa. Speakers include Anton Flores, Greg Boyd and Nelson Okanya. Jesus, community and mission are the broad themes for plenaries and breakouts. This will be a significant opportunity for different Anabaptist tribes to engage with each other and with evangelicals drawn to Anabaptism. Register and use the code MCUSA15 to receive a 15% discount (first 50 registrants) at www.missionalliance.org

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The **International Guest House** in Washington D.C. seeks volunteers to extend hospitality to guests from all over the world in a community atmosphere. The Guest House is owned and operated by Alleghany Mennonite Conference. If you are able to serve from one month to one year, please contact hosts Orv and Cleta Gingerich at (202) 726-5808 or igh-dc@juno.com

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 or call (540) 434-9727.



21 seniors graduate from Lezha Academic Center

On Friday evening, June 13, LAC held its second graduation with 21 seniors finishing their studies at LAC.

It was a picture perfect evening as we gathered in the lawn and listened to the student speakers. Dr. Marlene Wall, president of LCC International University, Lithuania, in her commencement address challenged the graduates to build their lives on the rock as Jesus instructed in Matthew 7:24-27.

LAC was honored to have a number of former teachers from the States present at the graduation ceremony. As these students move on to the next chapter of their lives, let us pray that they remember and incorporate into their lives the values and truths exemplified by the LAC staff.