



a l u m n i n e w s

2006 award recipients announced

Summer 2006
Volume 12 Issue 1

We're marking long-term service in this issue of *AMBS Alumni News*. The two recipients of this year's Alumni Ministry and Service award have each devoted a lifetime to Christian education. For more than 30 years each, Marion Bontrager and Paul Lederach have been involved in different aspects of the teaching ministry of the church.

On the back page, you'll see another note about long-term service—of the underground library bookstacks—and finally launching the construction project for a new library and campus center.

Give thanks to God for these people and for these new steps in the seminary's ministry of preparing people to serve God and the church.

Inside this issue you'll read about nominees to the Alumni Association Executive Committee. Please send your note of affirmation by mail or e-mail.

—Mary E. Klassen, editor

Two long-time educators are 2006 recipients of the AMBS Alumni Ministry and Service Award: **Marion G. Bontrager** of Hesston, Kan., and **Paul M. Lederach** of Lansdale, Pa.

Marion G. Bontrager has served on the faculty of Hesston (Kan.) College for more than 30 years. One of his most noteworthy tasks there was developing the course, "Introduction to Biblical Literature." Because this is a required course for all students, he has helped more than 2,500 students to understand the biblical story and make it their own. One colleague said, "This is a gift to the church."

Born into an Old Order Amish family, Marion was the first in his family to attend graduate school. He studied at Hesston College and earned a B.A. from Goshen College, then in 1963 a BD from Goshen Biblical Seminary. In 1996 he completed additional requirements to convert the BD to an MDiv.

Prior to his Hesston College position, which he still holds, Marion served as a youth minister and taught at the high school level. During the time he served Ohio and Eastern Mennonite Conferences as youth minister, he started the first Bible Quiz Teams in the Mennonite Church,

an effort that continues.

"Marion's approach to teaching is unique and the course ["Introduction to Biblical Literature"] is life-shaping for students," another colleague said.

Paul M. Lederach served Mennonite Publishing House and Mennonite Board of Education for more than 30 years. As editor at MPH he helped launch the first graded Sunday school materials and later was executive director of the Foundation Series, another Sunday school project. Following his work for the denominational agencies, he held leadership and pastoral roles in the Allegheny and Franconia Mennonite Conferences.

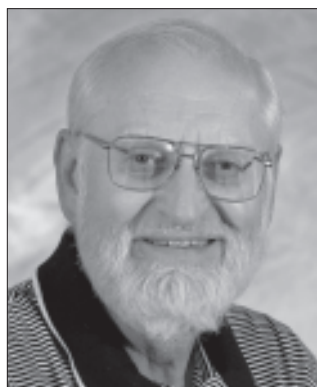
Paul was ordained to the ministry in 1944 in the Franconia Mennonite Conference, earned a BA

from Goshen College, a ThB from Goshen Biblical Seminary in 1946, an MRE from Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary and a DEd from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Paul is author of *A Third Way: Conversations about Anabaptist/Mennonite Faith* (Herald Press, 1980) and *Daniel* in the Believers Church Bible Commentary Series, in addition to several recent books recounting the history of churches and conferences in Pennsylvania.

Thanks to a generous gift to AMBS from Paul and Mary Lederach, AMBS is able to host the Lederach Preaching Lectureship.

Paul is known throughout the church for his vision and his deep commitment and concern for the church and for the conferences he has served. ●



Photos provided

Marion Bontrager and Paul M. Lederach are the 2006 recipients of the AMBS Alumni Ministry and Service Award.

Nominees to Executive Committee

Two alumni are being nominated to serve on the Alumni Association Executive Committee: Darrell Fast of Leamington, Ont., and Pamela Yoder of Goshen, Ind.

To affirm Darrell and Pam as new members for the Executive Committee:

- send an e-mail message to Ron Ringenberg, alumni director, rringenb@ambs.edu; or
- return the enclosed postcard.

