

## Afterword

Troy Osborne

As we turn the final pages of the final issue of *The Conrad Grebel Review*, I am grateful for the labor of all those scholars who have supported its mandate to engage “thoughtful, sustained discussion of spirituality, theology, and culture from a broadly-based Mennonite perspective.” Arising out of the conversations and disciplines of the faculty at Conrad Grebel College (now Conrad Grebel University College), the journal quickly extended the conversations beyond the faculty lounge to the broader Mennonite community.

In Walter Klaassen’s introduction to the first issue of *The Conrad Grebel Review* in Spring 1983, he located the journal at a critical moment of Mennonite “self-assurance.”<sup>1</sup> Following several decades when Mennonite identity had been strengthened and shaped through its connections to its history, especially in the sixteenth century, the time was ripe for a journal that looked at the present and towards the future. Whereas other Mennonite journals “focus particularly on the Mennonite story past and present. Our task is to reflect more on present and future in the context of the whole church and the world.”<sup>2</sup>

Writing on behalf of the entire editorial council—the College’s faculty and administration—Klaassen hoped that the content would extend beyond Mennonite matters. “Everything that concerns human beings is the concern of Christians. No issue will, therefore, on principle be excluded from consideration in the *Review*, but the means and ends of it will be subject to the searchlight of Christian faith.”<sup>3</sup> The journal was to reflect the multi-disciplinary makeup of Grebel’s faculty. Considering that several members of the faculty council were neither Mennonites nor theologians, it is not surprising that the initial commitment was to extend the journal’s reach beyond strictly Anabaptist-Mennonite concerns and include Christian viewpoints broadly considered. Klaassen states, “The conditions for accepting contributions for publication are that they reflect sound scholarship and that Christian faith be the acknowledged perspective from which an issue is discussed.”<sup>4</sup> Despite

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1 Walter Klaassen, “Editorial,” *The Conrad Grebel Review* 1, no. 1 (Winter 1983): i.

2 Ibid., ii.

3 Ibid., ii.

4 Ibid., ii.

the proclamations of confidence and denominational breadth, the first volumes reflect a community of scholars still discussing the parameters of Mennonite theological thought and group identities that drew from the Mennonite and Anabaptist pasts.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the subject of early articles soon ranged from the interplay of intellect and emotion in music to nonviolence to the poetry of David Waltner-Toews.<sup>6</sup> With new faculty arriving at the College, Mennonites production of literature and the arts became a trademark of the *Review's* energetic engagement with a variety of disciplines.

The *Review's* success was the result of its editorial leadership and the maturity of Anabaptist-Mennonite thought. With the awareness of the dedicated work by previous scholars and former colleagues, the decision to end publication was therefore not taken lightly. In the context of changing faculty interests and a strained financial context for the College, the University of Waterloo, and higher education in Ontario, the College is hoping to redeploy its financial resources and scholarly energy in support of a new online publishing platform for scholarship on Anabaptist/Mennonite topics, working with several Mennonite institutions of higher education to explore potential models for carrying the journals' conversations into new, open-access forms. Our faculty are excited about the possibilities of this new venture. We believe that the new online project is being designed with the same multi-disciplinary spirit that animated the CGR and hope that the journal's network of readers and contributors will join us on the new platform when it is ready to launch.

I am grateful for Kyle Gingerich Hiebert's recent leadership of the journal. His team have championed the journal and its mandate and remain steadfastly committed to scholarship of the highest quality. Perhaps it is not a traditional Mennonite trait, but I am proud of the influence that this journal has had in classrooms, staff rooms, and scholarly conversations over the past four decades, and I hope that future readers will continue to find the

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5 Rodney J Sawatsky, "Commitment and Critique: A Dialectical Imperative," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 1, no. 1 (1983): 1–12; A James (Allen James) Reimer, "Nature and Possibility of a Mennonite Theology," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 1, no. 1 (1983): 33–55; Maurice Martin, "The Pure Church: The Burden of Anabaptism," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 1, no. 2 (1983): 29–41; J. Harold Jr Sherk, "Rewards and Pitfalls in Studying Mennonite History," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 1, no. 2 (1983): 43–52.

6 Leonard J Enns, "Music: Intellect and Emotion," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 2, no. 2 (1984): 89–105; C Arnold Snyder, "Relevance of Anabaptist Nonviolence for Nicaragua Today," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 2, no. 2 (1984): 123–37; David Waltner-Toews, "Keeping House: David Waltner-Toews as Father, Son, and Poet," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 2, no. 3 (1984): 219–28.

records of the conversations in its pages worthy of their consideration for many years to come.

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