Foreword

In 1983, the year I was born, Harry Loewen opened the first issue of the *Journal of Mennonite Studies* with a sense of "excitement and at the same time some trepidation." Being "realistic enough to know that it is one thing to start a journal and quite another to sustain and develop it," he acknowledged to his first readers that *JMS* was a "calculated risk and a step of faith." Fourteen years later, incoming editor Royden Loewen referenced that inaugural publication when he confessed to having "some trepidation" as he took the helm of this now-established journal. Under Roy's leadership, *JMS* consolidated its position over the next two-and-a-half decades while exploring diverse themes from mental health to medicine to family and sexuality. Surveying the hundreds of articles that have appeared in this journal since its inception, I am also willing to admit to "some trepidation" at assuming the editorship of this publication. Fortunately, as with the previous transition in editorship in 1996–7, the outgoing editor has prepared the way for the new one. I will thus reserve some of my trepidation for next year.

Fittingly, this edition of *JMS* opens with a tribute to Roy Loewen written by his friend and colleague Hans Werner. I leave it to Hans to explore Roy's personal journey and prolific publication record in detail. I will simply share a glimpse of my first encounters with Roy, a story that will likely resonate with many of us who have come across his work and crossed paths with Roy himself over the years. As a first-year MA student in the spring of 2008, I remember stumbling onto the recently published *Diaspora in the Countryside* in a migration history seminar and enthusing to my graduate cohort (at great length, I recall) about this work that combined a detailed community history with extensive engagements with gender studies and the transnational turn.

Going back through my email record I then see a message to Roy in the fall of 2008 with the tentative subject line "UBC Student

working on Mennonite History" regarding connections between Mennonite sociology and the University of Chicago (also discussed in Roy's tribute to Leo Driedger in this issue). This led to an invitation to attend the 2008 Mennonites and Money conference, and the following year I submitted my completed MA thesis to *JMS* for consideration. The pace and extent of our interaction increased from there, and I found myself in Winnipeg chairing a panel at Roy's Antimodern Pathways conference in 2011, in Amsterdam beginning work with Roy and six others on a global research initiative in 2013, and in Guelph presenting a co-authored paper with Roy in 2015. If it all seemed exceptional to me in the moment, looking back now, I realize that at every step of the way I encountered other young scholars whose academic trajectories had been nudged, encouraged, and set firmly into motion through Roy's generous, collaborative spirit and keen sense for opportunity. I, like others, owe him a great debt.

The articles that follow Hans's tribute are, like our previous issue, from the 2019 Mennonites and Anthropology conference. James Urry, who first contributed to *JMS* in 1985, opens this JMS Forum with a revised version of his keynote address. His engaging overview of anthropological intersections with Mennonite studies begins with British anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor's visit to the United States, which tellingly included stops among Mennonite communities in Pennsylvania and Pueblo peoples in the Southwest. Reflecting his broader intellectual project of "fifty years of researching and writing about Mennonites," Urry challenges the idea of Mennonites as static "cultural survivals," instead viewing them as "active participants in the world" that have "contributed to change and not just been victims of it." Kat Hill's article, like Urry's, wrestles with continuity and change while demonstrating the value of an anthropological approach to early modern Mennonite life. Hill explores the writings of Mennonite elders as well as visitors to Vistula Delta communities like Abraham Hartwich. In analyzing accounts of baptism, travel, church discipline, and cemetery practices, Hill reveals how ritual, and in particular its material culture and emotive components, served to negotiate moments of change as much as reflect continuity.

The following two articles by John Thiesen and Kimberly Schmidt, on Henry Voth and Bertha Kinsinger Petter respectively, shift from an anthropology *of* Mennonites to historical considerations of Mennonites *as* missionaries, educators, and anthropologists. Voth and Petter embraced mission work in Oklahoma, Montana, and Arizona which brought them into contact with the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Hopi in the service of assimilationist policies. As Thiesen

shows, Voth's anthropological interest situated him uneasily between his mission board and a growing scholarly network of anthropologists and museums. Schmidt also finds a compelling paradox for Petter, whose education, extensive linguistic work, and active correspondence with state officials positioned her outside congregational expectations of gendered subservience even as she often advocated the same for her female missionary counterparts. Each article raises important ethical questions about the past and future of Indigenous-Mennonite relations.

Doreen Klassen's subsequent article pairs well with Thiesen and Schmidt's contributions. She explores the work of Ben Eidse and Jacob Loewen and positions the two men, who worked extensively in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa, beginning at mid-century, as "anomalies" in an expanding Mennonite mission field. Each saw anthropology as the "ideal partner for developing theologies and churches rooted in their cultural environment." A rigorous engagement with the discipline demanded a move from mere translation to active transculturation, including the promotion of self-theologizing among emerging Mennonite communities in the Global South. This anthropological approach, even more than the earlier work of Voth and Petter, often placed Eidse and Loewen at odds with established mission boards.

The final paper in our JMS Forum makes an overdue intervention in the well-established scholarly focus on Mennonite identity as expressed through print culture. Timothy Epp foregrounds racialization by examining how several nineteenth-century newspapers constructed ideas of Whiteness and Blackness. These ranged from moral tales to news reports and editorials. Epp tracks consistent representational tendencies that while "framed in terms of benevolence" ultimately "reproduced racial tropes." The tensions within this ambivalent stance came to a head in disagreements between Mennonites from northern and southern US states as well as in moments when Mennonite settler projects coincided with racialized representation of Black people.

Following Epp in our Regular Research Papers section, and covering the same years but in a Canadian context, is a contribution by Shelisa Klassen that also mines newspaper representation. In this case, Klassen explores how recently arrived Russian Mennonites were incorporated into a benign settler myth in Manitoba newspapers in the decades after their 1874 arrival. In a province "birthed in conflict," and where, much like in the US post-emancipation context, "racialized understandings" permeated print culture, Klassen recounts how Mennonites were "portrayed as a solution to the region's troubles." Finally, the concluding essay in this volume, by

Ervin Beck, calls for us to re-appraise David Waltner-Toews's 2007 crime mystery *Fear of Landing*. Beck finds Waltner-Toews's thriller, set in Suharto-era Indonesia amid a rural initiative redolent of Mennonite global development work, a welcome contribution to an emergent Mennonite post-colonial fiction. For Beck, this turn to Mennonite engagement with the Global South pivots from an extensive narration of identity in Mennonite literature.

Following our book review section, this issue concludes with two memorials. Roy Loewen reflects on Mennonite sociologist Leo Driedger while Leonard Doell considers the legacy of Menno Wiebe. Sociology and anthropology are companion disciplines; reading Roy's recollection we see how the University of Chicago's Department of Sociology pivotally shaped Driedger's self-perception and academic agenda, with implications for the belated, but promising, engagement between Mennonite studies and anthropology. As Doell points out in his touching tribute, Wiebe, who taught anthroplogy at Canadian Mennonite Bible College and Canadian Mennonite University, was profoundly influenced by the discipline. Nearly a century after Petter and Voth had participated as anthropologically informed agents of state assimilationist policy in the US context, Wiebe's sincere engagement with the discipline was inseparable from his pursuit of policies of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada.

We hope you will enjoy this issue of *JMS* and look forward to returning with the proceedings of our MCC at 100 conference in 2022!

Ben Nobbs-Thiessen, Editor