

AMBS alumni news

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“Something different”

I really, really want to call a security company to make an appointment for them to look at my house and give me a quote on what it would cost to install a system that would help to keep my family safe. But for many reasons I don't really want a security system. The only reason I even think about this today is because my home is in a lovely, small Midwestern town that since two weeks ago lives with the unsolved murder of a beloved Goshen College professor.

How can this be? What is going on here? I am afraid. I am angry. I am sad, and so is my community. I ask myself, “What is my response to all of this as an Anabaptist-Mennonite pastor?” I know what my gut-level response is, but what should my response be?

And then I read the reflections in this issue about what being Anabaptist means in the worlds of the three AMBS alums who write for this issue, and I am humbled, ministered to and convicted again of the “something different” that we have to offer the world. Forgiveness, reconciliation and peacemaking in the face of tension, bitterness, anger, fear and violence. Amen. May we take this message into our communities, our public squares, and around the world in the name of Jesus and his radically different new way of life.

—Mandy Yoder, Alumni Association president

Being Anabaptist today

We asked several alumni to name something that describes Anabaptism today. Three alumni responded for this issue; look for more in the next issue.

Sally Schreiner Youngquist MDiv 1987

I became an Anabaptist through belonging and behaving before adopting all the beliefs and historical legacy of Reba Place Fellowship (RPF). My brother, now a Presbyterian pastor, gave me the feedback, “The Anabaptists don't have a systematic theology like Calvin's *Institutes*.” I retorted, “Well, the difference lies in Mennonites putting their energy into practicing what they believe so they demonstrate something different to the world.”

RPF founder John W. Miller named Mars, Mammon and Me as the prevailing idols in our society. I can see how media, government and the economic engines of mass consumerism breed conformity, captivity and fear within our culture of individualism and so-called free choice. It takes a group effort to resist these

powers. I have thrown in my lot with one such experiment for 40 years, learning practices of communal resistance.

Worship repeatedly calls us to declare our allegiance to Jesus before family, country and way of life. Group discernment lends wisdom and accountability to major decision-making. Pooling our income and living on voluntary service-type allowances provide us with what we need while challenging our greed. Locating ourselves in urban areas where violence flares calls us to prayer and peace-building efforts with neighbors. Intentional proximity, table fellowship, evangelistic welcome and mutual aid are shared among people of diverse incomes and backgrounds in our surrounding congregations. Through such communal practices we live into Jesus' new way of life.

Our mistakes are legion and our learning process slow, especially as we wrestle with the entrenched power of racism within and around us. “Seeking first the Kingdom” requires faithfulness over the long haul, with many bouts

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Contributors to the Global Mennonite History Project joined in a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing at the Shenk Mission Lectureship, Oct. 28, 2011. More than 50 people were involved in writing, editing or serving on the organizing committee, including Adhi Dharma, Ken Shenk, I.P. Asheervadem, Luke Martin, Chiou-Lang (Paulus) Pan, Steve Nolt, Jaime Prieto and C. Arnold Roth. See more on page 4.

Being Anabaptist today (cont.)

of failure. Yet we are encouraged to see Jesus raising up a new crop of Anabaptist-leaning intentional communities these days as demonstration plots of the now / not yet Kingdom.

Sally Schreiner Youngquist, MDiv 1987, is community leader of Reba Place Fellowship in Evanston and Chicago, Ill. She is a member of Living Water Community Church in Chicago, a Mennonite Church USA congregation where she was a founding pastor.

Humphrey Akogyeram MATS 2000

With my thirty years experience of serving the African Initiated Churches (AIC) in Ghana, I found out that conflict is destroying the moral fabric of the AICs in Ghana. Conflict has negatively affected most AIC members through bitterness, hatred, disunity, tension, fear, enmity, anger, verbal and physical abuse, and secessions.

For me, the Anabaptist themes that are relevant to the AICs are Accommodation and Reconciliation. Thus accommodating the “enemy” is an important part of the process of reconciliation. Reconciliation is a significant aspect of peacemaking. In a church where conflict is common, reconciliation is a theme that needs constant consideration in ways that are appropriate to the context of the AICs. Reconciliation is also a subject at the center of Christianity. For “the gospel is about overcoming alienation and estrangement between God and ourselves, between us and others, and between all of us and creation.” [John W. De Gruchy,

Reconciliation: Restoring Justice]

In the book of Matthew, Jesus gave us a process of reconciling with the sinner, the one we may consider as “enemy”: From the teachings of Jesus Christ it is important to note that for a genuine reconciliation to take place there must be repentance and forgiveness. Conflict is really resolved and the resolution really internalized when confession and forgiveness occurs. Forgiveness therefore “becomes concrete among men and women who need to be reconciled among themselves and with God.” [John Driver, *Community and Commitment*]. The church is a community in which members are called to forgive and accommodate each other and thus experience reconciliation. “Through forgiving relationships among His people, God makes visible His forgiveness in the world.” [Driver]