If affirmed, Darrell will serve as vice-president of the committee for two years and then president for two years. Pam will serve a three-year term as member-at-large. They will replace Tim Lichti and Marilyn Rudy-Froese.

Darrell Fast

BD, 1966

Darrell Fast is pastor of Leamington Mennonite Church, Leamington, Ont., where he has served since 1996. Prior to this he was pastor of Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan., for 13 years and of Toronto United Mennonite Church for 16 years.



In 1966, Darrell earned a BD from Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Then in 1977 he earned a Master of Theology and in 1986 a Doctor of Ministry degree from Emmanuel College, Toronto School of Theology. He was ordained to Christian ministry at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, Neb., in 1970.

Darrell served on the Mennonite Biblical Seminary board of trustees from 1980 to 1992, and as chair for nine of those years. He also served as moderator of the General Conference Mennonite Church from 1992 to 1999.

Darrell and Loretta, his wife, have two adult children. He anticipates retiring from full-time pastoral ministry this fall.

Pamela Yoder

MDiv 2001

Pamela Yoder serves as a part of the pastoral team at First Mennonite Church of Middlebury as associate pastor for pastoral care. This is her first pastoral assignment and she has been at FMC since the spring of 2002.

Pamela grew up in the United Methodist Church,



attending Bristol United Methodist Church (Bristol, Ind.) throughout childhood and her early young adult years. She began studies at AMBS in 1997 and upon arrival felt a sense of homecoming and great appreciation for the community experienced on campus.

She is a 2001 graduate of AMBS (MDiv-Pastoral Care and Counseling) and a 1996 graduate of Indiana University-Bloomington (BA-Religious Studies). She joined Mennonite Church USA upon confession of faith in 2001 and was a part of the Belmont congregation in Elkhart, Ind.

Visitation, working with small groups and supporting the Stephen Ministry program are among some of her pastoral duties at First Mennonite. In her

spare time, she enjoys gardening, running, writing, doing just about anything that allows her to use her creative side and spending time with family.

She is happily married to Bob Yoder (also a 2001 AMBS grad), Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference Minister for Youth and Young Adults and Director/Assistant Professor of Youth Ministry at Goshen College. Bob and Pamela live north of Goshen and welcomed their first child, Josiah, in March. ●

Transitions

Arriving

Steven Schweitzer will join the faculty as assistant professor of Old Testament in July.

Departing

Art McPhee, associate professor of mission and intercultural studies

Rosalie Grove, secretary for central services

Charlene Thomas, administrative secretary for development and the business office

Beverley Sawatzky, administrative secretary to the dean and Church Leadership Center

LaJane Yoder, administrative secretary to development ●

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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@ambs.edu

Alumni Director: Ron Ringenberg

Alumni Association Executive Committee:

Tim Lichti, president
Louise Wideman, vice president
Marilyn Rudy-Froese
Jill Wright
Myron Schrag

Alumni News

Amanda (Mandy) Yoder (MDiv 2003) was ordained by Indiana-Michigan Conference on April 30 at First Mennonite Church, Indianapolis, Ind., where she is associate pastor.

Fred Speckeen, Ph.D., (BD 1956) was elected chairman of the Archer Education Group, a private company which operates educational institutions in Canada and overseas, and he serves in the new Pastoral Outreach Program of the Department of National Defense and Veterans Affairs, providing pastoral care to retired Canadian Forces personnel and their families.

Craig Oury (MDiv 2005) is pastor of Mt. Zion Mennonite Church, Boonsboro, Md. "I am lamenting the distance between me and the Chicago Cubs," he writes, "but it is a small price to pay for being a part of a congregation that I am sure I should be at."

Joe Sawatzky (MDiv 2005) and **Anna Leichty Sawatzky** and their two sons are in

Mthatha, South Africa, working with Bethany Bible School, a traveling Bible teaching ministry. In addition to helping host Bible conferences at the Catholic-run campus, they will travel to surrounding locations several times each year.

