



A M B S alumni news

Summer 2009
Volume 15 Issue 1

Farewell to Nelson

Nelson Kraybill, president of AMBS since January 1997, will leave in July to pursue other ministry opportunities.



At a May 1 event honoring Nelson, Ray Friesen (right), chair of the AMBS board, said, "You have a heart for combining a love for scholarship, a passion for leadership and a vision for education that has shaped your presidency. Thank you for your commitment to Jesus Christ and for repeatedly and in many different places holding before us us ... the importance of keeping Jesus Christ as the centre of who we are and what we do."

If you want to be among the first to know whom the board appoints as the new AMBS president, send your e-mail address to Mary E. Klassen: mklassen@ambs.edu.

We will keep your address on file for a special message as soon as the decision is public.

Millard Lind receives 2009 award

Millard Lind, professor emeritus of Old Testament, is the 2009 recipient of the Alumni Ministry and Service Award.

The theme that defined his vocation, Millard said in a 1992 interview, was that God's chosen people in the ancient Near East adored Yahweh—God of family love, not of the power politics that plagued the region.

Millard was a pastor in Indiana and Pennsylvania during the 1940s and 1950s. He also wrote Sunday School materials and was editor of *Christian Living* magazine. In 1959, he joined the faculty of GBS and he was named professor emeritus of Old Testament in 1992.

The book *Peace and Justice Shall Embrace: Power and Theopolitics in the Bible* is a Festschrift for Millard, published by Cascadia in 2000. In the introduction, Paul Keim, then academic dean of Goshen College, wrote, "Millard inspired us to listen to these [Old Testament] texts as dynamic conversation partners around which we gathered, with him as our guide." Those

who studied with Millard say that with his teaching, the Old Testament became a living document that continues to speak meaningfully.

The books Millard wrote also continue to speak. These include *Yahweh is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel* (Herald Press, 1980), *The Sound of Sheer Silence and the Killing State: The Death Penalty and the Bible* (Cascadia, 2004); *Monotheism, Power, Justice: Collected Old Testament Essays* (IMS, 1990) and *Ezekiel* in the Believers Church Bible Commentary series (Her-

ald Press, 1996). The list his writings fills 13 pages of the Festschrift. His current project is translating a book on Isaiah from German to English.

Millard received a BA from Goshen College in 1942 and a BD from GBS in 1947. In 1944, he was ordained to ministry. He also earned a ThM from Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary and a ThD from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

An award certificate will be presented to Millard on June 14 at College Mennonite Church where he is a member. ●



Millard Lind taught Ezekiel for the last time at AMBS in fall 1998. Miriam Lind (left) joined him in the last class session. Kathy Koop (MATS 1999) and Marlene Kroeker (MDiv 2000) were members of the class.

New executive committee member nominated

Neil Amstutz, MDiv 1999

My children like to remind me that the story of my life, at least as long as they've been part of it, has been a series of moves between McPherson County, Kan., and Elkhart County, Ind. So from living in Moundridge, Kan., in 1995, I followed a call from God through a dramatic vocational change to AMBS to pursue an MDiv. I'm a 1999 graduate of AMBS, although I began pastoring First Mennonite Church in McPherson in the summer of 1998. Since January 2005 I have been the pastoral team leader at Waterford Mennonite Church, near Goshen.

My three years on the AMBS campus are some of the richest and most fondly remembered of my life. The seminary was indeed a place of very sig-

nificant personal, intellectual and spiritual formation for me, and for that I'm quite grateful. Serving on the Alumni Executive Committee would be one way for me to give back to the seminary and the broader church.



Photo supplied

Most recently at Waterford, I've found meaningful ministries in connecting with a few local Hispanic congregations, in a

partnership with Benin Bible Institute in West Africa, and in discovering together with the people in the pews both the joys and fears of trying to relate with our neighbors in more missional ways.

I have been married to Janette Roth for 22 years, and we've been blessed with three children whose activities keep us hopping: Matthew (high school senior), Leah (high school freshman), and Jesse (6th grade). Besides toying around on acoustic guitar, and watching TV sports, I have picked up an interest in bicycling in the past two years.

Neil Amstutz is recommended as a new member of the Alumni Association Executive Committee, to serve a three-year term. To affirm Neil, mark and return the enclosed postcard, or send an e-mail message to Ron Ringenberg, AMBS vice president: rringenb@ambs.edu.

Pamela Yoder (MDiv 2001) is completing a three-year term as member-at-large on the executive committee.

