

would agree that there is more than one way to understand the authority of Scripture while still being faithful to its testimony.

David makes a significant point about provincial synods “defer[ring] to Unity Synod to decide controversial questions before plunging ahead on their own.” This is worthy of sustained consideration, which can’t be undertaken in this setting. How the Church might decide in advance what qualifies as controversial enough, well, that’s not easy to do. And, we haven’t been able to discern the best process for legislating an issue as controversial as homosexuality. It was apparent to me at the Northern Province Synod that a “Robert’s Rules of Order/simple majority vote” approach constitutes exactly the wrong way to discern the ways of God on this matter. But, that’s another

discussion. Unity Synod has given (mandated) breathing room on legislating this question. The larger Church still has the obligation before God and each other to work through this as a Unity.

Wally concludes his comments saying, “It appears my brother and I cannot even agree on what divides us, let alone on how to understand the relevant texts.” I have no doubt that if we keep engaging one another with respect and love and focusing on the Church’s mission to a world in travail, we will see where we differ and understand what matters to us most and why. I’m not yet sure if we agree on what divides us, but reading Wally’s final paragraph and reading each of the responses assures me that we agree on what unites us—the saving love of Christ who calls us to life together in service to others.

Letters

Many thanks to all who wrote this autumn!

Please send letters by email to: zinzenhof2002@yahoo.com.

Today we did receive *The Hinge* Summer 2003 mailed from Bethlehem September 17th and arrived here 22nd. Thank you for all arrangements. After taking it out of the envelop I read as first matter of major interest (!) the whole text of your grand review on John Granger’s book on Harry Potter. My wife Erika was as I was myself enthusiastic about this reviewed book and your review. Thank you. We will communicate this text to our four children for them and for our twelve grandchildren many of whom do read Harry Potter as my wife does in order to communicate with them. She also finds Harry Potter quite interesting. I have not spent so much time on these books. But if we have room to spare I consider to take a German translation of your text as appended matter into our Continental *TMDK* November issue. I think all this is quite intriguing and in Christmas time many of these books will again be a present if youngsters can bridle their impatience and will not have already read everything of it beforehand. It was refreshing to read this whilst at present there are still so many difficult theological issues in the air.

— Hartmut Beck, Karlsruhe, Germany

Reading through the pages of this Summer 2003 issue I was pleased to note so many names of people I know; Morgan, Sommers, Volpe, Castello, Wilde, Couch, Graf, and Weinlick. Why do I know so many? I’ve had the privilege of meeting them at Synods or working with them in various programs of the Church. “Working

with them” is one form of dialog that is often neglected in any discussion of reconciliation, but it is a powerful way to break down walls of prejudice. Coming from an all white background to an integrated high school didn't faze me because I hadn't been exposed to racial hatred, and so I could relate to those of different culture and race without any real prejudice. I also learned that others couldn't do that because of family intolerance or cultural disdain for those who weren't “good enough” because they were “different.”

Being different reminds me that Bro. Gordon made reference to the issue of homosexuality that is confronting our Church today. Sorry, I should have said God's Church since it seems to be a universal issue. The question is where to start, with the “fundamentalists” or with the homosexuals. Probably with the fundamentalists who consider the issue to be one of the essentials. We seem to have drifted away from study and applying what is taught in the scriptures. The same might be said about our reaction to race relations. Bro. Costello expressed the belief that “love should extend beyond our own walls.” Sometimes we must work at being loving to others.

Bro. Rodney stated that, “Most members focus on their own congregations and they aren't interested on other congregations. You can't hold that against them.” I disagree that we can't hold that against them. I have been encouraging fellow Moravians to visit other congregations and to take part in ecumenical opportunities. One thing that I have noted in visiting other Moravian congregations is that there is a warmth and friendliness when they learn that I am a fellow Moravian.

I've already said much more than I expected to so maybe I better stop here with the thought that we must become more Christ-like in our thinking whatever is being considered.

— Bill Mitchell, Lititz Moravian

I just got through reading the September *Hinge*. It's most excellent! Kat is raising excellent issues. Of course, her material is well-written and she has touched on a wealth of resources and viewpoints, but then after all she is a professional I rejoice in the topic. We need to make more progress on this topic, and this is one channel. I hope some practical face-to-face dialogues (the white community's way of making progress, by talking) and cooperative projects (the black community's way of making progress, by doing things) will take place.

