



a l u m n i n e w s

Pastoring in the context of disasters

Fall 2006
Volume 12 Issue 2

A pastor's role—ever changing, always new. We are granted privileges and freedoms that few jobs permit. Yet, we also encounter challenges for which we are often unprepared. Disasters, caused by the forces of nature or the brokenness of humanity, demand immediate leadership responses the likes of which most of us have never had to face.

With the increase of tragedy worldwide, it seemed timely to invite some written reflections on pastoring in context of disasters. The fall and winter issues of *AMBS Alumni News* include four excellent pieces written by pastors who have lived and walked with others in the midst of these sudden life changing traumas. In this issue, we hear from AMBS alumni Phil Mininger and Stefanus Christian Haryono. May their experiences and insights both inspire and challenge us to consider how we might respond to a disaster.

**Louise Wideman
Alumni Association
president**

**Phil Mininger
MDiv 1993**

I recently read the observation that any human crisis or pain can somehow be borne if it is given voice through story.

I believe that. And I believe that listening to that story is the primary role of a pastor, or for that matter any compassionate person, in a time of crisis. Even though there is much else to do, perhaps one of the most important will be helping create a context for listening and meaning making.

I cannot speak from a long-term context of pastoring in the midst of disaster. Rather I am blessed to serve a congregation that affirms my skills in carpentry as part of my pastoral ministry and particularly my joy in creating opportunities for people to physically work together toward a common good. This past year I've had three opportunities to travel with members of my congregation to the Gulf Coast area in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

My counsel to the folks who accompany me is always, "This is not a time to focus only on how much we can get done. This is a time to use our

physical services as a vehicle to open opportunities for listening!"

In listening to those who have gone through deep crisis, one will hear the very depths of a person's life—their faith, their fears, their dignity. In some cases, not much of a physical nature will be left and the survivor is thrown into an evaluation of what really matters. This sorting out is a personal process but it also requires a communal dimension—telling the story.

It is powerful to me that I first learned the mystery of this interchange, telling and listening, in that same geographical area when our family lived in Mississippi during part of the 70s and 80s. I was the one who was changed and transformed by the privilege of listening to my African American neighbors' stories. In that case it was not a story of natural disaster but human-made disaster. But all the same, I know significant healing came in these conversations, for both storyteller and listener.

*Phil Mininger is
Co-pastor of Paoli (Ind.)
Mennonite Fellowship* ●

**Stefanus Christian Haryono
MACF 2001**

A tectonic earthquake at 5.9 on the Richter scale shook Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in the early morning on Saturday, May 27, 2006. It destroyed 200,000 houses, injured 300,000 people and killed more than 5,500. We had cries and agony everywhere. Hospitals used parking lots because they were overloaded with patients. Hundreds of continuation earthquakes were still happening in the three months after May 27. It was a shocking experience without power to handle it. Spontaneously I had spiritual grief: "Lord, why did you do this? What's the good thing to come from this tragedy?"

Two days later, I, along with students, became volunteers at Bethesda Hospital, which is beside Duta Wacana Christian University where I work as a chaplain. All schools and campuses were closed and students become volunteers.

I couldn't stop my tears when I saw a lot of people from outside of Yogyakarta and even from other countries who came and helped us. Something happened in my spirit.

(continued on next page)

Pastoring in the context of disasters

(continued)

When I came to be with victims as a volunteer, my spiritual grief was healed gradually. I believe that is the process of "the wounded healer."

In Pundong village—10 km from the epicenter, a suburb of Yogyakarta—there is a small Mennonite church (Gereja Kristen Muria Indonesia/GKMI) in which 95 percent of members' houses were broken. Mennonite Diakonia Service (MDS), a committee of GKMI synod, has been working to help people in Pundong and other places. Right now, MDS is rebuilding 1,500 temporary shelters and 100 permanent houses. MDS's help is not just for Christians but also for Moslems. GKMI synod gets aid from the church members, Mennonite Central Committee and Coraid (a Catholic foundation in Europe).

Yogyakarta has been trying to wake up from

this tragedy. We put banners on the street to encourage people. One powerful sentence with Javanese philosophy is, "Ojo nelongso, kabeh seko sing kuwoso. Ayo awit di tata." That means, "Don't mourn because all is come from the Almighty. Let's start to rebuild." I praise God because this comes out from Yogyakarta as the center of Javanese culture.

Amazing stories come out from this tragedy. One day, when GKMI churches surrounding Muria mountain area in Central Java sent logistics to Pundong, we got help from Hizbullah, a radical group of Islam. They guarded the logistic cars so we able to contribute to the people. Also Hizbullah worked with us to build shelters. This is a miracle. The tectonic earthquake broke down houses but a depth of love builds humanity!

