

Foreword

This issue of the *Journal of Mennonite Studies* begins with two articles linking Canada and the United States. The first is a content analysis by David Csinos of the General Conference Mennonite children's magazine, *Junior Messenger*, in search for its messages on peace and war during the Second World War. A second paper by Timothy Epp follows the migration of African Americans and Mennonites from the United States to Upper Canada where the two groups often settled side by side and engaged in a wide variety of economic and social relationships.

The majority of the articles stem from a dynamic and ethnographically rich conference, 'Anti-modern Pathways: Horse and Buggy Mennonites in Canada, Belize and Latin America', held at the University of Winnipeg on 21-22 October 2011. The conference heard from two dozen historians, anthropologists and theologians who analyzed specific Canadian and Canadian-descendant 'horse and buggy' Mennonite communities, that is, the Old Order Mennonites of southern Ontario and Manitoba, and Old Colony Mennonites in Chihuahua and Campeche in Mexico, Belize, East Paraguay, Argentina and Bolivia. All of the presenters had undertaken ethnographic research in one or more of these communities, most in the pursuit of a doctoral or masters-level degree. They also included seven graduate and post graduate students – Anna Sofia Hedberg, Jakob Huttner, Anne Kok, Kerry Fast, Tina Fehr Kehler, Andrew Martin and Karen Warkentin – who had formed a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)-funded research group through the Mennonite Studies program at the University of Winnipeg. Other paper presenters had lived alongside

Old Colony people as community development workers. The keynote address by Prof. Donald Kraybill introduced a typology of research based on his work on the Amish in the United States. About half of the papers presented at the conference appear in this issue.

The first two papers consider cultural practices that have served indirectly to bolster the social resiliency of the Old Colony people. Christopher Cox analyzes the dynamic linguistic structure of Low German among the Old Colony Mennonites in Bolivia, arguing that their dialect reflects both their migratory pathways, a surprising openness to new words, and that pronunciation contains cultural codes such as humility. Lorenzo Cañás Bottos takes us to Argentina where he analyzes marriage patterns and concludes that the remarkable frequency with which siblings marry the siblings of other families may be without design, but that the result is a highly stable community, able to produce a surprisingly low percentage of first cousins, thus broadening the marriage pool within closed communities and stabilizing the social boundary of the community.

The next three papers address the elusive theological question for a quiescent people not given to religious debate or exegesis. Anna Sofia Hedberg, basing her research on Colonia Nuevo Durango, near Charagua, Bolivia, analyzes Old Colony wealth accumulation and consumption and their link to religious teachings on simplicity and egalitarianism. Andrew Martin's paper on the Old Order Mennonites in southern Ontario argues that their theology can be clarified when compared to medieval monastic traditions, such as the Benedictine order, which emphasized humility in meeting God. Karen Warkentin's paper, based on newly established colonies east of the Rio Grande in Bolivia, analyzes the way Old Colony Mennonites 'remember' the past, a complex task for a people committed to changelessness, and one invariably recalling community events rather than individual achievement.

The last two research papers consider the workings of cultural 'difference' within selected communities. Kerry Fast argues on the basis of her research in northern Mexico and among the 'older' colonies near Santa Cruz, Bolivia, that distinctives in religious teaching and social practice are crucial in shoring up community identity and social boundaries. Anne Kok and Carel Roessingh analyze internal division at Shipyard Colony in Belize, describing the fragmentation of the community over issues of technological innovation and the stalwart response from those upholding the Mennonite *Ordnung*.

Two presentations on a more personal note conclude this discussion. Levi Frey, a practicing Old Order Mennonite, shares his theology and worldview, and the intricate inner workings of his community. Martha Hiebert, currently an MCC worker in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, shares

stories about crime, sexuality, child birth and new settlement that are based on an oral history project among Old Colony women in Bolivia.

The book review section, with 13 reviews of literature, poetry and memoir and 9 in history and social sciences, once again demonstrates the rich Mennonite scholarly discourse of today. As always we are deeply grateful to book review editors Brian Froese and Rosmarin Heidenreich, and to the two dozen reviewers who have added their own dimension to the Mennonite scholarly conversation.

This issue of the *Journal* marks the 30th anniversary since Prof. Harry Loewen and friends launched the first issue in 1983. As has become tradition on the decanal anniversary we offer an index of the previous 10 years and recognize the work of Kelly Ross, special assistant for this task.

Finally, I wish to welcome aboard Dr. Robert Zacharias as associate editor of the *Journal*; his expertise in Mennonite literature and his commitment to the study of Mennonite scholarship continues as he completes his SSHRC post-doc at the University of Toronto. I also want to acknowledge the remarkable dedication and assistance of Angela Armstrong and Andrea Dyck in helping to manage the intricate task of production and dissemination.

Royden Loewen, editor