

IN THIS ISSUE

For many Americans, China looms somewhere on the periphery of our imagination. We are aware of its enormous size, its political significance, and its rapid economic growth, but the country, culture, and language remain distant nonetheless. In the opening essay of this issue of *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, **Matthew Amstutz** describes the unlikely series of events that led Goshen (Ind.) College to establish the first undergraduate exchange program with China—creating thereby a small bridge between North American Mennonites and the Sichuan Teachers College. In the mid-1970s—building on relationships established in post-World War II relief work—J. Lawrence Burkholder, then president of Goshen College, helped to create a program that sent Goshen College students to China and brought Chinese teachers of English to the Goshen campus. Although sometimes criticized for eschewing a missionary model of evangelism and for its naiveté regarding an oppressive political regime, the new model of engagement, argues Amstutz, was based on relationships of genuine mutuality and trust and eventually led to the formation of additional programs like China Educational Exchange and Mennonite Partners in China.

For most of the twentieth century, the Mennonite peace witness in the U.S. was found public expression in resistance to mass conscription accompanied by alternative forms of service. With the elimination of the draft in 1975, however—along with the avowed humanitarian motives behind the military actions in Haiti, Somalia, and Bosnia, and the complexities of the post-9/11 “war on terror”—Mennonites have been far less clear about how to express their commitment to the gospel of peace. **Grant Miller** traces the history of the contemporary Mennonite peace witness, as reflected in the pages of several denominational periodicals. He concludes that the current activist model of speaking to public policy—usually to reject all forms of military deployment—is one source of the current confusion. **J. Robert Charles** follows with an illuminating case study that tells the story of NATO Watch (1985-1991), a Mennonite effort to provide a peace witness in Cold War Europe amid the complexities of secular peacekeeping structures whose authority ultimately rested on the use of military force.

Among the many issues of debate generated by new readings of scripture during the Reformation of the sixteenth century was the controversy over the Sabbath. Most Protestant groups simply carried forward the Catholic practice of Sunday worship. But resolute adherence to the principle of *Sola Scriptura* made the question more complicated for others. Since the church in Acts continued to worship on the Sabbath,

Sunday worship was clearly a later innovation within the Christian tradition, and therefore, in the minds of some believers, unbiblical. Martin Rothkegel traces a fascinating debate among various Anabaptist groups in Moravia, that led to the formation of a Sabbatarian group. He provides compelling evidence that the group emerged out of the Hubmaier tradition, which defended both sword-bearing and Sabbatarianism as Old Testament commands that remained authoritative for contemporary Christians. His essay is followed by a transcription of several relevant primary source documents that we hope will encourage more research in this subject.

For more than a decade, **Carel Roessingh**, sociologist at the Free University of Amsterdam, has been studying Low German Mennonite groups in Belize. In his research note on a conservative community in Springfield, Roessingh describes how the social capital generated by shared group norms has encouraged the pursuit of collective entrepreneur enterprises. Finally, we close with a review essay by **Thomas Finger** focused on a newly-published statement of belief by the Bruderhof community called *Foundations of Our Faith and Calling* (2012). In the near century of its existence, the Bruderhof has had a complex and dynamic relation to its Anabaptist cousins. *Foundations* situates the Bruderhof community with new theological clarity within the Christian tradition and the broader Anabaptist movement. The essay provides a fitting conclusion to an issue focused on the ever-evolving forms of identity and witness within the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition.

– John D. Roth, editor

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Regular	\$35	\$45
Minister	30	40
Student	20	30
3-yr. subscriptions	90	120
Single copy	10	13 (postage paid)

THE MENNONITE QUARTERLY REVIEW (ISSN 0025-9373 / USPS 339-140) is published quarterly for \$35.00 per year for U.S. subscribers, \$45.00 for non-U.S. (includes membership in the Mennonite Historical Society), by the Mennonite Quarterly Review Publication Committee, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana 46526. Second-class postage paid at Goshen, Indiana, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to THE MENNONITE QUARTERLY REVIEW, Goshen College, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, Indiana 46526.