



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 22, 2007

Graduates called to belong to Christ

Goshen, Ind. (AMBS) – The thirty-nine graduates of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary were asked to hear God’s call as an ongoing call, bigger than what they might do for a paycheck.

April Yamasaki, pastor of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, B.C., addressed the graduates at the May 19 commencement service at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Sharing the experience of her own unexpected call to congregational ministry, Yamasaki told graduates, “God’s call is more than a noun, an event to look back on. God’s call is a verb, a movement, a direction. What sustains me is not that God called me 14 years ago, but that God is continuing to call me even today.”

Then sharing examples of people she has encountered in her ministry, Yamasaki emphasized that “whatever your paid employment might be, your calling is wider than that. It is to belong to Jesus Christ.”

In response to the charge to the graduates, given by Alan Kreider, associate professor of church history and mission, the graduates sang a new hymn text written for the occasion by graduate Adam Tice. Joining in on the third verse, the congregation sang, “Be our living guide; let your Spirit be our strength and song; with the gifts that you provide, lead where we belong.”

The 2007 graduates of AMBS came from four countries, including two from Kenya and one from Indonesia in addition to eight from Canada and the 28 from the United States. Nineteen received the Master of Divinity degree, three the Master of Arts: Peace Studies, eight the Master of Arts: Theological Studies, seven the Master of Arts in Christian Formation, and two the Certificate in Theological Studies. The class included a brother and sister, Rachel and

Ryan Siemens; and two married couples, Charleen and Kendall Jongejan Harder and Juanita Laverty and David Sararus, all from Canada.

Thirteen graduates already have pastoral ministry assignments that they are continuing or beginning and nine more are seeking pastoral ministry placements. Other future plans include mission work, spiritual direction, clinical social work, further graduate study, Bible teaching and writing, advocacy work for people with disabilities, and work with Church World Service.

AMBS is a seminary of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada. The two seminaries that formed AMBS have been preparing workers for the church since 1945; they began their association on the Elkhart campus in 1958.

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Mary E. Klassen



Jenifer Eriksen-Morales was one of thirty-nine students graduating from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary on Saturday, May 19, at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. Eriksen-Morales will begin June 1 as Minister of Transitional Ministries for Franconia Mennonite Conference. Thirteen of the graduates already have pastoral ministry assignments they will begin or are continuing; another nine are seeking assignments in congregational pastoral ministry.

Photo by Mary E. Klassen



Samuel Voth Schrag was one of thirty-nine students who graduated from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in the commencement service at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on May 19. Sam received a master of divinity degree and is seeking a pastoral ministry position. Rachel, his wife (pictured with him), will enter graduate studies in social work this fall. Thirteen of the graduates already have pastoral ministry assignments they will begin or continue; another nine are seeking assignments in congregational pastoral ministry.
Photo by Mary E. Klassen