Alumni access to full-text theological journals online

AMBS alumni who have completed at least 12 credit hours may now have access to ATLA Serials, a database of full text journal and magazine articles from more than 100 publications. You no longer need to be a graduate in order to take advantage of these resources.

To see more information about ATLA Serials and how to request a username and password, visit the AMBS Library Web page: <http://ambs.edu/library/alumni.htm>.

If you already are using ATLA Series, note that the current interface is being phased out. All direct searching of ATLA Serials should be done now on the EBSCOhost interface with a new username and password. Current users will receive new information in an e-mail message.

If you have completed 12 credit hours at AMBS, you may request the ATLAS username and password from Sharon Baker: sbaker@ambs.edu. Please include the years you studied at AMBS or the name and date of your degree. ●

Alumni gathering planned

Join the gathering of AMBS friends and alumni at the Mennonite Church USA convention in Columbus, Ohio. An evening gathering is set for Wednesday, July 1, from 9:30-11 p.m. in room E161. ●

Join other fans of AMBS on Facebook

The AMBS Facebook page has already gathered a cluster of fans who are alumni and friends of the seminary. We invite you to join them, to keep up-to-date with both their news and AMBS announcements.

AMBS has begun using Facebook to share news such as the death of Erland Waltner, as well as information about upcoming lectureships and events, and news notes that don't fit in this three-times-a-year newsletter.

It's a convenient (and paper-less) way to connect with other alumni and the seminary.

If you do not already have a Facebook account, it's a simple process to start one at www.Facebook.com. ●

Send messages of blessing for Nelson and Alan

Nelson Kraybill will end his assignment as AMBS president in July, and Alan Kreider is retiring this summer. We invite you to send messages of blessing to Nelson and Alan, adding your well-wishes to those of others who have benefited from their gifts to AMBS and to the church.

Send your messages to Rosemary Reschly, rreschly@ambs.edu. Please send messages for Alan by June 17, and messages for Nelson by July 1. If you wish to send your message by mail, use the AMBS address on the back page. ●

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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:

Darrell Fast, president

Mandy Yoder, vice president

Myron Schrag

Catherine Koziatek

Pamela Yoder

In memoriam

Erland Waltner (1914–2009), President Emeritus

Erland Waltner, president emeritus of Mennonite Biblical Seminary, died late Easter Sunday, April 12, in Goshen, Ind. He was 94 years old.

Erland served the seminary and the church in many ways over a long lifetime of ministry, including roles not only



J. Tyler Klassen

then served as president of MBS from 1958, when AMBS began, until 1978. He continued to teach for another ten years and to provide spiritual direction to students until shortly before his death.

Because of the association of the two seminaries, groundwork was laid for the eventual integration in 2001 of the two Mennonite denominations, forming Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada.

“Erland Waltner might very well be the most influential GCMC leader of the twentieth century,” Rich Preheim,

director of Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee, said. “The role he played in the creation of AMBS was absolutely crucial to the creation of Mennonite Church USA. I think he can safely be called a grandfather of the denomination.”

Nelson Kraybill, president of AMBS, said, “No one did more than Erland Waltner to bring together the two largest Mennonite denominations in North America and inspire us to work together for God’s mission in the world. With theology deeply grounded in the death and resurrection of Jesus, Erland was a

formative presence in the development of AMBS.”

June Alliman Yoder, AMBS professor of communication and preaching, said, “It was the quality of his person rather than the positions that he held that made him important to me.” She and Erland team-taught preaching when she joined the faculty in 1981. “He made room for me in his courses and gave me respect beyond what was my due. He was a New Testament Professor first of all and from him I learned the importance of reaching into the scripture first and faithfully.”

To read a more about Erland’s life and ministry and to read additional tributes, visit <http://www.amsb.edu/news-and-publications/news/erland-waltner-obit>. ●

David B. Miller (MDiv 1993) has been named associate



professor of missional leadership development for AMBS, beginning July 1. He has been pastor of Univer-

sity Mennonite Church in State College, Pa., for the last 12 years. He earned a D.Min. from Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Ga., in 2006.

Arthur Paul Boers (MAPS 1983) associate professor of pastoral theology since 2002, has accepted a position at Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, Ont., taking the R.J. Bernardo Family Chair of Leadership.

Steve Schweitzer, assistant professor of Old Testament since 2006, will become academic dean of Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind., this fall.

Alan Kreider, professor of church history and mission, is retiring this summer, with plans to do more writing. He will continue to teach occasionally at AMBS.

