



a l u m n i n e w s

A M B S

Fall 2008
Volume 14 Issue 2

What we've learned about retiring

AMBS, how do I love thee? Let me count the ways.*

February 1963: **I came to MBS, eager to learn about a biblical theology, a prophetic faith, and Anabaptism.**

June 1964: **A seminary quartet itinerated through western Canada. Sunday dinner we were hosted by the Henry Janzen family in Swift Current, Sask. I met my future in-laws.**

September 1965: **Loretta Janzen and I met face to face on the Goshen College campus—she, a nursing student; I, a student on the “gray goose” bus that took students from MBS to GBS.**

AMBS, how do I love thee? I can hardly count the ways.

August 1966: **Wedding bells for Darrell and Loretta.**

I love thee to the depth and breadth and height of our faith. Truly the lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. I have a good heritage. (Psalm 16:6)

August 1980 to August 1992: **During 36 years of pastoral ministry, I served on the MBS board for 12 years, nine as president of the board. There have been countless experiences for deepening friendships and faith.**

AMBS, how do I love thee? I cannot count the ways!

October 2006: **I retired from pastoral ministry, but I was given one more opportunity to serve my alma mater. A four-year term on the Alumni Association Executive Committee. Thanks be to God. — Darrell Fast**

**With apologies to Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

Burton G. Yost B.D. 1953

My retirement from 29 years of teaching at Bluffton College came about this way. In September 1992, I told President Elmer Neufeld that I planned to retire at the end of the school year after my sixty-fifth birthday anniversary. That way the college could find a replacement, and I had time to wind down and adjust emotionally to the end of my teaching career.

However, I had to undergo bypass surgery in April. The Lord was saying to me that “you no longer have the heart for it.” So I made the decision, and then it also was made for me. My official connection to the college was cut off, but I tried to maintain a non-interfering, supportive relationship with my successors. We have maintained our residence in Bluffton near the college and are active in campus events.

After retirement, I served as interim pastor for one and a half years and then, a few years later, again served in that position for four months. This was a good shift for me. I could continue my calling of a teaching/preaching ministry at a reduced level of stress and responsibility within a familiar setting. My career had begun as a pastor and

ended in the same role.

During my seminary years I struggled with what God was calling me to do—pastorate, missions or teaching. During my years of teaching, my wife and I were given three short-term overseas mission opportunities. That was the way that “my calling” was fulfilled: I was a pastor, a teacher and a missions partner.

The Lord has been good to us, and we have tried to be faithful.

*Burton and Elnore Yost
live in Bluffton, Ohio.*

Anne Neufeld Rupp MRE 1966

When I think of retirement, I believe that attaining a wide range of experiences and a broader education than only seminary helped me transition into later years. After college I served Mennonites in Mexico under the General Conference Board of Missions. I taught school, engaged in youth work and started a music program.

Another thing I've concluded is to plan for

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Mary E. Klassen

Zulma Prieto (MAPS 1997), editor of *El Puente*, a Spanish-language newspaper serving northern Indiana, was a speaker at Community Solidarity Day, September 13, in Elkhart. The event began with a walk from the campus to downtown Elkhart and was planned in response to several racially-motivated incidents in spring. It provided an opportunity for AMBS students, faculty and staff to become involved in a community effort that expands the seminary's year-long emphasis on anti-racism.

What we've learned about retiring

(continued)

Anne Neufeld Rupp

the future but also enjoy the present. It helped us to think about pre-retirement things we'd like to do and we did them, even if it meant pinching pennies. We traveled extensively, tented a summer in Alaska and later experienced Europe for over two months in a camper.

The transition at a later date may be easier if one identifies additional gifts or interests to use. It was that way in my case as a female pastor prior to retirement and into retirement years. For several years I served as director of education in a Presbyterian church and then ministered with people with long-term mental illness. Later I chose to be self-employed and ministered by teaching piano, writing and publishing.

Finally, I've realized that transition into retirement, no matter how well planned, may come to a dead halt, due to crisis or illness. More than four years ago, a hemorrhagic stroke changed my life and continues to affect me emotionally, physically and

mentally. Two years later, I was diagnosed with Parkinson's. After a long time of denial, fear, resistance and coping, I've concluded that I can only do the best with what I have. I realize that God still has ministry for me now despite my limitations. I have become more compassionate as I relate to the suffering of others. I have also become more aware that life is short. This has evoked in me a deep caring for those close to me. I am grateful for relationships and a wide range of life experiences. Life is God-graced. So is retirement.

Anne Neufeld Rupp and Ken Rupp live in Olathe, Kan.

Fred Unruh Student, 1962-1964

Our congregation, Lethbridge Mennonite Church, honoured our moving into retirement with a joyful, teasing, affirming retirement party. My retirement was facilitated by a Covenant of Separation between myself and our congregation because we wished to stay with the congregation. The Covenant clearly defined I would not be available for pastoral functions like weddings, funerals or pastoral care, although I preach and lead worship several times a year. The Covenant provided freedom for myself and our new pastor.

