

AMBS alumni news

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Why I didn't eat pancakes on Shrove Tuesday

I like pancakes. But I decided not to participate in Shrove Tuesday at our congregation. No one, as far as I could tell, did any theological reflection about the significance of this particular festival in the church year. Why in the world is it called Shrove Tuesday? Isn't this a Catholic thing that Anabaptists discarded centuries ago?

Maybe so. But didn't we miss out on an opportunity to do some teaching on the nature of the Christian life? All of us need to take time for spiritual renewal, time for confession of sins done and not done. Lent invites God's Spirit to cleanse our lives for the reality of spring and the promise of new life. Shrove Tuesday prepares us for Ash Wednesday which carries us through the forty days of fasting ending with Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday.

Once the reality of this HOLY WEEK is appreciated, I will eat pancakes on pancake Tuesday!

Darrell Fast

AMBS Alumni Association President.

Spanish-language graduate students get acquainted with AMBS community in Elkhart

The first Spanish-language graduate program in pastoral ministry offered by AMBS concluded in February, with six students in the course on worship and preaching.

Seminario Bíblico Anabautista, which began in 2006, included eight graduate-level courses taught in Dallas, Texas. The seminary's Engaging Pastors program sent several professors to Dallas to sit in on classes, learn to know the students and find out about the congregations in which they minister.

Then, before the end of both programs—Engaging Pastors in December 2009, and Seminario in February—AMBS brought the Hispanic pastors to Elkhart.

Nina Bartelt Lanctot, assistant director of Engaging Pastors, explained, "The goal was mutual learning. The Seminario students could see resources here and become aware of those that could be useful to them; and the AMBS community could learn to know a slice of Mennonite Church USA that these pastors represent."

Blanca Vargas, pastor of Iglesia Menonita Comunidad de Vida, San Antonio, Texas, reported she valued "the

sharing that we had over lunch with all of the administrative and teaching staff, and their interest in getting to know us and to listen to us."

The group also visited MennoHof in Shipshewana and Mennonite Central Committee facilities in Goshen where AMBS alumni Jorge Vielman and Saulo Padilla explained the work of MCC Great Lakes.

Juan Limones, pastor of Iglesia Menonita Luz del Evangelico, Dallas, reflected, "I became aware that the purpose of the Mennonite Church is very missional and missionary, and that there is also a concern for [providing] education for others. Well, for me, it was a great blessing."

Seminario students who came to Elkhart, in addition to Blanca and Juan, were Alberto and Aurora Parchmont, pastors of Iglesia Menonita Casa del Alfarero, Pasadena, Texas; Samuel Moran, pastor of Ministerios Restauración, Oak Grove, Ore.; and Oneida Dueñas of Ferris, Texas.

Seminario Bíblico Anabautista students who completed course work earned credits toward an AMBS Certificate in Theological Studies. ●



Seminario Bíblico Anabautista students posed in front of the AMBS chapel during their October visit to campus. In the front row are Blanca Vargas, Alberto Parchmont, Aurora Parchmont, Juan Limones, Oneida Dueñas, and Samuel Moran. Behind them are AMBS faculty members and the instructor for the last course, Nina Bartelt Lanctot, Daniel Schipani, Lois Barrett and José Ortiz.

Pastoring in tough economic times (Part 2)

This series continues with reflections from two alumni. Reflections also were published in the fall 2009 issue of *AMBS Alumni News*.

Patrick Preheim
Nutana Park Mennonite Church
Saskatoon, Sask.
MDiv 1997

Tell stories. Tell the story of famine which drives the near retired Jacob off the farm. Reflect on Priscilla and Aquila's relocation because business slowed. Delve into the entrepreneurial challenges found in Acts chapters 12-19. Need I mention Job or a Psalm of lament? These biblical illustrations, and other passages, intersect the lives of many who are mired in red ink.

On a given Sunday these days I look out across the congregation and see people who have postponed retirement on account of devalued mutual funds. I see young adults whose debt to income ratio, the lending agencies say, will keep them paying rent when a mortgage would actually save them money. I see other households putting 40 to 50 percent of their disposable income toward housing. Rising agricultural input costs for the farmer and declining markets for the business community have made some families financially vulnerable. I see them and they see me, but they don't see each other. The stigma and shame

associated with financial difficulty keep many people suffering in isolation.

Telling stories from the pulpit, biblical and otherwise, is one form of pastoral care which helps normalize the experience of those who are hurting. The stories serve to remind us that we are not the first to experience loss. We are still valuable. God will bring purpose and meaning out of hardship. Resurrection is the keystone of our faith, and we should not bypass Good Friday in getting there.

Arden Shank
Neighborhood Housing Services of South Florida, Miami, Fla.
MDiv 1985

Experts say lenders could file 100,000 foreclosures in South Florida during 2009. At Neighborhood Housing Services of South Florida (NHSSF) where I have been president since 2001, we certainly experience the impact of homeowners in default and foreclosure; homeowners are coming to us by the thousands for assistance.

