

Notes from the Editor

It is the mission of *The Hinge* to discuss issues that are controversial in the Moravian Church so that we may come to a better understanding mutually. When I was in seminary 20 years ago, I never expected that homosexuality would become *the* divisive issue of the 21st century, but it is evident that this issue will define the future of all American churches. The issues surrounding homosexuality, including ordination and gay unions, are tearing apart some of our sister denominations. Some congregations have declared themselves “open and affirming” or simply “sanctuaries” for gay persons while other congregations, in opposition, have signed on to various “Confessing Church” movements that define heterosexuality as an essential of the faith.

Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, and UCC are dealing with this matter according to their own doctrinal and ecclesiastical traditions, but the basic arguments sound very familiar to Moravians. *The Hinge* first raised this issue more than a decade ago (1991, 1:4), and the arguments are basically the same now as then. There has been much discussion of the handful of biblical passages that address same-gender relationships and how these passages should be interpreted in the light of two thousand years of church practice. There has also been much debate over what modern scientific research tells us about human sexuality. Needless to say, there has been little consensus despite synod resolutions in the North and South. The theological and ecclesial discussion has been complicated by secular politics, too.

The debate in the Moravian Church made a quantum leap in intensity in 2002 when the Northern Provincial Synod passed a resolution that is explicitly supportive of homosexual persons in our church. In this issue of *The Hinge*, Glenn Hertzog gives an interpretation of Resolution 6 and its role in the church. That resolution passed, though, without a clear consensus in the synod or the church on what this means. Now we Moravians are experiencing divisions similar to those in other churches.

It is not the role of *The Hinge* to advocate for any position in church debates, other than for the need for open and honest intellectual dialog about our faith and practice. It is therefore unfortunate that this particular edition of *The Hinge* is unbalanced in its presentation. More than a dozen people, liberal and conservative, were asked to write responses to the lead article by Glenn Hertzog. Those who accepted the invitation were generally supportive of greater inclusion of homosexuals in the church. Many of those opposed to Resolution 6 told me privately that they did not feel they could put their views in print. Clergy indicated that they felt that their careers might be affected if they spoke against a synod resolution. It saddens me greatly that anyone in our community feels that they cannot speak openly and honestly on sensitive issues. I wonder what it means to move towards greater openness and affirmation in matters of sexuality if it means less openness to reasonable discussion of matters of faith. I am very grateful to each of the brothers and sisters who had the courage to present their views on this volatile issue, and I hope that we Moravians can recover our ability to reason together in faith and love.