IN THIS ISSUE

During the past decade, debates in the U.S. over public education have increasingly taken on the contentious tone of our broader civic discourse. It's not only that education accounts for a significant portion of our tax dollars, or that access to education has profound consequences for life trajectories, or even that opinions on pedagogy, accountability, and measurable outcomes differ so widely. Instead, the debates are so passionate because education is the way in which societies transmit their deepest spiritual, cultural, and political values from one generation to the next. Education is never just about literacy or preparation for a future job market—at stake are fundamental assumptions about our shared identity and the communities we envision for the future.

Perry Bush, professor of history at Bluffton University, opens this issue of *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* with a thoughtful essay on the educational vision of C. Henry Smith, a leading Mennonite public intellectual, who played a key role in shaping Mennonite identity during the first half of the twentieth century. As one of the first Mennonites in North America to receive a doctoral degree, Smith began his pedagogical career convinced that higher education was the key to progress—both for Mennonites and for the wider American society. In numerous speeches and publications, Smith argued that the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition was the source of such modern democratic principles as religious liberty and the separation of church and state. However, the experience of World War I and the strident patriotism that characterized American culture in the decades that followed sobered his perspective. During the second half of his life, Smith revised his educational vision for Mennonites. That vision became more inward-looking and defensive—Mennonite colleges and seminaries, he argued, should inoculate students against the currents of nationalism, fundamentalism, and acculturation. In lively prose, Bush traces this transformation in Smith's outlook, then shifts his focus to contemporary realities, noting how the pressures of professionalization and upward economic mobility have introduced new challenges for Mennonite educational institutions. The questions of identity, tradition, and witness to the broader society, he suggests, are never fully resolved; and education remains a crucial context where that debate must unfold.

In the essay that follows, **Felipe Hinojosa**, associate professor of history at Texas A&M University, offers an insightful illustration of this enduring tension. Drawing on insights from his widely-acclaimed *Latino Mennonites: Civil Rights, Faith, and Evangelical Culture* (2014), Hinojosa proposes a new approach to Mennonite studies. Whereas the default mode of Mennonite scholarship has tended to frame the relevant

questions—be they theological, historical, ethical, sociological, or literary—from an insider's perspective, often in the form of some quest to define "Mennonite identity," Hinojosa proposes instead a "relational approach." Identity, he suggests, is forged most profoundly in relation to broader realities of ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, or politics, all of which interact with each other in complex, sometimes disorienting, ways. In the 1970s, for example, the debate swirling around the United Farm Worker movement pulled Mennonite fruit growers, farm laborers, social activists, and church institutions into complex relationships that can only be understood "from the outside in" rather than the other way around. Mennonite educational institutions, he argues, should foster precisely this kind of scholarship, framed in the context of larger social transformations.

On April 14, 1937, Nazi officials formally dissolved a German Hutterite community, the Rhön Bruderhof, confiscating its property and expelling its members. According to the dominant historical narrative, set forth by Michael Horsch, a German Mennonite elder and erstwhile supporter of the community, the Nazi action was precipitated by the community's economic mismanagement and imminent bankruptcy. Members of the community, however, who had earlier considered Horsch to be a friend, were stunned by his account of what happened. In this essay, historian **Thomas Nauerth** considers the primary source evidence in painstaking detail and raises significant questions about the veracity of Horsch's account. The sudden critical tone that Horsch adopted toward the community, he argues, reflected both German Mennonite suspicions of communitarian practices and the direct pressure of the Gestapo on Horsch to craft a narrative for foreign readers that would protect the Nazis from any hint of religious repression. Though this story has been largely forgotten by Mennonites, a sense of betrayal has lingered among descendants of the Rhön Bruderhof, which this article helps to explain.

David Weaver-Zercher, professor of American religious history at Messiah College, closes the issue with a research note focused on a minor mystery in the 1938 [add date?] standard English version of *Martyrs Mirror*—namely, why did the editors include only fifty-five of the original 104 images that the Dutch artist, Jan Luyken, had engraved for the 1685 Dutch edition? Weaver-Zercher challenges the traditional explanation that the missing images were excluded because they depicted particularly gruesome scenes. Instead, he suggests, the decision was based on a tradition already established in the 1886 English edition and by a desire to include more images from the Anabaptist section of the volume.

We hope you enjoy the range of topics and arguments in this issue!

– John D. Roth, editor