



a l u m n i n e w s

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The beginning of AMBS in Elkhart

It's time to celebrate—beginnings and buildings at AMBS! Things have changed on campus in the last fifty years, as you can see from the dress code in the photos, and as you will read in the articles written by some of the first AMBS students and faculty. If you have not visited campus lately, you will not recognize the front acreage—now a wonderful library and campus center. Yes, things have changed and are changing. And yet, the one unchanging thread which unites the generations is our hope and faith in God.

You will not want to miss the anniversary celebration and dedication of the library and campus center planned for April 25–26 at 3003 Benham Avenue. Plan now to gather with your classmates and celebrate *the hope to which we have been called and the hope beyond what we can imagine.*

~Louise Wideman
Alumni Association
President

Harold Regier Student in 1958, BD 1961

I came to MBS knowing Rosella and I already had an invitation to long-term service. We agreed to consider a call if it could wait three years so I could attend MBS. I am ever grateful for this decision to study Anabaptist theology before our nine years in racially-conflicted Mississippi in the turbulent '60s.

Here are a few reflections/memories:

- Housing was limited. We pulled a 37-foot trailer from Newton, Kan., to the RV capital!
- Lunch breaks in the furnace room kept us humble!
- Greek and Hebrew flash cards (which I still have) helped me identify with Rosella's students at Beardsley Elementary School.

- Faculty assigned to relate to students on a supportive/social basis enhanced the feeling of community.
- Experiencing a whole generation of revered Mennonite scholars of that era is a privilege to treasure.
- One regret: Financially challenged, Rosella's degree was limited to her PHT (Pushing Hubby Through) by working, when she might also have earned a seminary degree.

An essential task of today's Anabaptist scholars and students is to redefine a 21st century Anabaptist vision applicable to today's troubled world. Thanks be to God and AMBS for its past, present and future mission to teach and live a relevant Anabaptist faith! ●

Hedwig (Hedy) Sawadsky MRE 1960, student in 1958

I continue to be grateful for being immersed in the inductive method of Bible study. By now this is deeply integrated in my life. The Christocentricity of our Anabaptist faith was also solidified during my time at AMBS. What a legacy! I trust that that emphasis, too, will not be missed—ever!

During those years there was also a strong focus on the biblical languages. For that I am deeply grateful, as even now I pick up my interlinear Greek-English New Testament quite often. (wish I had a Hebrew-Old Testament interlinear also!)

Because I needed to finance my way, I was privileged to be the occasional secretary for quite a number of the professors. ●



In this photo of the tea at the inauguration of Erland Waltner as president of MBS, Hedy Sawadsky is second from left.

The beginning of AMBS in Elkhart (continued)

William Klassen, BD 1954; Faculty in 1958

It is a blessed privilege to reflect on the history of this seminary and to celebrate its existence, which began more than 50 years ago but certainly attained a kind of rebirth on a bean field in south Elkhart in 1958.

As we look back, we now recognize that what has happened in the last five decades is far beyond what most of us had dared to hope. They say that as institutions go, 50 is about equal to the teenage years in human terms. If that applies to AMBS, then wow—look out!

From June 1, 1958, until July 1 of 1969, this was my first full-time assignment as a teacher. I was trying out my wings, of course, very deeply affected by stage fright knowing that I was going to be teaching on the same faculty with

Howard Charles, who had taught me so very much at Goshen College and Seminary (1949-54) and who would still be teaching at GBS in Goshen.

The students at MBS and later AMBS came from the best Canadian universities, from Goshen, Bluffton and Bethel Colleges. They came from California, New York, Europe and Japan. I formed warm friendships with them—some of which last until this day. These

students, along with the faculty members made the campus such an exciting place in the summer of 1958. It is a source of profound gratitude that I was invited to begin my teaching career there with such esteemed colleagues.

They helped me to value scholarship and devote myself to it, to devote my energies to teaching and public lectures, to write educational materials for the church. I found my place

within the scholarly world but also within our family which had grown to four by the fall of 1959. All in all God blessed us during those years and drew us more closely to the fullness of joy promised to us in the Gospel.

William Klassen has shared much more of his memories, particularly of other faculty and administration members. You can read his entire document at www.amsb.edu/dedication-anniversary. ●



Faculty of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, fall 1958, in front of the breezeway that used to divide the two ends of what is now Waltner Hall. Leland Harder is second from right in the back row; William Klassen is at the right end of the front row.

