



**AMBS**

explore ~ prepare ~ serve

# christian spirituality fact sheet

## ■ overview

At AMBS, spiritual formation is a foundational part of all study, with the Master of Arts in Christian Formation as the one program that focuses primarily on the church's ministries of personal and communal formation and transformation. Students in this program work alongside others being developed in crucial areas of Christian ministry: pastoring, teaching, counseling, academics. Our approach to spiritual formation is not in isolation from these vital expressions of the Christian faith but sees them as integrally related.

Our course of studies offers a well-rounded program of Scripture, history, theology, ethics and ministry formation, as well as courses in one's concentration.

We respond to current interest in spiritual formation and honor the wider traditions of spiritual formation. While we appreciate what can be learned from other Christians, we specifically explore how Anabaptist-Mennonites understand and engage in Christian spiritual formation.

We strongly appreciate the role of intellectual and theological challenges in this work. At AMBS, you will be part of a Christian community where faculty, staff and students are involved actively in their own Christian development and formation.

## ■ programs of study

In the Master of Arts in Christian Formation degree program, students complete 60 credit hours. Courses in the program span the breadth of the AMBS curriculum, including courses in Bible, theology, history and ethics together with courses focusing more specifically on spiritual guidance, Christian spirituality and spiritual disciplines. Your program of study will include a practicum and opportunities for practical experience in spiritual direction, both as a directee and director, and in other aspects of ministry.

For the Certificate in Christian Spiritual Formation, students take core courses and a practicum to enhance their work of fostering spiritual growth in their congregations.

## ■ ministry options

Training in spiritual formation at AMBS has several possibilities for ministry. Some students also engage in these studies for their own spiritual growth, faith enhancement, or to deal with important issues that they face. While the MA in Christian Formation is not intended for the training of sole or lead pastors of congregations, it is beneficial for those already

Master of Arts in Christian Formation, Christian Spirituality concentration (60 credit hours)  
Certificate in Christian Spiritual Formation (27 credit hours)

## faculty

### **Ted Koontz, Ph.D.**

Professor of Ethics and Peace Studies  
*Godward: Personal Stories of Grace* (Herald, 1996), editor and contributor

### **Rachel Miller Jacobs, M.Div.**

Sessional faculty

### **Marlene Kropf, D.Min.**

Associate Professor in Spiritual Formation and Worship  
*Preparing Sunday Dinner: A Collaborative Approach to Worship and Preaching* (Herald, 2005), co-author  
*Singing: A Mennonite Voice* (Herald, 2001), co-author

### **John Rempel, Th.D.**

Assistant Professor of Theology and Anabaptist Studies  
"Worship in the Anabaptist Tradition," in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship* (Oxford University, 2005)  
"Ritual as My Third Language: an autobiographical account" (adaptation of 2003 Ritual Conference address), in *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (January 2005)

### **Rebecca Slough, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor of Worship and the Arts  
Director, Spiritual Formation Program  
Academic Dean  
*Preparing Sunday Dinner: A Collaborative Approach to Worship and Preaching* (Herald, 2005), co-author  
"Acting the Word: Preaching in the Context of Worship" in *Anabaptist Preaching: A Conversation Between Pulpit, Pew, and Bible* (Cascadia, 2003)

involved in pastoral ministry. It is a good program for associate or assistant pastors with primary responsibilities in the area of discipleship or spiritual formation. This training is also useful for those involved in teaching, spiritual guidance, and youth ministries in the church.

## ■ key resources

As well as having an excellent library (with knowledgeable and helpful staff) and faculty with expertise in various areas, AMBS has given considerable attention and resources to enhancing the spiritual formation of its students.

We encourage the practice of **spiritual disciplines** in various ways. Practicing spiritual disciplines is required in several classes, and students and faculty have the opportunity to pray the Daily Office together, to participate in weekly intercessory and centering prayer sessions and to use the prayer labyrinth for meditation time. Spiritual disciplines seminars are available in areas of prayer, journaling, Scripture and family spirituality. Other classes address Christian spirituality and peacemaking, contemporary spirituality, and the history of Christian spirituality.

**Corporate worship** in our unique and lovely chapel is at the center of AMBS life. Our worship involves shared leadership and incorporates a variety of styles. Monthly Evening Song and Prayer worship services are patterned after the ecumenical worship services of the Taizé community in France.

Various locations on campus encourage the practice of **prayer**, including several prayer rooms, locations for spiritual guidance, and an outdoor labyrinth.

AMBS generally offers at least two **spiritual formation retreats** per semester and publicizes retreats in the area. The seminary is within easy access of several **retreat centers**.

We subsidize **spiritual guidance** for students and also provide training in this important ministry.

As Christian spirituality is connected to the **Body of Christ**, we foster community life in many ways. Students are invited to participate in forums, daily breaks, chapel services, choir ensemble, and in a local congregation.

AMBS promotes engagement with the neighborhood and wider world through particular courses, the peace committee, opportunities for service and volunteering, and public witness.

## ■ additional information

- **AMBS web site:** [www.ambs.edu](http://www.ambs.edu)  
Select *Academics*, then *Degree programs*, then *Master of Arts in Christian Formation*.
- **AMBS Admissions Office**  
[admissions@ambs.edu](mailto:admissions@ambs.edu) or 800.964.2627
- **AMBS Catalog**  
Request from Admissions Office or consult online at [www.ambs.edu/student-resources/catalog](http://www.ambs.edu/student-resources/catalog)

## graduate comments

"At its core the Master of Arts program at AMBS rekindled in me a fascination with my own spiritual formation. As a youth minister, I appreciate the posture this concentration has toward viewing the congregation as a living organism where the faith questions of adolescence are embraced as spiritually beneficial for the growth of the whole."

Curt Weaver, MACF,  
Service Adventure unit leader, Albany, Ore.

"I have come to appreciate in a new way God's story and how our stories fit into the larger realm of God's kingdom. Personally, I have gained a deep grace and confidence as I have studied here."

Mary Etta King, MACF, co-director,  
Kairos School of Spiritual Formation,  
Lancaster, Pa.

"My experience in the MACF program has surpassed my expectations. The education I've received has not only contributed to my spiritual formation as a pastor, but it has also equipped me with many tools I use regularly in tending spiritual formation in a congregation."

Jane Roeschley, MACF, associate pastor,  
Mennonite Church of Normal, Ill.

"The counseling and spiritual formation courses at AMBS gave me the courage to speak my story, the story of my formation. AMBS also provided me with an environment and a community where I could boldly share my story with others."

Elisabeth Kunjam, MACF, youth ministry  
worker with several Mennonite conferences in Rajnandgaon, India