Humphrey Akogyeram is registrar and lecturer at Good News Theological College and Seminary, Accra, Ghana. What is published here is an excerpt; you can read his full contribution at www.ams.edu/news-and-publications/publications/alumni-news

Paul Heidebrecht MATS 2000

In my current role as director of Mennonite Central Committee Canada’s advocacy office in Ottawa, Ont., it is my privilege to speak to the Government of Canada on behalf of the people MCC partners with in Canada and overseas. For politicians who presume that I am a spokesperson for Canadian Mennonites, this broader

mandate comes as a surprise.

Mennonites in Canada who support the work of MCC are often surprised that modern-day Anabaptists would be known and respected in the halls of power in Ottawa. Of course, this doesn’t mean that politicians always listen to our advice! In any case, constituents are even more surprised to learn that, in a country where religious language is rarely used in the public square, a good part of my time is spent making moral arguments and addressing theological debates.

The biggest surprise I have experienced is that being an Anabaptist-Mennonite in Ottawa means that I am a valued member of several ecumenical communities. For example, as MCC’s representative on the board of KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, I have been welcomed into the fold by counterparts from the Anglican, Christian Reformed, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Quaker, Roman Catholic, and United churches. Their hospitality is informed by knowledge of church history, and respect for the distinctive contribution that Anabaptist-Mennonites have made in recent years to the quest for justice and peace. There is a clear sense that the witness of the body of Christ would be incomplete without us. This frees me to deepen and focus my own efforts on the issues and concerns I know best, and challenges me to situate this work in a much broader context. ●

Paul Heidebrecht is the director of MCC Canada’s advocacy office in Ottawa. He earned a PhD in Religious Studies from Marquette University. He and Carmen Brubacher (MDiv 2000) have four children.

Chapel renovation continues



Walls are rising on the annex to the Chapel of the Sermon on the Mount. Main-floor washrooms, a larger gathering area and an elevator to the basement are included in the new space. The worship space is being refurbished for more efficient climate control and better lighting. New chairs will be added, but the design and acoustics will not change.

Call for nominations

The AMBS Alumni Association Executive Committee invites all alumni to nominate graduates for the annual Alumni Ministry and Service Award. The purpose of the award is to recognize and celebrate outstanding ministry and service by graduates. If there is someone you would like to nominate for the 2011 award, please download a nomination form from the AMBS website and send the completed form to Ron Ringenberg no later than January 1. Visit www.ams.edu/alumni to find a link to the form or email Ron Ringenberg at rringenb@ams.edu to request a printed version of the form. ●

Ordinations

Adam Tice (MACF 2007), June 12 at Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church.

Paula Killough (MDiv 2008), June 5, at Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, for her work with Mennonite Mission Network.

Heidi Siemens-Rhodes (MDiv 2005), May 29 at Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Christina Litwiller (MDiv 2009), June 26 at Salina (Kan.) Mennonite Church.

Jean Ness (MDiv 2007), Cromwell, Ind., was ordained in June as Elder in the United Methodist Church at the Indiana Conference.

Jennifer Eriksen Morales (MDiv 2007), May 15 as a conference LEADership Minister with Franconia Mennonite Conference.

Renee Kanagy (MDiv 2008), Sept. 25 at New Creation Fellowship in Newton, Kan.

News notes

Angel Luis Miranda (MDiv 1982) is a volunteer chaplain for the Center for Healing and Hope in Goshen. He is an overseer for Iglesia del Buen Pastor and teaches a Spanish Sunday School class at Prairie Street Mennonite Church.

Rainer W. Burkart (student 1982–83) is pastor of Enkenbach (Germany) Mennonite Church. Previously he served the Evangelical Mennonite Congregation in Neuwied (Germany) since 1997.

Create Space for Peace collects the writings of **Gene Stoltzfus (MDiv 1972)**, whose life was committed to peacemaking for more than forty years. The book was edited by his widow, **Dorothy Friesen (MAPS 1976)**, and long-time Filipina colleague, Marilen Abesamis. The book was a finalist

in the 2011 International Book Awards Spirituality-Inspirational category.

Bradley Roth (MDiv 2006) is serving for a year in Cuzco, Peru, with Eastern Mennonite Missions, doing biblical and theological training for local pastors. Lici, his wife, is working with the health promoter program at the clinic the mission supports.

Chet Miller-Eshleman (former MAPS student) pastor of LifeBridge Community Church, Dover, Ohio, is serving as Ohio Conference Church Planting Coach on a volunteer basis.

Nancy Kauffmann (MDiv 1981) celebrated the 30th anniversary of her first ministry assignment with the Mennonite Church and of her ordination on Sept. 27, 1981. She is a member of the Leadership Development team for Mennonite Church USA.

