

IN THIS ISSUE

The Japanese author Shusaku Endo (d. 1996) was noted for writing fiction from a Roman Catholic (or more broadly Christian) perspective. In the first article of this issue, “Salvation for the Weak in Faith? The God of Shusaku Endo and the God of the Mennonites,” Mennonite pastor **Shuji Moriichi** revisits martyrdom—the “central archetype in collective Mennonite identity”—in light of Endo’s writing and reflection on the subject. Contrasting Endo’s picturing of Christians who lacked the strength to die as martyrs with the typically heroic Mennonite view of steadfast martyrs as depicted in the *Martyrs Mirror*, Moriichi suggests that there is much to be learned from Endo’s weak, would-be martyrs.

Focusing on human weakness in the face of both life and death marks an important shift in perspective and emphasis: from the undeniable personal heroism of the steadfast martyrs, to the mercifulness and faithfulness of a God who also embraces the weak. Moriichi notes that recognizing our weakness as human beings opens us to becoming more “authentically Christian,” to becoming more intimate with the living God of love, recognizing how God reaches out to us in our weakness. He concludes, “Our willingness to die for our faith does not ultimately justify us; only the grace of God does.” Such an affirmation does not diminish the call to discipleship, Moriichi asserts, but rather completes it by locating following after Christ in the living experience of God’s love.

This issue’s second article explores the social and religious dynamics active in the migration and settlement of Mennonites in Pennsylvania. In “Prosperity, Tolerance, and Pacifism: Mennonites in Pennsylvania, 1683—1800,” **Mark Häberlein** traces the outlines of this migration. He begins by noting religious and economic pressures on Mennonites in Europe, along with active support networks led by Dutch Mennonites, as reasons why Mennonites were among the first German-speakers to begin settling in Pennsylvania. Immigrant Mennonites were involved in the founding of Germantown already in 1683, and by 1756 between 2,000 and 3,000 Mennonites had migrated to Pennsylvania from the Palatinate, Alsace, and Switzerland.

Given their early arrival and industriousness, Mennonites came to be substantial and prosperous landowners in 18th century Pennsylvania, especially in Lancaster County. Mennonite settlers did not form isolated communities, but shared the land with Lutherans, Reformed, Moravian

Brethren and other religious groups who arrived later. In order to shed light on the dynamic relationships between these groups, Häberlein accesses the letters and diaries of Lutheran clergymen who began arriving in Pennsylvania in the 1740s. These sources reveal not only religious tensions, but also a surprising amount of cooperation between these groups. This cooperation has been attributed in part to the widespread influence of Pietism on all the groups involved. Pietist literature was widely shared.

With the outbreak of the revolutionary war in 1775, Mennonites and other pacifist groups found themselves in a new and difficult situation. Citizenship demands in the new United States were required eventually; the tensions experienced led also to the migration of some to Canada. Häberlein concludes that in terms of Central European migration patterns “[Mennonite] settlement and economic structures were hardly different from those of other Central European immigrants . . .” Nevertheless, in spite of social pluralism and numerous interactions with other religious groups in Pennsylvania, “the vast majority of Mennonites held fast to their beliefs and passed them on to their descendants.”

In “Anticipating 2025: Interpretations of Anabaptism on the Eve of a 500-Year Celebration. Part Five: Daring to live Hopefully,” **Leonard Gross** translates selections from the fifth volume of the series “500 Jahre Täuferbewegung 2025 (*Themenjahr 24: gewagt! Hoffnung Leben*)” published early in 2024. The current publication joins the four collections translated and published in prior issues of the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*.¹ In highlighting the theme of hope, these present reflections turn from past centuries to the future. To navigate current realities, difficulties, and crises calls for hope above all, always in light of God’s promises. These reflections by European church members can be read as encouraging hopeful steps into the next years of Anabaptist-related life and development.

This issue concludes with the usual book reviews.

– C. Arnold Snyder

¹ Leonard Gross, “Anticipating 2025: Interpretations of Anabaptism on the Eve of a 500-Year Celebration,” *MQR* 96 (January 2022), 103–32; Leonard Gross, “Anticipating 2025: Interpretations of Anabaptism on the Eve of a 500-Year Celebration: Part Two: Daring to Live Together,” *MQR* 97 (July 2023), 317–34; Leonard Gross, “Anticipating 2025: Interpretations of Anabaptism on the Eve of a 500-Year Celebration: Part Three: Daring to Live Steadfastly,” *MQR* 97 (October 2023), 427–48; Leonard Gross, “Anticipating 2025: Interpretations of Anabaptism on the Eve of a 500-Year Celebration. Part Four: Daring to live Nonviolently,” *MQR* 98 (January 2024), 79–104.