While we provide a whole line of services for getting families into homeownership and keeping them there in this expensive market, our foreclosure prevention services have exploded in the last two years. Between our two offices in Miami and Ft. Lauderdale, we have

ten employees (with this number likely to increase) focused only on foreclosure prevention. We gather borrower documents, talk with borrowers about their financial situation, help them create a family budget, and negotiate with lenders for loan modifications.

As a seminary graduate, I use my role as president to care for NHSSF as an institution as it has grown to meet the market demand for intervention in very difficult situations. I provide implicit pastoral care for employees through an open, understandable and ethical personnel policy and organizational structure. Specifically, we set up foreclosure prevention processes to reduce the emotional toll on employees who encounter these crises every day.

Our message to pastors working with people in financial crisis: listen and care, and also urge people to get professional financial counseling from organizations like NHSSF. I remind our staff that they are not pastors, priests or social workers and shouldn't pretend to be by listening to long sad stories of homeowners in foreclosure; our job is to help structure a family budget and negotiate a loan modification. ●

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www.ams.edu/iTunesU/

Vision accepted for ATLA Religion database

Sometime in the next year, citations for articles in *Vision: a Journal for Church and Theology* will become available to researchers around the world who use the ATLA Religion Database, the premier database in the field of religion and theology. Eventually *Vision* articles also will be available for online reading in ATLASerials, the full text database that supplements ATLA RDB and that AMBS provides to alumni. *Vision* joins over a 150 scholarly journals that have been selected by leading religion scholars for inclusion in the ATLASerials. AMBS alumni (twelve credit hours or more) may contact Eileen Saner (esaner@ams.edu) to receive access information for ATLASerials. ●

Listen to presentations at AMBS

Pastors Week sessions, Theological Lectureship presentations, sermons from chapel services and forum discussions are all available for your listening on AMBS's iTunes U site. There are several ways you can get access to these, so the first step is to visit the AMBS Web page: www.ams.edu/news-and-publications/iTunesU. Select the best option for you and enjoy keeping in touch with what's happening at AMBS. ●

Jared Jennette (MDiv 2004) has joined the Alumni Association Executive Committee as member-at-large. Jared is pastor of Center Chapel United Methodist Church in Marion, Ind. He is filling the unexpired term of Catherine Koziatek.

Margaret Shaw (student 2003–2006) is pastor of St. John's Episcopal Church, Essex, N.Y.

Dawn Ruth Nelson (MDiv 1979) has written *A Mennonite Woman: Exploring Spiritual Life and Identity*, published by Cascadia. It explores the "story of twentieth-century Mennonite agrarian spirituality through the lens of one woman's life and one seminary" [AMBS].

Jane Thorley Roeschley (MACF 2007 and board member) is chaplain of Meadows (Ill.) Mennonite Retirement Community.

David Voth (MAPS 1980) authored the book *Quality Victim Advocacy: A Field Guide*, published by Workplay Publishing. He has been director of Crime Victim Services, Ohio, since 1985. The book is a guide for measuring and improving quality and outcomes in crime victim service programs.

Willmar Harder (MDiv 2001) and Hannah Neufeld and their three sons will begin a service

assignment with Low German Mennonites in Bolivia in April. Willmar has been pastor of Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

Lowell Gerber (MDiv 1980) ended his pastorate at Lititz (Pa.) Mennonite Church in August. He and Lois served two months at the International Guest House in Washington, D.C.

Palmer Becker (MRE 1965) published *What is an Anabaptist Christian* in the *Missio Dei* series from Mennonite Mission Network, and it has been translated into seven languages. From January to June 2009, he taught at Bethlehem Bible College, and this spring will teach and lead workshops in emerging Mennonite churches in Vietnam, Hong Kong, China and Korea.

Jean Kilheffer Hess (MATS 2004) recently launched StoryShare, a business providing oral history interview services for individuals, businesses and institutions.

Tim Singenstreu (MDiv 2003) is pastor of Salem Mennonite Church, Wooster, Ohio.

Daniel Smith-Christopher (MDiv 1981) a professor of theological studies at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, Calif.,

was interviewed recently by a Sydney, Australia, national radio program, "Peace on Earth: Ancient and Modern Visions."

Tina Stoltzfus Schlabach (MDiv 2003) is pastor of care at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. She is working with others to begin Stephen Ministry in the congregation and has completed the foundational level of a training program in Gestalt pastoral care.

Angel Luis Miranda (MDiv 1981) is retired and living at Greencroft Center in Goshen, Ind. He volunteers for the Center for Healing and Hope in Goshen.