A few years after my retirement we were invited to partner with the Springridge Mennonite Church near Pincher Creek, Alb., while their pastor and family spent a year at AMBS. I taught Sunday School and preached, and then we enjoyed a sumptuous dinner with friends.

We enjoy a variety of ac-



Mary E. Klassen

Everett Metzler (BD 1956, MDiv 1976) received a brass bell from Myron Schrag (BD 1967), member of the Alumni Association Executive Committee, at a reunion of MBS and GBS graduates in May. All graduates from 1958 and earlier were invited and received replicas of the Wadsworth Bell that now is on the AMBS campus.

AMBS plans to host annual reunions each May. Graduates from multiples of ten years will be invited to a Friday evening dinner and program (with time for visiting) and will have the opportunity to join in the commencement procession at the Saturday afternoon service. Watch for announcements for the next reunion, May 22 and 23, 2009.



Mary E. Klassen

Andre Gingerich Stoner (MATS 1995) visits with a pastor at AMBS's celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Brethren movement, October 2-3. Andre is involved in interchurch relations for Mennonite Church USA and is on the pastoral team of Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend, Ind.

tivities. I am "Mr. Fix-it" for our Ten Thousand Villages store. Virleen, my wife, assists at the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Thrift Store. I enjoy making things for the Alberta MCC Relief Sale.

We are grateful our employers contributed to our denomination's pension programs. Canadian health

care has been wonderful to us. The hobbies and interests we developed earlier offer activities and friendships we continue to enjoy.

Fred (Wilfred) and Virleen Unruh live in Lethbridge, Alb. ●

The full text of these three reflections can be found at www.ams.edu/alumni.

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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@ams.edu

Alumni Director: Ron Ringenberg

Alumni Association Executive Committee:

Darrell Fast, president

Mandy Yoder, vice president

Myron Schrag

Catherine Koziatek

Pamela Yoder

Alumni News

Ruth Isaac Wiederkehr (MDiv 1992) and **Miles Zimmerly Wiederkehr (former student)** with their sons, Theo and Andre, are serving with Mennonite Central Committee in Cambodia since October 2007.

Craig Oury (MDiv 2005) was ordained Sept. 21, at Mount Zion Mennonite Church, Boonsboro, Md.

Elisabeth Kunjam (MACF 2004) is married to Sanjay Frank Kumar and currently is at home with their two-year-old son.

Dennis P. Hollinger (faculty 1987–1991) is president of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

Troy Osborne (MATS 1998) is assistant professor of history at Bluffton (Ohio) University.

Wayne Nitzsche (MDiv 1986) and **Mary Nitzsche (former student)** have moved to Telford, Pa. Mary is associate pastor at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church.

Mary Grove (MDiv 1993) retired after ten years as chaplain at Greencroft Retirement Communities in Goshen, Ind.

Krista Dutt (MDiv 2002) is national program director of DOOR (Discovering Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection).

James E. Horsch (BD 1966) is chair of the committee on the Uniform Series adult Christian education materials.

Jason Harrison (MACF 2005) is program director at Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, Mich.

Steve Ratzlaff (MDiv 1998) is author of *7 Steps to End War and Save the Planet*, published by Xlibris.com.

Harold Thiesen (BD 1959 and staff 1986–1994) was interim pastor of Inman Mennonite Church from Nov. 2007 to

Sept. 2008, is development consultant for retirement homes and serves on the steering committee of Vision 2012 of Western District Conference.

Malinda Berry (MAPS 2000) will join the Bethany Theological Seminary faculty in fall 2009 as an instructor in Theological Studies and director of the M.A. program. She is a Ph.D. candidate at Union Theological Seminary in New York, and currently teaches at Goshen College, Goshen, Ind.

Ken Hawkley (MDiv 1989) began serving as associate director of developing in July. Previously he had been involved with Chicago Mennonite Learning Center as development director and principal.

William Klassen (BD 1954 and former faculty) and Walter Klaassen have completed a biography of 16th century Anabaptist leader Pilgram Marpeck (Herald Press 2008).

Pham Xuan Tin (MRE 1974) died on January 2. He was an evangelist and ordained minister in Vietnam and he wrote numerous books, textbooks, commentaries and a translation of the Bible that he worked on from 1970 to 1990.

AMBS News

Honoring June Alliman Yoder

June Alliman Yoder will retire from teaching at AMBS in January. We invite you to send words of greeting and thanks as one way to recognize her contributions. We prefer that you send these by e-mail to Rosie Reschly, rreschly@ambs.edu. If you wish to send your note by mail, please print it on a horizontal half-sheet (or several half sheets) and send it to Rosie Reschly at the AMBS address on the back of this newsletter. Make sure she receives these by January 20.