Rev. Stefanus Christian Haryono is chaplain of Duta Wacana Christian University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Stefanus explains: Yogyakarta is a unique province in Java because there is a Sultan (King) even though it is a part of Republic Indonesia. Yogyakarta as a tourism city has a lot of historical sites of Hinduism, Buddhism and Javanese mysticism, such as temples, Sultan's palace, and museums. The city is well known as a student's city because hundreds of colleges and universities are there. ●



Mary E. Klassen

At the first forum of the school year, students, faculty and staff discussed values important in life at AMBS. Loren Johns, dean, and Janeen Bertsche Johnson, campus pastor, began the discussion by explaining, "A seminary is a unique institution. We are not a church, but we are very closely identified with the church. And in this setting we can and do practice some of the values and ideals we have for the church." The values included diversity and respect; care for one another; care for body, mind, and spirit; care for creation; and anti-racism.

Call for nominations

The AMBS Alumni Association Executive Committee invites all alumni to nominate graduates for the annual Alumni Ministry and Service Awards. The purpose of the award is to recognize and celebrate outstanding ministry and service by graduates.

The enclosed nomination form gives detailed criteria. Please note that all graduates of Goshen Biblical Seminary (GBS), Mennonite Biblical Seminary (MBS) and AMBS qualify.

Use the enclosed form to make your nomination by January 1, 2007. Awards will be announced in May. One or two awards are given each year.

Winners will receive \$500 toward registration fees for AMBS courses or continuing education events. ●

Don't pass up these opportunities

Openings are still available for pastors to participate in two study opportunities at AMBS:

Funded Pastor Sabbatical: Openings are still available for pastors to receive financial support for sabbaticals at AMBS. Applications for fall 2007 are due on April 28, 2007. Openings are still available for spring 2007.

Pastor-Faculty Study Group: Pastors may register for a study group focusing on the writings of Paul, led by Jacob Elias, professor of New Testament.

Information is available at www.ambs.edu (select Church Leadership Center). You also may call 574 296-6269, or write to eamer@ambs.edu. ●

Fall 2006 Volume 12 Issue 2

AMBS Alumni News is published three times a year by Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. It is intended to keep alumni informed about each other and AMBS. Please send suggestions for articles or information about alumni activities, honors, publications, to: Mary E. Klassen, editor
574 296-6229
mklassen@ambs.edu

Alumni Director: Ron Ringenberg

Alumni Association Executive Committee:
Louise Wideman, president
Darrell Fast, vice president
Jill Wright
Myron Schrag
Pamela Yoder

Alumni News

Jill Wright (MDiv 2002), Fort Wayne, Ind., is cochair of one of 14 discernment groups to assist in the Imagine Indiana project. This project will work on a plan to unite the North and South Indiana Conferences of the United Methodist Church.

Richard A. Patton was ordained for specialized ministries in the North Central Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Fernando Enns is teaching at the University of Hamburg in Germany. He is director of the new Institute on Peace - Church - Theology. He writes, "This is the first chair ever for theology from a free church perspective within the theological faculty of a German University."

Lamar Bender (MDiv 1985) completed Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training in May 2005 and became certified as an EMT in July 2005. He volunteers for Hesston, Kan., EMS and works full-time as a registered nurse for Schowalter Villa in Hesston.

Hugo Neufeld (MDiv 1990) authored the book, *The North End Lives: A Journey Through Poverty Terrain*, published by Herald Press in May 2006.

Mark Weidner (MDiv 1973) and Kay Fransen were married on January 14, 2006.

They currently reside in Bluffton, Ohio.

Kathleen Miller (MDiv 2001) was ordained as an elder in the United Methodist Church on June 3, 2006. She lives in South Bend, Ind.

Guishik Nam (MDiv 2005) was ordained at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church near Goshen, Ind., on June 25, 2006. Guishik has returned to Seoul, Korea, with his wife, YounJu Park, to start a new Mennonite church.

Mona Sauder (MDiv 2004) was ordained at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio, on June 11, 2006.

Kathy Colliver (MDiv 2001) has been serving as chaplain at Shore Haven Living Center in Grand Haven, Mich., since March 2006.

Rachel Hartzler (MACF 2004) was licensed for ministry in Central District Conference and installed as pastor at Pleasant Oaks Mennonite Church in Middlebury, Ind., on May 28, 2006.

Ed (MDiv 1986) and **Kathrine** (MATS 1987) **Rempel** retired from work as conference ministers for Rocky Mountain Mennonite Conference at the end of June 2006.

