
Preface

Due to a generous financial grant from the Secretary of State through its programme of Multiculturalism, we are able to publish this year a "promotional issue" of the *Journal of Mennonite Studies*. It is our hope that the 1988 issue will not only continue to be of interest to scholars in the various areas of Mennonite studies but also extend its readership base to educated laypersons in Canada and abroad. We are most grateful to the Department of Multiculturalism for its encouragement and support.

The first three articles in this year's issue deal with the Mennonite Brethren — a major branch of the world-wide Mennonite family — who this year are celebrating 100 years of their existence in Canada (1888–1988). James Urry, noted cultural anthropologist and frequent contributor to Mennonite journals, explores in his extensive article the social, cultural, political, and religious factors in Poland, Prussia and Russia which gave rise to the Mennonite Brethren in 1860. He concludes that while the Brethren became a force and movement to be reckoned with, they were less radical and innovative than has been generally assumed.

Paul Toews of Fresno, California, deals in his article with the interaction between culture and faith among North American Mennonite Brethren, concluding that it is neither desirable nor possible to separate the two. In doing so he addresses an issue which of late has become a veritable identity crisis among Canadian, and to a lesser extent American, Mennonites.

The question of who and what Mennonite Brethren are — an ethnic group or a religious denomination — was further advanced by John H. Redekop's book *A People Apart* (1987) and led to a symposium in Fresno, California, sponsored by the Mennonite Brethren seminary and Center for MB Studies there. An article summarizing the proceedings of this symposium was prepared by the organizers of the symposium and submitted to this journal for publication. The "Summary and Findings Statement" reflects the thinking of Mennonite and non-Mennonite academics on Mennonite identity, ethnicity, and self-understanding, and suggests that further studies in this area are needed.

In the last two years Canadian Mennonites held two symposiums (one at the University of Winnipeg in 1987 and one at Conrad Grebel College in 1988) on the influence of World War II on Mennonites in Canada. These symposiums were to assist in the writing of *Mennonites in Canada*, Volume III (Volumes I and II had been published by the late Frank H. Epp). Some of the papers presented at last year's symposium were published in the 1987 issue of *JMS*, and five papers given at this year's symposium are included in this year's issue.

Ted Regehr of Saskatoon, who together with Marlene Epp is writing Volume III, explores the development of Mennonite entrepreneurs from their early farm-community beginnings to the present time, concluding that

today's Mennonite "big business" is little different from successful non-Mennonite business enterprise. Traditional values, according to Regehr, seem to have little place in large Mennonite business establishments. Leo Driedger, a sociologist at the University of Manitoba, traces the shift from earlier rural dominance to present urban dominance among Canadian Mennonites. He points out that the former Mennonite farmers and small-town business people have gradually moved to big city centres where they have become most influential among Mennonite and other, non-Mennonite, communities.

Wesley Berg, a professor of music at the University of Alberta, illustrates Canadian-Mennonite development from "piety to sophistication" in the area of music. Ross T. Bender, a Mennonite pastor in Denver, Colorado, traces the rise and development of Mennonite biblical and "secular" education in Ontario. And Marlene Epp of Waterloo, Ontario, has contributed a most interesting article on Mennonite girls' homes which flourished in Winnipeg and other Canadian centres for some three decades prior to and during World War II.

The next four items in this issue comprise the literary section. Gerhard K. Friesen, professor of German at Wilfrid Laurier University, presents Arnold Dyck's "life as a sum of shattered hopes," based on the Canadian-Mennonite writer's letters to his friend Fritz Senn. Victor Doerksen of the University of Manitoba has translated and edited Arnold Dyck's only poem, written in 1923 when the author passed through the Kiel Canal on his way from Russia to Canada. Poet Jean Janzen of Fresno, California, has some of her latest poems published here for the first time. Harry Loewen introduces another little-known Mennonite poet, Theodor Block, and interprets his poem cycle *Hungerlieder* (1922) which was occasioned by the famine in Russia. Mavis Reimer, who teaches children's literature at the University of Winnipeg, has written a penetrating analysis of two children's novels by Barbara Smucker.

The last two articles in this issue deal with Anabaptist and Mennonite community. Abraham Friesen, a University of California Reformation historian, looks in his article at medieval monasticism and early Anabaptism as renewal movements in their time, concluding that in their efforts to restore Christian faith, piety and discipleship the Anabaptists were similar to the early monastic orders. Jacob Peters, a sociologist at the University of Winnipeg, compares the Mexican and Paraguayan Mennonite communities, exploring similarities and differences with regard to their social, economic, and cultural endeavors.

This issue concludes with an interesting historical note concerning the location of the burial place of Nestor Makhno who died in 1934 as an exile in Paris, and several reviews of recent books.

As of now Victor G. Doerksen is the book review editor of this journal. Reviews of books may be sent directly to him (Department of German,

University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N2) or to the Editor of *Journal of Mennonite Studies*.

Writers of articles are reminded that we have decided to change to the new MLA style. In preparing their manuscripts for possible publication in *JMS*, writers should consult the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (Second Edition). See the bibliographical details on the inside cover of this issue.

Harry Loewen, Editor