Wanda Stopher (MDiv student) is associate pastor at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio, and is a regional pastor with Ohio Conference.

Miriam Zehr (MACF student) was licensed on May 22 at Oak

Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville, Ohio.

Willard Swartley (BD 1962, faculty 1978–2004, professor emeritus) is a contributor to *Preaching God's Transforming Justice: A Lectionary Commentary, Year B, Featuring 22 New Holy Days for Justice*, a new commentary published by Westminster John Knox Press. This work is the first to help the preacher focus on the implications for social justice in every biblical reading in the Revised Common Lectionary. Each lectionary day and each Holy Day for Justice has an essay that helps the preacher integrate social justice concerns into his or her preaching. The 90 contributors are a diverse group of biblical scholars, preachers, social activists and professors of preaching. For more information, visit www.wjkbooks.com

Deaths

Alden Bohn died June 13 in Goshen, Ind. Previously he was a counselor in the Elkhart Community Schools.

Irene Kanagy died August 15 in Indianapolis, Ind.



Elizabeth Miller, MATS student, serves as Anabaptist history and identity promoter in Bogotá, Colombia, serving with Mennonite Central Committee. At the Shenk Mission Lectureship at AMBS, Oct. 27–29, Elizabeth presented a paper exploring approaches to mission among migrants in Colombia.

Menno Epp (MDiv 1971) died August 2 in Saskatoon, Sask. He was a Bible school teacher and pastor for 40 years. He was moderator of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada for five years and served as chair of the AMBS board for five years. ●

AMBS notes

Rosemary (Rosie) Reschly retired after 23 years of service to AMBS. She was executive assistant to the president, dean, vice president and board, and served nine different people in the president's office. **Stephanie Coleman** is the new executive assistant to the president, dean, vice president and board.

Take our moments and our days: An Anabaptist prayer book (Advent through Pentecost) is one of *Worship Leader* magazine Editor's Picks for devotionals for 2011. The editorial team for the Anabaptist prayer book consisted of Mary Schertz, John Rempel, Arthur Paul Boers, Eleanor Kreider, Willard Swartley and Barbara Nelson Gingerich. It was published by the Institute of Mennonite Studies at AMBS and Herald Press. Visit www.bluetoad.com/publication/?i=84109&pre=1 (see p. 22).

Martin Luther King Jr. Day at AMBS to feature Dr. Vincent Harding

AMBS will host Dr. Vincent Harding—activist, author, teacher and friend to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.—on January 16 and 17, 2012. Save the date and visit www.ambs.edu/news-and-publications/mlk2012 for updates.

“Like,” then “Share”

Visit www.facebook.com/follow-AMBS to see postings of photos, quotes, upcoming events and messages from alumni. If you have a Facebook account, select “Like” to get regular updates of what's happening at AMBS delivered to you. You can also “Share” the news with your friends and spread the word about what AMBS offers.



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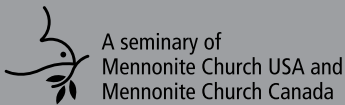
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A seminary of
 Mennonite Church USA and
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Barbara Nkala, writer for the Africa volume of the Global Mennonite History Project, talks with Everett Metzler (MDiv 1976) and Margaret Metzler at the Shenk Mission Lectureship, October 27–29.

Lectureship marks end of global history project

The biennial Shenk Mission Lectureship, October 27–29, celebrated the completion of the five-volume Global Mennonite History Project.

Coordinated by Mennonite World Conference, the project grew out of a study group at AMBS in 1995. Wilbert Shenk, former AMBS mission professor, was credited with setting the vision for this project, which used writers from each continent to tell their own history in the Anabaptist and Mennonite faith.

Series editor C. Arnold Snyder said, "Telling our history from the point of view of local churches has been very fruitful. We will be able to grow as a global church only in so far as we enable all global voices to be heard and genuinely accept their legitimacy."

Alumni who contributed include **Chiou-Lang (Paulus) Pan** (MATS 2004), **Premanand Bagh** (Certificate 1996), **Neal Blough** (MDiv 1975), **Hanspeter Jecker** (MATS 1988), **Linda Shelly** (MAPS 1989), **Janet Reedy** (MAPS 1985), **Steven Nolt** (MATS 1994), **Earl Zimmerman** (MDiv 1996), **Ken Shenk** (MDiv 1990), and **Larry Miller** (MDiv 1975). Four volumes are available from the bookstore at AMBS (www.ambs.edu/bookstore). The North America volume will be released soon.

Walter Sawatsky, professor of church history and mission, and John A. Lapp, co-general editor of the history series, coordinated the conference. For a fuller story and more photos, visit www.ambs.edu/shenk-lectureship ●

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