



w i n d o w

How students pay for it

How to pay for seminary study is a question to which each student must find answers. Two messages are clear as students share their stories:

- Assistance from congregations and conferences means more to students than only dollars; and
- Don't close the door of seminary study before you've explored all the possibilities.

Paula Killough
Student from Seattle, Wash.

"Cloud of witnesses" or "living stones"—these are the Biblical images that come to mind as I reflect upon the individuals, congregations, and organizations who have surrounded me with support and encouragement. Through prayer, affirmation and financial assistance I have been provided with the sustenance needed to open doors for my full-time seminary education. I am humbled by this outpouring of generosity.

As someone in mid-life with a loving family, co-housing community, church congregation, professional relationships and friends, I began my education gradually through AMBS

internet course offerings from my home in Seattle, Wash., in 2001. My congregation, Seattle Mennonite Church, offered financial support.

Later as I attended intensive summer courses on my "vacations" from work, a relationship of prayer and financial assistance with the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Men began. In 2004-05 I prayed for discernment as I struggled with the financial challenges of achieving seminary education and my certainty of call to pastoral ministry. More witnesses and living stones of faith came forward and provided many answers to the puzzling questions.

I am grateful to God for the opportunity to study full-time at AMBS. Abundance and generosity from witnesses and stones (plus student loans) have enabled me to look toward a bright future of ministry in God's church. May it be so. ●

Ryan Siemens
Student from Lethbridge, Alberta

In June 2005, Sandra, my wife, and I decided that I would study at AMBS; the only question was when. Our savings were meagre and due to visa restrictions, Sandra wouldn't be able to work in the U.S.

The choice was between going that fall or staying in Canada and working for another six months to build up the pot. When we were getting close to our "must-make-decision-soon"

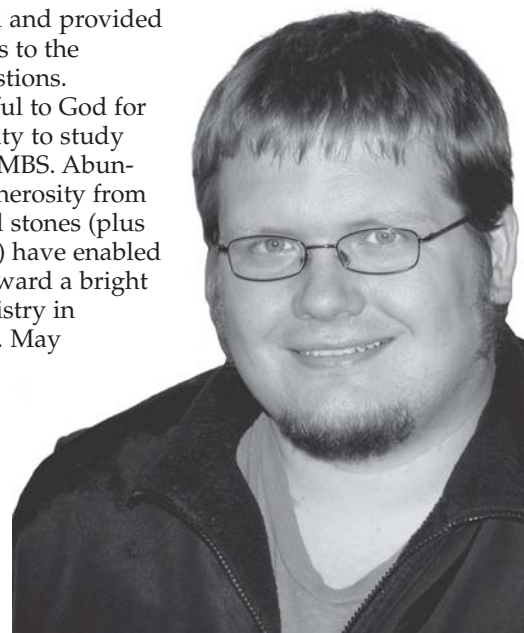
(continued on page 4)

Fall 2006
Volume 17 Issue 1

2 **Congregation provides financial aid and scholarships for students**

3 **Many sources help students fund their study**

4 **President's Window**



Congregation provides financial aid and scholarships for seminary students

Two-thirds of AMBS graduates in 2006 reported incurring no new debt during their seminary study.

Source: Association of Theological Schools Graduating Student Questionnaire

“It’s not hard to see that Eighth Street Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., is a congregation committed to education. The evidence ranges from the church’s weekday preschool to the financial aid it provides for college and seminary students.

Currently there are 14 students—both college and seminary—receiving

support through the congregation’s Student Financial Aid Committee. Jon Brookmyer, a member of the committee who is an accountant, explained that the program was set up with care to comply with tax regulations. Funds come from three sources: a line item in the annual budget, earnings from an endowment and pledges.

The goal of the 250-member congregation is to pay ten percent of the tuition bill for each full-time student in a Mennonite college or seminary. Part-time seminary students receive a smaller percentage.

Christine Guth, member of Eighth Street and part-time student at AMBS, said, “I receive \$250 a semester, but even if they gave me only \$50, it would mean a lot, because it means congregation thinks I’m worth investing in to help me prepare for ministry.”

Jon also said, “When we have a child dedication service, the pastors take the child down the center aisle into the midst of the congregation and we say ‘We will help raise this child.’” He sees the assistance with the financial burden of college and seminary study as part of that commitment.

In addition to this program for members and children of members, the congregation also provides financial aid for international students at AMBS. The Mission and Service Commission of the congregation coordinates this aid and works with the seminary to identify one student each year to receive the aid.

Christine, who serves on

the commission, says, “The congregation sometimes has to cut back in other areas, but we’ve never been asked to cut the budget for the Mission and Service Commission. We’ve been able to keep the support for international students steady, and even increase it a little.”

