

## IN THIS ISSUE

Although it is commonplace in Radical Reformation studies to associate the Anabaptist movement with a strong Biblicist emphasis, modern scholars have been less attentive to the fact that the Anabaptist canon included the books of the Apocrypha. Moreover, sixteenth-century reformers drew heavily on these texts to defend their distinctive beliefs and practices. In this issue of *THE MENNONITE QUARTERLY REVIEW*, **Loren Johns**, a professor of New Testament at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, highlights the centrality of 1 and 2 Maccabees in Anabaptist theology, especially among those believers who were contemplating their imminent martyrdom. In 2 Maccabees 6-7, the story of Eleazar and the account of the woman and her seven sons proved especially significant. Johns argues that these texts provided a “script” for a “performative reenactment” of defenseless resistance. As these stories and other texts from the Apocrypha were woven into Anabaptist hymnody and martyrological writings, their place within the tradition was secured. The essay offers a welcome reminder of the significance of the Apocrypha for the Anabaptist movement and invites further discussion as to the reasons for its fading relevance within the Mennonite tradition.

In the opening decade of the twenty-first century, two longstanding Mennonite newspapers—*Die Mennonitische Rundschau* and *Der Bote*—quietly ceased to exist. As historians **Harry Loewen** and **James Urry** describe in their analysis of the periodicals, both papers served a crucial function in the twentieth century, helping to maintain a sense of social and religious unity among various waves of German-speaking immigrants from Russia. Although the newspapers’ primary readership was in North America, their influence extended back to Europe and throughout the diaspora of German Mennonite immigrants in Latin America. The demise of the newspapers marked the end of an era. It also raises interesting questions about the nature of group identity formation in an age increasingly dependent on electronic forms of communication.

**Conrad Kanagy**, an associate professor of sociology at Elizabethtown College, may be known to some readers as a collaborator on the Church Member Profile of Mennonite Church USA, and as the author of *Road Signs for the Journey* (Herald Press, 2006), a summary of that study. In this issue, Kanagy turns his attention to the rapidly growing Anabaptist-Mennonite movement in the “Global South.” In 2008 Eastern Mennonite Missions commissioned him to oversee a systematic survey of the membership, beliefs, and practices of twelve groups in ten countries, all of them affiliated with the mission agency. In his essay, Kanagy presents

a summary of key findings from the Multi-Nation Anabaptist Profile. Many of the results confirm larger trends long noted in the literature on global Christianity: rapid growth; the predominance of youth; a strong emphasis on charismatic gifts; and ongoing questions regarding theological and ecclesial identity that accompany dynamic movements. But Kanagy also noted in these groups several strong Anabaptist-Mennonite motifs and differentiated results between younger and more established groups. Most striking, perhaps, are the dramatic differences evident between Anabaptist-Mennonite groups in the Global South and Mennonites in North America. This is a pioneering study in a field that is destined to become the focus of more attention in the coming decades.

The Mennonite experience in South Germany in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has long been an underdeveloped theme within Anabaptist-Mennonite historiography. And social or economic essays on this period—as opposed to studies devoted to theological or genealogical concerns—are even more rare. So it is a delight to offer *MQR* readers a translation of **Frank Konersmann's** essay on the role of Mennonite peasant merchants in the emergence of a rural middle class in Southwest Germany. Konersmann, who has written extensively on Mennonites in the region, focuses on six Amish and Mennonite farming families who exemplified a progressive and entrepreneurial approach to agriculture. Not only were these families characterized by a concentration of capital, but they also introduced more intensive, rationalized production methods, extended the reach of their markets, and cultivated networks of kinship and cooperation, all of which helped to promote new forms of socialization. This newly-emerging rural middle class promoted a stronger sense of individualism and views of the world more consonant with modernity than one might have expected from Mennonites and Amish more frequently identified by a desire to be “nonconformed” to the world.

We conclude this issue of *MQR* with a series of book reviews and book notes. Like the essays themselves, the reviews reflect the geographic, chronological, and disciplinary breadth of contemporary Anabaptist-Mennonite studies. If you value the quality of scholarship represented here, help contribute to its ongoing vitality by encouraging others to subscribe to the journal.

– John D. Roth, editor