IN THIS ISSUE

Of all the qualities of Amish life that fascinate modern people today, none is likely to evoke stronger reactions—ranging from admiration to disgust; from bewilderment to outright incredulity—than the Amish suspicion of technological innovation. For most Americans, upgrading a cell phone, opting for a faster computer, or embracing tools that save time and energy is a self-evident assumption, if not a moral imperative. By contrast, the Amish selective acceptance of some technologies and rejection of others—allowing a phone booth at the end of the lane, for example, while refusing to have a landline phone inside the house— seems blatantly hypocritical. In June 2013 the Young Center for Pietist and Anabaptist Studies at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College hosted an international conference titled "Amish America: Plain Technology in a Cyber World" that brought scholars from many disciplines into a conversation about Amish attitudes and practices regarding technology. Although the essays compiled in this issue of *MQR* represent only a fraction of the papers presented at the conference, they do suggest some directions of contemporary scholarship on this theme.

In the opening article, **Karen Johnson-Weiner**, an anthropologist at SUNY-Potsdam, challenges the commonly held assumption that the Amish "reject" technology. In point of fact, the Amish use various forms of technology routinely in their daily lives, and they are continually adjusting their practices as the context around them changes. The critical point, she argues, is that the Amish are highly conscious and discerning users of technology, always attentive to the unanticipated consequences that new technologies may have on family life and community relations. Johnson-Weiner also dispels another standard myth regarding the uniformity of Amish practice. Some Amish groups, she notes, have kept technological innovations to a minimum in order to preserve family farm economies and shared community labor; other groups, however, have allowed for a wider range of new technologies as they adapt to economic change. In either case, the Amish recognize that these decisions will have significant implications for family, community and church.

In the essay that follows, **Christopher G. Petrovich** provides a clear illustration. Although all Amish groups reject car ownership, affirm the Dordrecht Confession, and regard community life as an essential part of

their identity, a wide variety of distinct Amish affiliations have emerged within these basic parameters. Petrovich traces the blurred but real boundaries that delineate one such group—the Andy Weaver Amish. The identity of the Andy Weaver, he argues, can be described both historically and theologically; but the most salient markers of the group have emerged over time in the complex and fluid decisions Andy Weaver ministers have made regarding the acceptance (or, more commonly, the rejection) of new technologies.

Gerald Mast offers another concrete illustration of this dynamic process of identity formation in his analysis of a recent controversy among the Old German Baptist Brethren over the use of the Internet. Mast, a professor of communication at Bluffton University, provides a theoretical framework for the impact of new technologies and narrates a fascinating story of the debate—and, ultimately, the division—that unfolded as the group struggled to find the balance between the benefits of technological innovations and the ensuing costs to community values.

How much deviation from cultural norms can a society tolerate? **Susan Ruth Cohen**, a political scientist, frames the question of Amish particularity from the point of view of the dominant culture: Are the Amish good citizens? Cohen interrogates the Amish from the perspective of classical liberal political theory—on the basis of such criteria as individual rights, critical thought, freedom to exit, and gender equality—and offers a qualified affirmation.

This issue of *MQR* concludes with two research notes, both of which give ample testimony to the ongoing vitality of Amish studies. Drawing on detailed data compiled in 1935-1936 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture on women's household production and consumption—including 105 Lancaster County Amish families—**Katherine Jellison** concludes that women played a vital role in the relative success of Amish farms during the Great Depression. Finally, **Caroline Faulkner** sketches the framework for a research project on Amish defection that draws on detailed interviews, integrates several theoretical insights, and is sensitive to variables such as baptismal status and gender.

We hope that you enjoy the essays in this special issue of *MQR*. If you have not yet already renewed your subscription, please be sure to do so.

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– John D. Roth, editor

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