Nelson Kraybill announces resignation

Nelson Kraybill, president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, has announced his intent to step down as president of the seminary in summer 2009, after serving since January 1997.

Nelson hopes to move into another assignment, although

he has no specific plans at this time.

The AMBS board established a process for a presidential search when it met in mid-October.

See more at www.ambs.edu/news-and-publications/news/kraybill-resigns.

Upcoming events

Visit the AMBS Web site for information about these upcoming events:

Theological Lectureship, March 4–5, John Witvliet of Calvin Theological Seminary and Calvin Institute of Christian Worship.

Pastors Week, January 26–29, with Diana Butler Bass.

Kentucky Holy Land Pilgrimage, led by Marlene Kropf, May 24–31.

See www.ambs.edu/news-and-publications/events-and-news.

Invitation to comment on AMBS

AMBS will have a comprehensive evaluation of our programs Feb. 16-18, 2009, by a team representing The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. AMBS has been accredited by the Commission since 1974. Its accreditation is at the Master's degree level.

AMBS has been engaged in a process of self study over the last year and a half. The evaluation team will visit AMBS to gather evidence that the self study is thorough and accurate. The team will then make a recommendation regarding continuing accreditation to the Commission for final action.

You are invited to submit comments regarding AMBS to:

**Public Comment on Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
The Higher Learning Commission
30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400
Chicago, IL 60602**

Comments must address substantive matters related to the quality of the institution or its academic programs. Written, signed comments must be received by January 15, 2009. Comments should include the name, address and telephone number of the person providing the comments.

Lois Longenecker retires

Lois Longenecker, assistant librarian, retired in September after 31 years at AMBS. She came to AMBS just after the underground bookstack area was built and was told that an above-ground library would be added within five years. It took 30 years instead, and Lois stayed at AMBS until she could work one year in the new building.

Lois was willing to take on any task, current Librarian Eileen Saner noted, including unpacking 80 boxes of books in storage after the recent construction. She was an expert at finding books that had been misshelved, and she was an excellent teacher and supervisor of student assistants, several of whom have become professional



Mary E. Klassen

Lois Longenecker was honored by Nelson Kraybill and all the faculty and staff in May at the annual recognition event. She retired in September after 31 years as assistant librarian.

librarians.

Lois was the librarian who worked with the first steps of automation as she ordering catalog cards online. In addition, she became an expert in preservation quality book repair and rebound many of the hymnals used in the seminary's

chapel. Lois continues to work several hours a week on special projects.

Karl Stutzman is filling an interim position in the library. He has taken several AMBS courses and is married to Twilla Epp-Stutzman (MDiv 2006). They have one son, Silas. ●

In memoriam

Bertha Fast Harder, instructor at AMBS when classes began on the Elkhart campus, died August 23 in Goessel, Kan. She was 94.

"Bertha was the first female faculty member of AMBS," Erland Walters, president emeritus of MBS, noted. "Her field was Christian education, but she also worked hard with the issue of the pastor's wife—as it was called in those days. She was an emerging feminist, and kept a good balance between the growing sense of women's strength and respect for the traditional roles of women in the church. She was a pioneer."

Bertha earned a BA from Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., in 1949, and an MRE from MBS in Chicago in 1951. While studying at MBS, she met Leland Harder, whom she married in

1951. They joined the new faculty when MBS moved to Elkhart in 1958 and taught at AMBS until 1983.

Bertha served as the first director of Mennonite Voluntary Service, and she



Archive photo

was the first woman elected to a major denominational board. Leland and Bertha retired in North Newton, Kan., where Bertha became a docent at the Kauffman Museum. She was active in

Bethel College Mennonite Church and taught Sunday school children there for 18 years.

In the 1960s, Lillian Elias (MDiv 1999), now copastor of Parkview Mennonite Church in Kokomo, Ind., was at AMBS while her husband, Jacob Elias, completed an MDiv. Lillian said, "Bertha modeled for me how a woman in her time was able to joyfully serve Christ and the church with her gifts. Her enthusiasm, vision and drive to educate women as teachers of children in the home and in the church, and as a support for the spouse in ministry was contagious."

Survivors include Leland; two sons and their families—John and Julie Harder of Windsor, Ont.; and Tom (MDiv 2006) and Lois (MDiv 2006) Harder of Wichita. ●



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Essay contest winners

Devon Miller, AMBS student, won second place in the graduate school/seminary category of the John Horsch Mennonite Historical Essay Contest, sponsored by the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee. His paper is "The Gospel for All Creatures: An Anabaptist Theology for Reconciliation."

Jonny Gerig Meyer, incoming student this fall, placed first in the undergraduate category with "Sending Mixed Messages to Congress: Mennonite Involvement in Proposed National Health Care Reform 1992-1994." **Andre Shenk**, also an incoming student, placed second in the undergraduate category with "A Crisis Among Mennonites: Competing Traditions in the Mennonite Church in the Early 1980s." ●