Eileen Saner, AMBS librarian and director of educational resources, was on the commission when it began supporting an international student. At that time, an AMBS alumnus in Kenya had recommended a student to AMBS, but that person could not come without additional support. The commission decided to provide the support for that student, and the practice has continued for ten years.

Currently Fred Lesakale from Kenya is receiving the congregation’s support. The congregation also has helped students from Ethiopia, Rwanda and Taiwan.

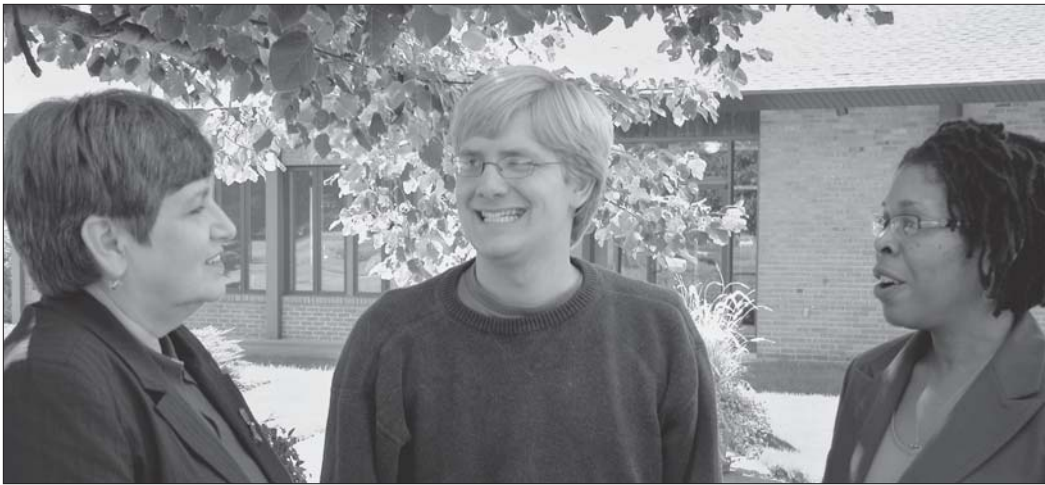
“Eighth Street has AMBS as a line item in its congregational budget along with other church schools,” Eileen says, “and the financial aid is an additional kind of support that helps individual students.” She also emphasizes that when the student who is receiving aid worships with the congregation and occasionally preaches and teaches, the congregation gets the benefit of learning to know more about the student and also about the worldwide church. ●



Last fall, Christine Guth, student from Goshen, Ind., and the whole AMBS community celebrated AMBS Thanksgiving Day on October 19. That was not the national Thanksgiving holiday for either Canada or the U.S., although AMBS commemorates both.

Instead, AMBS Thanksgiving Day marks the day when 20 percent of the school year is completed, the portion of the year covered by the tuition students pay. The celebration included giving thanks to God for the support that comes from individuals, congregations, conferences and businesses for the remaining 80 percent of the school year income. Each student who receives financial aid is linked to the people who give the support, so the celebration provided an opportunity for students to write notes of thanks to these donors.

This fall, the seminary celebrates AMBS Thanksgiving Day on October 17.



Irene Koop, left, is the new AMBS director of financial aid. Samuel Voth Schrag, center, is a Master of Divinity student who has received the AMBS Church Leadership Award, a full-tuition scholarship. Regina Shands Stoltzfus, right, is AMBS director of admissions.

This fall, AMBS will provide almost \$338,000 in scholarships and matching funds (grants that match congregational support for students). This amount is more than ten percent of the annual budget.

More than 20 percent of the AMBS annual fund represents scholarships and all forms of financial aid.

Many sources help students fund their study

by Regina Shands Stoltzfus, director of admissions

Financing a seminary education is not an impossible dream, but careful planning does have to happen. Most AMBS students receive some form of financial assistance; the more research and legwork a student is willing to put into the process, the greater the financial rewards are likely to be. All students who are admitted into a degree program are eligible.

Most AMBS financial aid is in the form of need-based grants. These funds are made available through the generous donations of AMBS supporters. Students apply for these funds by filling out the AMBS Financial Aid Application (U.S. students must also fill out the FAFSA—Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Applications should be submitted by May 1 for the following academic year.

Matching Grants

Admitted students who are enrolled full-time, and who receive financial support from their home congregations or conferences may participate in the matching

grant program. AMBS will match \$500 per semester, or \$1,000 per year. A representative from the church or conference should submit a Matching Grant Commitment Form to the Financial Aid office by May 1.

