

IN THIS ISSUE

During this year of commemoration, a plethora of conferences have offered scholars opportunities to reflect on the past, present, and future of Anabaptist and Mennonite studies. I have had the privilege of participating in several of these gatherings and have been repeatedly struck not only by the rich 500-year history of the Anabaptist tradition—fodder for at least another half millennium of scholarship—but also the creative work being done in several disciplines to push forward the normative and descriptive terms of our fields of inquiry. This issue of *Mennonite Quarterly Review* contains several articles at the cutting edge of research.

Martin Rothkegel presents a reappraisal of Valentin Krautwald's influence on the Schwenkfeldian tradition through a careful examination of his lectures and exegetical writings. Krautwald made decisive contributions to the development of Schwenkfeldian Christology, and his body of work shows a scholar laboring hard to interpret the biblical text through dialogue with early Christian theologians. Rothkegel's penetrating analysis provides new context and underutilized sources for understanding an important, easily neglected Reformation-era tradition of non-conformity.

The next four articles originated as presentations at the 2024 American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature (AAR/SBL) Annual Meetings, held in San Diego, California. All appear as they were presented other than the author's revisions for a reading audience, the standard editorial review for clarity, and *MQR* style standards. The first of these, by **Russell P. Johnson**, explores possibilities for recovering Mennonite and Quaker practices of consensus-seeking as a nonviolent model for decision making and conflict transformation. Although Johnson is sympathetic to criticisms of the consensus model as naïve about power dynamics, he maintains that it contains resources for church and society in the crucial task of "disagreeing better."

David C. Cramer similarly dwells on congregational discernment, this time to reflect on his own church's decision to take a queer-affirming stance. As the church came to its decision after two years of studying the book of Acts, Cramer argues that Acts provides hermeneutical guidelines compatible both with an Anabaptist construal of biblical authority and with the church's full affirmation of queer persons.

The question of queer affirmation is of course “live” in many Anabaptist communities. **Eliot Chandler Burns** contends that unaffirming theologies harm not only queer and trans persons but also the church as a whole. By metaphorically extending clinical research on gender dysphoria, they suggest that when the church denies that trans bodies are in the image of Christ, it denies itself and so experiences a damaging “disassociation.” Chandler Burns hopes that peace churches will respond to this violence with healing so that the church can become “gender euphoric.”

Eric A. Seibert returns to hermeneutical questions in an article designed to encourage Anabaptists to engage in queer readings of Scripture. He specifically highlights several surprising features of the Joseph narrative in Genesis to convey the benefits of queer hermeneutics and offers practical guidelines for pastors and church leaders looking to employ such interpretive strategies publicly. This and the previous two articles were first presented on a panel titled “Queering Anabaptist Scholarship” organized by Mennonite Scholars and Friends.

A Research Note by **John D. Thiesen** updates his October 2024 *MQR* study of Mennonite collaboration with Nazis in occupied Ukraine. His statistical analysis confirms Mennonite collaboration but also indicates that Mennonites may have been less likely than non-Mennonites to collaborate. These pieces, along with the book reviews, together point to a flourishing future for Anabaptist and Mennonite studies.

I began editing this issue with managing editor Jo-Ann Brant and book review editor Breanna Nickel in my capacity as the chair of the *MQR* Publication Committee considering the journal’s ongoing editorial transition. As explained in the preceding letter, Jeremy Bergen and I have now been appointed as co-editors of the journal. The *MQR* team was thrilled for Jeremy to join the editorial process in the final stage of producing this issue. We, in turn, are delighted by the responsibility of stewarding the legacy of *MQR* as a premier home for scholarship on Anabaptist-Mennonite history, thought, life, and affairs.

— Jamie Pitts