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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@amsb.edu

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Joann Kaiser*

Leland Harder, BD 1952, Faculty in 1958

My credentials for teaching at AMBS for 25 years, in addition to a doctorate in the sociology of religion from Northwestern University, was my experience in urban evangelism in Chicago. One example of my focus on urban evangelism was the launching of a coffee house ministry in downtown Elkhart, called "Partly Dave's." The vision for this originated in my evangelism course. On my bibliography was a book by John D. Perry, Jr., *The Coffee House Ministry*

(John Knox Press, 1966), a manual on how to start and operate a curriculum-related coffee house ministry. My evangelism students, led especially, as I recall, by Lauren Friesen, said, "Let's do it!"

We began a series of planning sessions, which soon included the director of the Elkhart County Council of Churches and representatives of interested Elkhart churches. Our first paid manager was my student, David Schmidt. Subsequent managers included Dale Sudermann, now a professional counselor in

Chicago; Robert Charles, now with Mennonite Mission Network; John Kampen, the academic dean at Bluffton University; and Lauren Friesen, drama teacher in several colleges, including Goshen College. Partly Dave's was one of the more successful seminary-related coffee houses and outlived most of them.

For additional information about Partly Dave's see the spring issue of AMBS Window, available on the AMBS Web site in mid-April, www.amsb.edu/news-and-publications/publications/window. ●

To honor Jacob Elias

Jacob Elias will retire from teaching at AMBS at the end of this school year after 31 years of teaching New Testament and serving in administrative roles.

We invite you to send words of greeting and thanks as one way to recognize his 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 instead, 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 April 15.

Correction

The fall issue of *AMBS Alumni News* included information about AMBS deans that was incomplete. Here is a more complete record of who has served in that role beginning with Ross Bender, the first dean of both GBS and MBS: Ross T. Bender: 1964 to 1979
Willard M. Swartley: interim 1979 to 1981
Jacob W. Elias: 1981 to 1990
Gayle Gerber Koontz: 1990 to 1995
Willard M. Swartley: 1995 to 2000
Loren L. Johns, 2000 to 2007
Rebecca Slough, began July 2007
In addition, Millard Lind was acting dean 1970–71, and C.J. Dyck was acting dean from 1973–74.

Alumni News

Catherine Koziatek (MDiv 2004) began June 17 as pastor for Bethel United Methodist Church in Elkhart, Ind.

Garry Jost (MDiv 2000) received a Doctor of Ministry from Drew University, Madison, N.J. His project was "Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength: An Authentic Encounter with the Bible in its Original Languages."

Diane Zaerr Brenneman (MDiv 1992) has ended her assignment as denominational minister for Mennonite Church USA. She hopes to accept more speaking engagements, lead retreats and design workshops. Diane graduated with a DMin from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago in May 2007.

Phil Bergey (MATS 1993) ended his role as conference minister with Franconia Conference to begin a Ph.D. program through Fielding University of Santa Barbara, Calif., in Systems Transformation with a concentration in leadership coaching.

Fred Speckeen (BD 1956) has been appointed to the Board of SHEAF, a Christian Trust established to assist needy persons with a focus on Central America.

Faith M. Weedling (MDiv 2003) was ordained an Elder of the Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church on June 11, 2007. She is serving the Mount Pleasant and South Covington United Methodist Churches in Covington, Va.

Karen Jane Weldy (MDiv 2003) was ordained on September 30 at Southside (Mennonite) Fellowship.

Kevin (MDiv 2005) and **Rochelle Drudge** spent most of 2007 in Menno Colony, Paraguay, where Rochelle taught music.



Mary E. Klassen

Doreen (MDiv 1990) and **Hugo Neufeld** (MDiv 1990), Calgary, Alb., are spending time at AMBS in the Pastor Sabbatical Program. They attended Pastors Week and here are talking with **Leah Dawn Bueckert** (MDiv 2006), who has accepted a position as Spiritual Care Coordinator of North Eastman Health Association in Manitoba.



Mary E. Klassen

At Pastors Week, January 28–31, small groups gave participants opportunities to discuss their experiences with testimony and what presenters shared. Here three pastors in conversation following the presentation by AMBS Professor Ben Ollenburger: **Charleen Jongejan Harder**, Valleyview Mennonite Church, London, Ont.; **Rachel Nafziger Hartzler**, MACF 2004, Pleasant View Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.; and **Sue Conrad**, MDiv 2005, East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Books by AMBS faculty

The Way is Made by Walking (InterVarsity 2007), by **Arthur Paul Boers** (MAPS 1983 and associate professor of pastoral theology), shares insights and experiences of walking the 500-mile Camino de Santiago. The InterVarsity Web page for the book says, "It's a story of learning to pray in new ways, embracing simplicity, forming community, living each day centered and focused, depending on God to provide."