Special Scholarships

The Church Leadership and Next Generation Awards are full-tuition scholarships for Mennonite students who demonstrate strong potential for leadership ministries in the church. Each year, this award is given to several students beginning masters programs. The awards provide full-tuition grants for up to three years provided the recipients continue full-time study. Some of the awards also include stipends for living expenses. Application must be made by March 15 of the year prior to beginning studies.

The Steiner Bivocational Scholarship assists students training for bivocational ministry, or pastors who combine congregational ministry with other work.

Multicultural Scholarships are available annually for North American students preparing to minister in a multiracial context, and who will contribute to the multicultural ethos of the church.

Mission-Evangelism Scholarships are available to international students who have a commitment to return to their home churches, and who have church agency support.

MCEC/AMBS Study Fund assists a pastor/student from the Mennonite

Conference of Eastern Canada who needs approximately one year of residency to complete a degree.

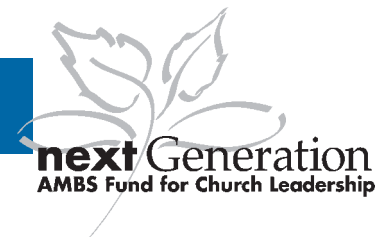
Loans

While we encourage students to explore all other sources of funding before applying for a student loan, if need remains, a loan may help close the gap.

For Canadians only

Canadian students pay tuition costs at par. In addition, full-time students may exchange up to \$1,200 at par each semester for living expenses. ●

Campaign Report



The current emphasis in the Next Generation campaign is to complete funding for the new AMBS library and campus center. To find out more, see www.ambs.edu/NextGeneration.

| | Goal | Received (US dollars) |
|---------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Library and campus center | 8,104,110 | \$6,627,935 |

President's Window

It is hard for me to imagine a vocation that could have enriched me spiritually and intellectually more than church leadership has done over the past twenty-five years. Seminary education prepared me for pastoral leadership in Vermont, missionary work in England, teaching on three continents, academic administration at AMBS, and a variety of writing assignments. I have had opportunity to work alongside gifted teachers, ministers, missionaries and lay people who taught me the joy of witness and service. I feel wealthy because the journey has been so rich.

But ministry is not a strategy for material wealth. So I am grateful that seminary education twenty-five years ago did



not saddle me with large debt. Presbyterian donors—through contributions to their denominational seminary—largely paid for my doctoral studies. That freed this churchman to raise a family and serve with the Mennonite Church on a modest income.

Jesus himself “commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel” (1 Cor 9:14). A strong denomination gives pastors and other leaders enough financial support so they are not preoccupied with making ends meet. A

church with a future also helps fund training programs to prepare a new generation of leaders.

I thank God for people across the church who support AMBS, allowing us to offer financial aid and keep tuition low. No person gifted for ministry should avoid or delay seminary study because of cost. Congregations and conferences increasingly realize that their future depends in part upon having well-trained leaders who have a deep understanding of theology and Scripture.

If your congregation or conference does not have a plan for supporting persons in training for ministry, perhaps you can help make it happen. It might be your best investment in the future of your own faith community.

— J. Nelson Kraybill

How students pay for it

Ryan Siemens

Continued from page 1

deadline we noticed an ad in the *Canadian Mennonite* for a Voluntary Service position at MennoHof in Shippshewana, Ind. So we contacted the director, Joe Yoder, and within five days it was confirmed that Sandra would do VS at MennoHof for one year and I would commute to AMBS. Our living expenses would be covered!

However, the financial support we received for studying at AMBS did not end there. We were very fortunate to receive financial aid from our home

congregation, Lethbridge Mennonite Church, from the Provincial Conference, and from Mennonite Church Canada through Company of 1000. Along with AMBS financial aid, working on campus eight to 10 hours a week and our own savings, we were able fund our first year at AMBS.

You may ask, what about the second year? Well, first of all, we have received financial aid again from all these same organizations. The only change is that we have moved to campus where Sandra is now a VSer with AMBS, which means

our housing expenses are again covered.

So if you are considering study at AMBS but are uncertain about funding, there are ways for it to happen. And if you are someone that has made a contribution to AMBS, or Company of 1000 or any of the other organizations that provide financial aid to students, thank you!! ●

Alumni News

Ed Nyce (Master of Divinity 1998) began a three-year term with Mennonite Central Committee as Iraq Program Manager in August 2006, based in Amman, Jordan.

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

Ed (Master of Divinity 1986) and **Kathrine** (Master of Arts: Theological Studies 1987)

Rempel retired as conference ministers for Rocky Mountain Mennonite Conference at the end of June 2006.

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.”

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The purpose of *AMBS Window* is to invite readers to call people to leadership ministries, and to provide ways for readers to become involved with AMBS through financial support, prayer support and student recruiting.

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