



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 1, 2008

Helen Kruger receives AMBS Alumni Ministry and Service Award

Elkhart, Ind. (AMBS) – Helen Kruger of Saskatoon, Sask., is the recipient of the 2008 AMBS Alumni Ministry and Service Award. Announcement of this award was made at the Dean’s Breakfast, May 23, an event at AMBS that honors current graduates and welcomes them into the AMBS Alumni Association.

Education has been a theme through Kruger’s own life—both as a student and as a teacher. This started when she was 17 and served as teacher of a country school in Saskatchewan. She also was houseparent and dean of women at Rosthern Junior College, and taught at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate and in Clinical Pastoral Education programs. Through these experiences, she pursued her own learning: a B.S. in nursing at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., in 1958, an M.R.E at AMBS in 1961, an M.A. in English in 1974, an M.A. in German in 1980, and an M.Div. at AMBS in 1996 after taking Clinical Pastoral Education courses in Saskatoon.

Kruger was the first woman to serve on the board of Mennonite Biblical Seminary, beginning in 1974 and serving for 12 years. In other areas, too, she was at the forefront of women in ministry and leadership roles. After receiving the M.Div., she became one of only 16 women who were certified teaching supervisors in CAPPE, the Canadian association of chaplains.

Ordained in 1995 at the age of 61, Kruger and her husband, William, became co-pastors of Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary in 1997, and later they were interim pastors in Swift Current. The resume of her ministry includes serving on the boards of Mennonite World Conference, the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Commission on Education of the General Conference; serving as vice chair of the Saskatchewan Mennonite Conference; and writing Christian education curriculum.

Kruger is noted for the strengths of connecting with others, her ability to effectively address issues, and for persistence even in difficult situations. She has helped to foster acceptance of women in ministry by the way in which she provides pastoral care and listens to people. She also has worked for justice in situations of abuse and discrimination.

Teaching was something she always loved doing, Kruger said. She also explained, “Teaching CPE was the most rewarding vocation in my life. I could use all my other experience—theology, teaching empathising, and my nursing background to be a knowledgeable and intuitive teacher of students.”

Kruger will receive the award at the Mennonite Conference Canada Assembly in Winnipeg, Man., in July.

The AMBS Alumni Ministry and Service Award honors graduates whose ministry is marked by faithful and effective service or distinguished accomplishment.

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Mary E. Klassen