I laughed at your end-note, about no mail except bank statements. One of my favorite small books is “Whobody There?” It was written 30 years ago (seems like yesterday) for parents and children to read together. The author divides people into several categories. Whobodies are those who love and care for us, like grandparents and the people who pick children up and toss them into the air. There are other categories, one of which is really insincere people (the salesgirl who mutters “haveaniceday” without meaning it) and people who don't care yet but who might someday. One of the lines I remember comes when the child in the book helps Mom look at the mail. “Whobodies don't send mail in envelopes with transparent windows.” I recall that all too often when I look in my own mailbox. May your mail contain more interesting items henceforth, Craig!

— Al Reynolds, Maryland

Pop quiz! Who is the paradigm of all racists? Who flashes immediately to mind? I will not say his name, as that might lend an increment of power to his being, which still reigns among certain of our species. In 1924 he wrote his defining intellectual autobiography while in prison in the Fortress of Landberg am Lech, having been sentenced there by the People's Court of Munich. One chapter in that intellectual autobiography is title, “Race and People.” It is thirty-nine tightly printed pages long in my edition (*Mein Kampf*, Jaico Publishing House, 1988). His logic is pretty good; however, it is based on a lot of false premises and leaps of knowledge and faith.

Isn't that the foundation of sand that the house of racism is built on?

The author postulates a theory of human history that is almost religious. His god is nature and the forces of evolution. A devotee would be willing to die and more to further its Ideal. The Ideal goes something like this, "The greatness of the Aryan is not based on his intellectual powers, but rather on his willingness to devote all his faculties to the service of the community...and when necessity calls he will sacrifice his own life for the community."

In his own sense, the author was a firm proponent of family values, extended and risen to the level of the community. The author points to nature to show that species always reproduce within their own kind. Foxes with foxes, rabbits with rabbits. Otherwise the hybrids produced are inferior to the superior mate, thus degrading the evolution of the species of the superior mate. The same principle, according to the author, applies to races of human beings as to species of animals. ... So, racism benefits nature. Hmm...

Well, what can I say? "Vital sap"? "Precious bodily fluids"? (Dr. Strangelove, the movie.) Conquer the world? "We had to destroy a village in order to save it." Good thing the superior races won World War II. Phew! Sin? Eternal Creator? The Ideal? Will you join me in pronouncing this man's nature-worship a religion? Racism at its ugliest is a religion. It is a deeply rooted in our psyches as is fundamentalist religious faiths. Maybe we will always – in the kingdom of the world.

We Moravians, we Christians, we religious faiths of love and compassion do not function according to this world. We are different. As Peter wrote, "Come to him, a living stone...and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house...you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (I Peter 2:4-9)

— John Scepanski, Christian Faith Moravian Church, DeForest, Wisconsin

*Editor's note: Because of our word limit on letters to the editor, some of John's letter was edited out, with apologies to the writer. **The Hinge** is appreciative of the letters we receive, but we will have to limit the number we publish from any one person. You can read more from John on the *Unitas* listserv.*

The suggestion has been made that there be dialogue between "old Moravians" and "new Moravians." I assume "old Moravians" are those with some earlier family connection with the Moravian Church and "new Moravians" are those who have more recently joined a Moravian congregation. Dr. Fred Bahnson and Paul Couch could be considered "old Moravians" but their opinions and not necessarily those that some would expect to be from "old Moravians." Let us have dialogue but do not classify those taking part.

— William A. Cranford, Retired Moravian pastor

Recently I was deeply impressed by this sermon delivered at Fairview last month by Hermann Weinlick. It strikes me as being a very fine statement of where the Moravian Church stands. In view of the current turmoil in the Province, it is a message that should reach a larger audience. I don't know whether or not it might have a place in *The Hinge* but I thought I would bring it to your attention in case you had not seen it. I thought the last issue of *The Hinge* was of unusual interest. Katherine succeeded in approaching the racial issue in a different and fresh way which I thought was stimulating and well done.

— Herbert Weber, Retired Moravian pastor

*Editor's note: Yes, Herbert, such sermons do have a place in **The Hinge**. Read on!*