David Miller (MDiv 1993) completed a Doctor of Ministry degree at Columbia

Theological Seminary in Decatur, Ga. His D.Min. project is entitled *The Missional Church and the End of Christian Social Ethics: Reassessing, Remembering, Rehearsing*. He received the George and Sally Telford Award which recognizes a D.Min. graduate who shows exceptional ability for congregational leadership with an emphasis on social justice issues and vision for the church. David is pastor of University Mennonite Church in State College, Pa., where he has served since August 1997.

Jeremy Garber (MDiv 2005), Buffy Garber and Fiona have moved to Denver, Colo., where Jeremy has entered a Ph.D. program at Iliff School of Theology and the University of Denver.

Ed Nyce (MDiv 1998) began a three-year term with Mennonite Central Committee as Iraq Program Manager in August 2006. He expects to be based in Amman, Jordan, for the duration of his term, but might move to northern Iraq if conditions allow.

Donald Kaufman (MDiv 1969) is author of *The Tax Dilemma: Praying for Peace, Paying for War*, which has been updated, expanded and newly released by Wipf & Stock (www.wipfandstock.com).

Angel Luis Miranda (MDiv 1981) is pastoring at Iglesia Evangelica Menonita de Cayey during 2006. In August 2006 he finished an assignment in chaplaincy after 14 years at the Cayey Mennonite Hospital.

Lois Siemens (MDiv 2006) has been called to pastor the Superb Mennonite Church, Kerrobert, Sask.

Matthew (MDiv 2005) and **Anita** (MDiv 2006) **Christian** have been called to pastor the Americus Mennonite Fellowship in Georgia, beginning in January.

Birth

Tammy Sawatzky (MATS 2002) and Reynold Friesen, Winnipeg, Man., are the parents of Caleb Paul, born September 23, 2006.

Deaths

Keith Benner (MATS 2006), died July 18 at his home on the AMBS campus.

Mary Ellen August, wife of **Stephen Tom August** (MDiv 2003) died July 23. Tom is chaplain for the Greater Lafayette Health Services, Lafayette, Ind., and he and his daughter, Kristin, live in Battle Ground, Ind.



Construction of the new AMBS library and campus center is on schedule. In this late-September view, the north wing roof line is taking shape. Clerestory windows will be added along most of the

peak visible here to allow natural light into the interior. The AMBS chapel and bell tower are in the background. Watch progress from the webcam: www.ambs.edu/Library-CampusCenter.



3003 Benham Avenue
Elkhart, IN 46517-1999
574 295-3726
www.ams.edu

New catalog online

The 2006–2008 AMBS catalog is available on the AMBS web site and by request.

New information includes new concentrations in the MAPS degree, incorporating courses at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Mich.; and North Park University, Chicago, Ill.



Remember that graduates of AMBS can audit courses at a special reduced fee of \$40 per credit hour. So check the catalog to find out what courses AMBS offers.

Go to www.ams.edu/catalog for the online, full-color version. Request a print copy from Denise McOwen, <dmcowen@ams.edu>.

We encourage you to share a copy of the catalog or the link to the web copy with someone who has gifts for ministry.

Changes in mail from AMBS

Over the next few months, you may notice changes in how mail from AMBS is addressed to you. That is because we have implemented a new database for alumni records.

For a year and a half, staff have been working

on transferring data from an outdated (DOS-based) system to more functional software. In the near future these records will be integrated with databases in the development office and Church Leadership Center.

The result should mean more accurate addressing and fewer duplicate mailings. But in the short-term it may require further fine-tuning. Please let us know if your address or name does not appear correctly on your AMBS mail.

New staff

Jonathan Neufeld (MDiv 2005) is one-quarter time admissions counselor for Canada, working out of his home in Winnipeg, Man.

Irene Koop is director of financial aid, a halftime position.

Suzanne Huffman is administrative assistant in the development office.

Eric Saner is administrative assistant for the Church Leadership Center and assistant for the communications office.

Monthly AMBS eNews

If you would like to receive a monthly electronic newsletter with updates on events and AMBS news, send a message to advancement@ams.edu.

Pastors Week

Pastors Week, January 22–25, 2007, will focus how Jesus Christ is portrayed in contemporary media and how to guide congregations in finding authentic and helpful portrayals of Christ. See more at www.ams.edu; select *Church Leadership Center*, then *Pastors Week*.



Mary E. Klassen

A walking path winding around the perimeter of the AMBS campus provides a venue not only for exercise, but also for discussion. New students Jill Schreiber and Samantha Lioi here are getting some of both just before classes begin in the morning.

As part of the emphasis on care for the environment, AMBS is restoring native prairie grasses in some areas of the campus. To the left of Jill, a bluebird house is visible—one of twelve built for the campus by a 4-H club led by campus pastor Janeen Bertsche Johnson. Don Yoder, a retired landscape architect who volunteers weekly at AMBS, also has coordinated the planting of wildflowers in open areas of the campus.