

The Birth of a New Journal

It is with a sense of excitement and at the same time some trepidation that we launch this first issue of *Journal of Mennonite Studies*. We are elated at the birth of this journal and firmly believe that it will fill a need for a particular journal in the field of Mennonite Studies. The encouragement we have received from many colleagues and friends across the continent confirms our vision for this venture. On the other hand, we are realistic enough to know that it is one thing to start a journal and quite another to sustain and develop it, given the high cost of printing and distribution, the uncertainty with regard to the number of subscribers, and the limited number of scholars and writers who can contribute material to a scholarly journal. The creation of this journal is thus a calculated risk and a step of faith.

There is an important question that needs to be answered at the outset: Is there a need for another Mennonite journal? Before answering this question it should be stated that the new journal does not intend to compete with the other Mennonite journals in existence — whether old or new — but will seek to complement them in areas that are not sufficiently covered. We believe there is a need for a journal which will reflect, support, and evaluate the emerging and developing literature, art, and culture among Mennonites, with a focus on Canadian Mennonites. There is also a need for a journal which will seek to come to terms with an urban culture to which Canadian Mennonites find themselves exposed in increasing measure. Finally, there is a need for a journal which will grapple with intellectual and academic issues to which university-oriented Mennonites are exposed. It is our hope that this journal will fill some of these needs.

The *Journal of Mennonite Studies* will be firmly rooted in the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition, but will seek to express that tradition in an ever-changing world in which Mennonites are also subject to change. We believe that the traditional Mennonite values must be taken seriously in today's society, knowing that the principles for which our ancestors lived, suffered and died are more urgently needed today than ever before. However, we do not think that beliefs and practices of a former age can simply be transferred and applied to another generation and age. The old values must be rethought, reinterpreted, appropriated anew by each generation, and applied in new ways to changing circumstances. Herein lies the challenge and task of a journal such as this.

The first issue of the *Journal of Mennonite Studies* sets the stage for what readers can expect to see in subsequent issues. It carries the proceedings of the first symposium on the "state of the art" of Mennonite studies which was held in June, 1982, at the University of Toronto. We are grateful to the conference organizers for agreeing to have the papers given at the symposium published in our new journal. Thus, we have invited Professor T. D. Regehr, one of the organizers of the Toronto symposium, to be the guest editor of our inaugural issue. In his Foreword, Ted Regehr explains the occasion and purpose of the Toronto symposium and introduces briefly the papers included in this issue.

It is intended that initially the *JMS* appear once a year. This does not preclude, however, the possibility that in some years two issues will be published. The second issue will carry scholarly articles, reviews, and selected creative writing (poems and short stories).

With this first issue we are extending a "call for papers" on themes dealing with Mennonite issues. The *Journal* will accept submitted material prepared in accordance with Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, Fourth Edition. (By special request and as an exception the article on sociology in this issue deviates from the *Manual*). Manuscripts must be typed and double-spaced and footnotes numbered consecutively at the end of the article.

We would be most grateful for any financial contribution to cover printing and distribution costs of the journal. Monetary contributions made out to the University of Winnipeg will be acknowledged in the *Journal* and receipts for income tax purposes will be issued promptly.

The *Journal of Mennonite Studies* now takes its place alongside the recently established *The Conrad Grebel Review*, published by Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario. We regard the two new journals as sister publications and hope that both will be welcomed by readers within and without the Mennonite brotherhood.

Harry Loewen, Editor