Send Forth Your Light: A Vision for Peace, Mission, and Worship (Herald Press 2007) by **Willard Swartley**, (BD 1962 and professor emeritus) develops a biblical theology of peacemaking and witness.

Sheila Klassen-Wiebe (MDiv 1988) says, "Willard ... offers a compelling argument for understanding this three-stranded cord [peace, mission, worship] as essential to the Bible's good news." ●

In Memoriam

Erick J. Sawatzky, 63, associate professor emeritus of pastoral ministry at AMBS, died December 6, 2007, in Winnipeg, Man.



J. Tyler Klassen

Erick joined the AMBS faculty in 1986, directing the field education pro-

gram and teaching in the area of pastoral ministry. He retired early in 2004 and in 2006 he and Beverley, his wife, moved to Winnipeg.

In 2004 Erick realized a dream of editing essays on ministry written by AMBS faculty, *The Heart of the Matter: Pastoral Ministry in Anabaptist Perspective*, published by Cascadia and Herald Press.

"Erick was passionate about the practice of pastoral ministry and the importance of an adequate theology of pastoral ministry in the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition," Loren L. Johns said.

Jacob Elias commented, "Erick and I had a special

kinship arising out of our shared roots as Saskatchewan farm boys whom God called into church work. In the mystery of God's working both of us heard the call, first of all to pastoral ministry, and then also to seminary teaching. Often our reminiscing about our respective journeys from the Canadian prairie heartland to our assignments at AMBS awakened within both of us the incongruous sense that these memories had best be communicated in Low German!"

Daniel Schipani said, "Erick had a lifelong passion for the church and for pastoral ministry and leadership. As a beloved



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faculty colleague and friend, he was a gifted, gentle and generous team player."

Marlene Kropf said, "Erick's irrepressible joy in living is what I will miss most. Erick loved the church. He loved AMBS. He loved his family. He loved God. What a saint!"

In addition to Beverley, his wife, Erick's immediate family includes a son and daughter, their spouses and one grandchild. ●

David H. Tripp, 67, died Sunday, December 16, from complications following surgery.

At the time of his death, David was pastor of Rolling Prairie United Methodist Church and he had been adjunct faculty in Methodist studies at AMBS since 1998.

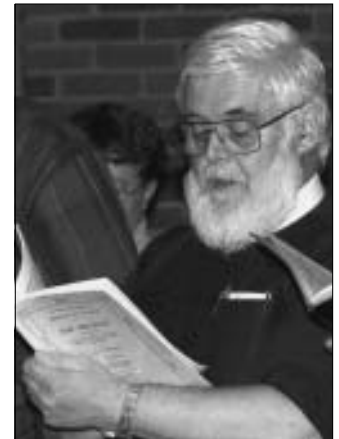
John Rempel summed up David's scholarship and contributions in this way: "David was an enormously gifted scholar in the field of worship. He read and wrote for all the key journals. He was intellectually and emotionally at home in the ancient church and undertook original translations of texts, some of which had never before appeared in English. At the same time he had a fine and sensitive understanding of Methodist and, more broadly, Free

Church worship."

Janeen Bertsche Johnson audited his class, History of Christian Worship, and said, "His lectures often left me in amazement. He would come to class with a simple note card on which he had written a few words, and then he would proceed to lecture with hardly any references to the notes. His grasp of the history of worship was astounding. Along the way, I noted that it would be interesting to sing some of the hymns that came from the early church, and David seized that idea with enthusiasm. From that point on, I believe he started all of his classes, in every course, with a hymn. He loved to sing, and I enjoyed hearing the sound of his classes drifting down the hallway.

"David's love for God, for the Church, and for excellent scholarship were wonderful gifts to AMBS. I will miss him, and I will remember his repeated reminders (upon each meeting in the halls) that life is a gift from God."

David is survived by his wife, Diane Karay Tripp; two children and six grandchildren. ●



Mary E. Klassen

Our hope
is in
God

*The hope to which we have been called
The hope beyond what we can imagine*

Join us April 26-26 as we to celebrate our 50th anniversary and dedicate the library and campus center.
www.ambs.edu/anniversary-dedication