Takanori Inoue (MATS 2009) is serving as an intern with OMS International, Inc. He assists the director of the Asian Mission department with research and missionary recruitment. Hatoko Inoue, who previously worked for this organization in Japan, serves as a volunteer for the development office. Hatoko worked as a volunteer for the AMBS Church Leadership Center and Engaging Pastors for two years.

Ordinations

Rachel Siemens (MDiv 2007) was ordained October 11, 2009, at First Mennonite Church, Wadsworth, Ohio.

Ruth R. Harder (MDiv 2007) was ordained September 27, 2009, at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

Juanita Laverty (MDiv 2007) was ordained June 28, 2009, at Hanover Mennonite Church, Hanover, Ont.

Char Harris Allen (MDiv 2005) was ordained as an Elder in the United Methodist Church on June 28, 2009.

Deaths

Willard "Dick" Martin (BD 1960) of Goshen, died December 11, 2009.

Anna M. Detweiler, secretary to Marlin E. Miller when he was president of GBS, died in an automobile accident on January 15, 2010.

George Unger (BD 1957) of Goshen, Ind., died January 29, 2010.

Linea Reimer Geiser (MDiv 1985) of Goshen, Ind., died February 4, 2010.

Additional alumni news notes

The AMBS Web site has links to other Web sites with news about AMBS alumni. Discover what alumni are writing, who's being interviewed, and what alumni bloggers are thinking. Visit www.ambs.edu/alumni/news-activities. ●



Pastors Week 2010

Praying at the end of a small group discussion time during Pastors Week are Bock Ki Kim (MDiv 2002), pastor of Vision Mennonite Church, London, Ont.; Todd Friesen (MDiv 2000), pastor of Lombard Mennonite Church, Lombard, Ill.; Mindy Smith (back to camera) from Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.; and Eileen Saner (MATS 1995), AMBS librarian.

Mary Schertz, New Testament professor, and Rachel Miller Jacobs (MDiv 2000), currently a doctoral student, led participants in what they called "reading the Bible confessionally."

Each day, a text from Luke became the focus of a three-part movement. First, the text was read, and this reading came from a fresh translation by one of the two leaders. Then the group was invited to "let the text read us," by taking ample time for participants to reflect on how the Scripture speaks to them in their ministry and how their contexts speak to the text. The final movement, adoration and worship, focused on the text and included communion each day.

To read more about Pastors Week, see the news release on the AMBS Web site. You also can listen to recordings of the morning sessions from Pastors Week by selecting the iTunesU link on the AMBS's home page: www.ambs.edu.


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A seminary of
 Mennonite Church USA and
 Mennonite Church Canada

Engaging Pastors Summative Conference explores what makes healthy congregations



Extended time for small group discussion was included in the Summative Conference at AMBS, Dec. 1–3, the event that concluded the five-year Engaging Pastors project. Participants, such as these three—Brenda Hostetler Meyer (MDiv 2006), pastor of Benton Mennonite Church near Goshen, Ind.; John Rempel (MDiv 1974), AMBS professor; and Jerry Buhler (student 1999–2001), area church minister for Saskatchewan—represented pastors, church leaders and theological educators who gathered for the event. Together they grappled with issues at the heart of strengthening congregations and pastors in the Mennonite Church, both in Canada and the U.S. To read more about the Summative Conference and learnings from Engaging Pastors, visit the AMBS Web site: www.ams.edu/EngagingPastors.

AMBS notes

Sherri Martin-Carman (MDiv 1998) has been named the new AMBS admissions counsellor for Canada. She continues as AMBS development associate for Canada, working primarily in Ontario and Manitoba, from her home office in Elmira, Ont. **Jonathan Neufeld** (MDiv 2005) was admissions counsellor for Canada until recently, when he ended that assignment to focus more fully on his ministry for Seattle (Wash.) Mennonite Church.

Karl Stutzman, currently interim librarian for access services and acquisitions and former student, has been named digital access services librarian, a position he will begin in July.

Walter Sawatsky, professor of church history and mission, recently edited *Prophetic and Renewal Movements: The Prague Consultations* (Proceedings of the Prague VI and Prague VII Consultations, 2000 and 2003), published by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Geneva, Switzerland, #47 in the Studies from the

World Alliance of Reformed Churches series.

Nina Bartelt Lanctot (MDiv 2002) ended her assignment as assistant director of Engaging Pastors at AMBS at the end of January. She continues as pastor of Florence Church of the Brethren-Mennonite in Florence, Mich. Currently she is on sabbatical in Guatemala.

Rafael Barahona (MATS 1997) ended his assignment as Director of Leadership Programs with the AMBS Church Leadership Center at the end of February. He continues as associate director of Mennonite Education Agency.

Joni Sancken (student 1999–2000) is co-teaching Foundations of Worship and Preaching with Rebecca Slough, academic dean, during spring semester. Joni holds a Ph.D. in homiletics from Emmanuel College, Toronto School of Theology, University of Toronto.