C. Norman Kraus (BD 1951 and former GBS professor) is author of *Using Scripture in a Global Age: Framing Biblical Issues*, copublished by Cascadia and Herald Press. This is Volume 24 in the Institute of Mennonite Studies Occasional Papers. It addresses how the Bible may speak today on issues such as Christology, hermeneutics, peace, sexuality, creationism, miracles and social justice.

More information is available through the AMBS web site: www.ambs.edu/IMS; select *Occasional Papers* in the left menu.

David B. Miller (MDiv 1993), completed a DMin at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Ga. His

project is entitled *The Missional Church and the End of Christian Social Ethics: Reassessing, Remembering, Rehearsing*. He continues as pastor of University Mennonite Church in State College, Pa., where he has served since August 1997.

Fourteen AMBS alumni are writers in the 2005–2008 cycle of the Uniform Series study guides and teacher guides: **Wilma Bailey, Leonard Beech, James R. Engle, Willmar T. Harder, Sheila Klassen-Wiebe, David M. Morrow, Linda Gehman Peachey, Raymond H. Reimer, Dale E. Shenk, Sue C. Steiner, Anne Stuckey, Don Unger, Duane Yoder, Elizabeth Yoder, Perry B. Yoder**, professor emeritus, also is a writer.

Births

Robert Josiah was born March 10, 2006, to **Robert** (MDiv 2001) and **Pamela Yoder** (MDiv 2001), Goshen, Ind.

Francesca Paige was born April 28, 2006, to **Tim** (MDiv 2003) and Loretta **Singenstreu**, Elkhart, Ind.

Deaths

Roy C. Bucher, (BTh 1956), Lititz, Pa., died March 10, 2006. He was a pastor for more than 50 years, serving congregations in Illinois, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Ohio, and conducting worship services during winters in Sarasota, Fla.

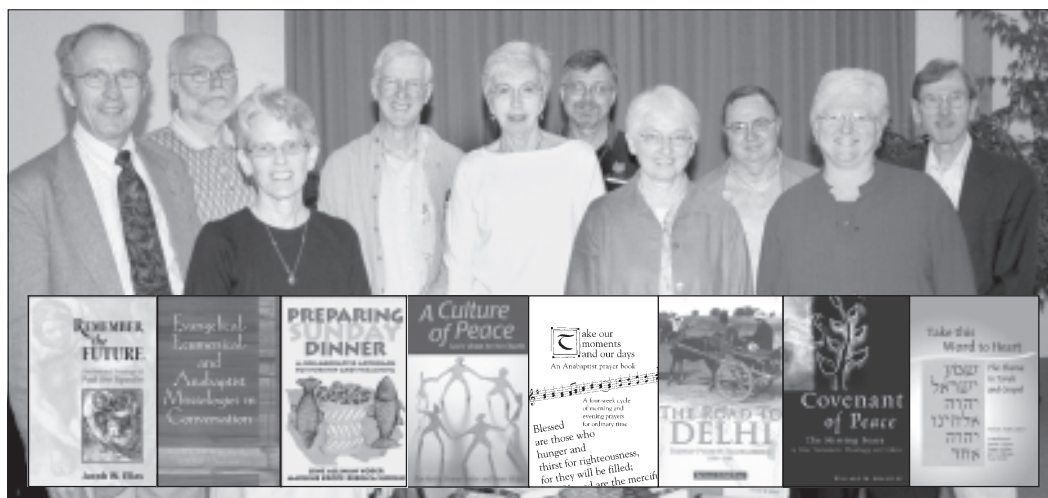
Ellis Croyle, (BD, MDiv 1976), Goshen, Ind., died March 31, 2006. He was pastor of Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio, for 34 years, preceded by a pastorate in Topeka, Ind., and followed by interim assignments in the Goshen area.

Daryl Dean Schmidt (MDiv 1970), Ft. Worth, Texas, died on March 21, 2006. Daryl was the John F. Weatherly Professor of Religion at Texas Christian University, where he had served since 1979. An active Fellow of the Jesus Seminar, he debuted the Scholars Version translation in The Gospel of Mark.

