

IN THIS ISSUE

Although the generation that carries living memories of World War II is slowly passing from the scene, the historian's task of preserving and interpreting those memories must continue. In recent years, we have published a number of groundbreaking essays in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* on the sensitive subject of Mennonite experiences during the war. Gerhard Rempel's "Mennonites and the Holocaust: From Collaboration to Perpetuation" (Oct. 2010) offered an especially sobering window into the complicity of several German Mennonites in slave labor camps established by the National Socialist regime in Poland, and the direct involvement of other Mennonite individuals in the execution of Jewish civilians in the Ukraine. In this issue of *MQR*, **Alle Hoekema** tells a more uplifting story coming out of the Dutch Mennonite experience. In the spring of 1939, as Jews and Jewish-Christians began to flee Nazi Germany and occupied Austria, a small group of Mennonites in the Netherlands took an active role in securing shelter for refugee children. Hoekema offers a narrative of this fascinating story—told, in part, through the lens of correspondence between the children and their parents—and he attempts to trace the children's fate after the Nazis shut down the network in the fall of 1940.

In the years immediately following the war, a young generation of North American Mennonites served in Europe as relief workers under Mennonite Central Committee. The experience was unsettling for many; but it was also intellectually stimulating. Encounters with European Mennonites, opportunities for study in European universities, ecumenical conversations with other Christians, and proximity to the primary sources of Anabaptist history prompted some young volunteers to challenge conventional thinking about Mennonite history, theology and identity. One group of restless workers, led by John H. Yoder, gathered in Amsterdam in the spring of 1952 to share their thoughts and frustrations regarding the state of the North American Mennonite Church. In this essay, **Nathan Hershberger** describes the formation and early ideals of the movement that emerged from that meeting, often called "Concern" after the name of a publication series the group initiated. Hershberger identifies the central goals of the Concern movement and highlights the ironic nature of its long-term impact: though the movement did successfully challenge the authoritarian structures of the Mennonite church, their emphasis on shared leadership did not so much strengthen the vitality of local congregations—one of their primary goals—as promote the emergence of more complex organizational structures and a new managerial class within the church.

Hershberger's analysis nicely introduces the next two essays. Although **Ryan Newson** does not explicitly cite the Concern movement, his argument for a distinctive Anabaptist hermeneutic—characterized by a communal reading of the text, attentive to contemporary contexts, and anchored by a deep commitment to the Lordship of Christ—appeals to the writings of John H. Yoder and echoes many of the ideas put forward by the Concern pamphlet series. Newson acknowledges the possibility that groups can be misled in their communal discernment, but argues that the advantages of such a hermeneutic far outweigh the potential dangers.

The influence of John H. Yoder—and, implicitly, of the Concern movement—also looms large in **Hyung Jin Kim Sun's** reflections on Philippians 2 within the context of Korean Christianity. Kim Sun notes the apparent anomaly in the fact that even as public expressions of Christianity in Korea have steadily grown in recent decades, so too has the incidence of suicide and the levels of violence. The church's silence in the face of these realities, he argues, can be traced to Korean (or Confucian) understandings of submission to authority and to a misreading of Philippians 2. Kim Sun appeals instead to the concept of "revolutionary subordination," in which a conscious yielding of the self in the manner of Jesus can serve as a mirror on social violence in ways that actively challenge, subvert and transform the culture. Both Newson and Kim Sun received their training at Fuller Theological Seminary.

Finally, we conclude this issue of *MQR* with an essay by **James Urry**, a leading scholar of the Russian Mennonite tradition. Urry revisits the archival sources to track with painstaking detail a complex debate that unfolded within the British Colonial and Foreign Offices in the early 1870s as Mennonites in Russia contemplated the possibility of relocating to Canada. Anglo-Russian relations were delicate at the time. And since emigration from Russia was officially illegal, having British subjects in Canada promote or facilitate emigration had diplomatic consequences that British officials were eager to avoid. Urry ably untangles a flurry of correspondence—filled with calculated maneuverings, outright deception, and honest misunderstandings—and situates the story of Mennonite emigration within a much larger diplomatic framework.

This spring we again welcome a host of new subscribers to *MQR* and express our thanks to those of you who have faithfully renewed your subscription. We are determined to keep our subscription rates as low as possible; but even in a digital age, the survival of academic journals relies on subscription income. Thanks for your on-going support!

– John D. Roth, editor