June Alliman Yoder (MDiv 1988, faculty 1981–2008) was named Professor Emerita of Communication and Preaching by the AMBS board.

Daniel S. Schipani (MAR 1974, faculty 1985–) and Leah Dawn Bueckert (MDiv 2006), Winkler, Man., edited *Interfaith Spiritual Care: Understandings and Practices*, published by Pandora Press.

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Melissa Fisher Fast (MDiv 2006) was ordained at Sunnyside Mennonite Church, March 1, 2009.

Sue Conrad (MDiv 2005) was ordained at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, May 16, 2009.

Tobias Gavin Jongejan Harder was born February 13, 2009, to Kendall (MDiv 2007) and Charleen (MDiv 2007) Jongejan Harder, London, Ont.

Kathy Giesbrecht (student 1995–1996) is Associate Director of Leadership Ministries for Mennonite Church Manitoba.

Two fulfill long-time pledges

“When I graduated from AMBS with an MDiv in 2005, I pledged (to myself) to give my first pastoral paycheck to AMBS, as a token of appreciation for the quality education and preparation for ministry that I received,” Heidi Siemens-Rhodes wrote to AMBS last December.

That same week, AMBS received a note from Jenny and Weldon Martens. In it Jenny wrote, “I’m delighted to share this check from my first payday as a physician assistant. When I returned to school six years ago I decided I would share my thanks to God by giving my first paycheck to educational institutions that had shaped my life—such as AMBS.” Jenny had previously earned 21 credit hours at AMBS during the time Weldon (MDiv 1984) also studied here.

For Heidi, who received a full-tuition Church Leadership Award when she came to AMBS, the gift was a way to recognize how previous donors helped her. She also wanted to express gratitude for AMBS as the place where her call to ministry began to deepen and “was tested and tempered.” In addition, the gift was a reminder to Heidi that her first goal was not money; Mitch, her husband, works full-time so her income is not as much of a necessity as it could be for others.

Heidi joined the pastoral team of Assembly Mennonite Church in Goshen last October. During the three years between graduation and

this assignment, she was a teaching fellow at Goshen College, wrote Sunday School curriculum materials, worked at the local library, and welcomed a second son into the family.

Jenny also began her new assignment in October, working as a physician assistant in Grand Island, Neb., 45 miles from her home in Henderson. (Weldon is pastor of Bethesda Mennonite Church in Henderson).

Six years of preparation preceded Jenny’s new position, years during which Jenny said their family was not able to make charitable contributions at the level they would have liked. “But giving is a big part of what we want to do,” she emphasized, and her gift is a signal of

the priority they place on charitable giving.

Jenny chose AMBS as one of two education institutions with whom to share her first paycheck because she enjoyed the classes she took at AMBS, and because of how the seminary nurtured her husband for his ministry. ●



Associated
Mennonite
Biblical
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3003 Benham Avenue
Elkhart, IN 46517-1999
574 295-3726
www.amsb.edu

In this challenging year, gifts from alumni are especially valued. If you are able to give a gift before the end of June, you can help assure that AMBS ends the year with income and expenses in balance.

To make a credit card gift:

- go to www.amsb.edu/giving,
- go to the Mennonite Church USA giving site (<https://giving.mennoniteusa.org/>), or
- call AMBS, 800-964-2627.

To send a gift by mail, use the address above.

If you have a story to share about how you make giving a priority in your life or in your ministry, please share it. Send a note to editor Mary E. Klassen, mklassen@amsb.edu.



J. Tyler Klassen

Seferina DeLeon (Cert 2004) participated recently in conversations at AMBS about ministry in settings of diversity. The April 30 event provided opportunities for pastors from diverse congregations in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Arizona and Indiana to share stories of how they work to cross barriers.

Seferina is a lay leader in the Goshen congregation Iglesia Menonita del Buen Pastor, doing visitation. Others who shared stories were Maria Crockett (left with back to camera), copastor of House of Power in Elkhart, pastors who were at AMBS on sabbatical and several additional local pastors. The host for the evening was Nina Bartelt Lanctot (MDiv 2002) (right), associate director of Engaging Pastors.

In the concluding reflections, Seferina said she believed God was saying, “Be still and know that I am God.” She added, “God knows where He is going to take us and we need to let Him lead the way.”

“Making room for ‘the other’ takes energy; there are hurdles to overcome,” Nina observed. “But when we cross the hurdles, it’s energizing.”