Takio Tanase (MRE 1972), Tokyo, Japan, died April 6, 2006. Takio was one of Japan's earliest Mennonites and an influential leader in the Mennonite Conference of Hokkaido and the Tokyo Area Fellowship of the Mennonite Church. ●

Planning a sabbatical?

AMBS invites pastors to apply for funded sabbaticals on the AMBS campus. Applications for fall 2007 are due on Sept. 5, 2006. Slots for spring 2006 are still available. See information and find forms at www.ambs.edu; choose *Church Leadership Center*, then *Engaging Pastors*. Pastors may also phone 574.296.6269 for information. ●



Faculty who authored or edited books that were published during the 2006–2007 year were honored at the annual book celebration on May 3: **Jacob Elias, Walter Sawatzky, Rebecca Slough, Alan Kreider, Eleanor Kreider, Arthur Paul Boers, Marlene Kropf, Art McPhee, June Alliman Yoder and Willard Swartley**. Not pictured is **Perry Yoder**, professor emeritus.

For a complete list of published books, journals and articles during the year, see www.ambs.edu/php/academics/aca_writings.php



Mary E. Klassen

Using the same shovel he used to break ground on the campus of AMBS in 1958, Erland Waltner (left), president emeritus, planted a forsythia bush during the ground-blessing service on April 21 for the seminary's new library and campus center.

Construction begins (at last!)

"We waited a generation for this day," AMBS President Nelson Kraybill (at right in photo) said as he opened the April 21 ground-blessing service for the new AMBS library and campus center.

The first hopes and plans for an above-ground library facility began in 1975, he explained, when an underground room was constructed for the library book stacks.

The new facility will have space not only for the long-awaited main-floor library, but also will house the bookstore and a foyer for display of art. When the current library is vacated and renovated, it will become space for a larger student lounge and offices

for the AMBS Church Leadership Center and campus pastor.

Excavation for the building began in mid-April and will continue for approximately 18 months.

Fund-raising for the project continues. Currently gifts and letters of intent total \$6.2 million; total cost is projected to be \$8.1 million. Online gifts can be made at www.amsb.edu; select the *Make a gift* link below the photo.

You can watch progress from a webcam mounted on the east end of the Lambright Center looking toward Benham Avenue: www.amsb.edu/php/Library-CampusCenter/libcen_webcam.php. ●

Continuing education events announced

Advent Worship Planner, September 30, 2006. Presenters: Marlene Kropf and Rosanna Eller McFadden, AMBS student and worship coordinator for the Church of the Brethren Annual Conferences in 2005 and 2006.

Spiritual Guidance Seminar, a year-long supervised program for learning the art of spiritual guidance. Presenter: Marlene Kropf. Six sessions at AMBS are scheduled between September and June.

Preaching Institute, offered through AMBS-Great Plains in central Kansas. Instructor: June Alliman Yoder. Four sessions will be scheduled in fall 2006.

Pastors Week, January 22-25, 2007. Featured speaker: Rodney Clapp, author, speaker and editor. His speaking and writing emphasize the importance Christian spirituality for congregational life and practice.

Extreme Cases in the Congregation Pastoral Care Series. Additional events in this ongoing series will be announced soon.

For information on all of these events, see the AMBS web site:

http://www.amsb.edu/php/clcenter/clc_conted.php.



Associated
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Alumni gatherings

United Methodist Church, Northern Indiana District

Friday, June 2
Breakfast with Nelson Kraybill, AMBS president

Participants should go through the regular serving line and look for a room designated for the gathering.

United Methodist Church, Western Michigan District

Friday, June 2
Breakfast with Ron Ringenberg, AMBS vice president

Participants should go through the regular serving line and look for a room designated for the gathering.

South Central Conference of MC USA

Saturday, July 1
Evening, after plenary session

Mennonite Church Canada

Friday, July 7
1:30 p.m. (During a seminar time slot)

Western District Conference of MC USA

Saturday, July 15
4 p.m.