



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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AMBS alumni award honors two with global involvement

Elkhart, Ind. (AMBS) - Ahmed Haile and Yorifumi Yaguchi are the 2007 recipients of the Alumni Ministry and Service Award for Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. The awards were announced on May 18, during the annual Dean's breakfast when graduates are welcomed to the alumni association.

Haile currently is a peace studies instructor at Daystar University in Nairobi, Kenya. In addition, Ahmed gives leadership to Somali Christians who are studying at the university.

In 1991, after study at Goshen College and completing a MAPS degree at AMBS in 1989, Haile was called back to his homeland of Somalia to serve in a delegation drafting a peace proposal to settle conflict between warring factions. The home where they were meeting was shelled and he was so badly wounded that one leg needed to be immediately amputated. He survived that and a life-threatening infection, returning to the U.S. in 1992 where his wife, Martha, and two children were living.

Haile is known as someone who brings together Muslim tribal culture and Mennonite peace theology, has keen global insights and good cross-cultural skills.

Fred Lesakale, a 2007 AMBS graduate from Kenya, was a student of Haile's at Daystar. He says that several hundred students from all over Africa have gone through the peace studies program there, studying with Haile. In a context where even being a Christian puts him in danger, Haile continues to be actively involved in reconciliation between various armed and competing factions that seek power in Somalia.

Yaguchi combines an unusual mix of theology, pastoral work and poetry writing. A 1965 B.D. graduate of Goshen Biblical Seminary, Yorifumi was a professor of English poetry

and Bible literature at Hokusei Gakuen University in Sapporo for 33 years and edited Poetry Nippon, a Japanese magazine of English poems. He also was a pastor of several churches for 40 years.

A commitment to peace and memories of World War II are at the heart of much of Yaguchi's work. Six books of English poetry and eight books of Japanese poetry feature his work. The most recent of these is *The Poetry of Yorifumi Yaguchi: A Japanese Voice in English*, edited by Wilbur Birky. His poetry has been published in England, Australia, Israel, Greece, India and China.

According to Birky, Yorifumi became a Christian through serving as a translator for Howard Charles when Charles was lecturing in Japan and through the influence of missionary Ralph Buckwalter. Willard Swartley, who nominated Yaguchi for the award, says he is skilled in making Jesus attractive in the Japanese context.

When she announced the award recipients, Louise Wideman, president of the AMBS alumni association, said, "Ahmed Haile of Kenya and Yorifumi Yaguchi of Japan have contributed significantly to peacemaking and reconciliation in their countries. Given the turbulent times in which we live, it seemed timely to honor and celebrate the impact of these AMBS grads around the world."

Haile will receive his award at the San José gathering of MC USA in July. Yaguchi will receive his award in November when AMBS President Nelson Kraybill travels to Japan.

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Mary E. Klassen



Ahmed Haile



Yorifumi Yaguchi