

Notes from the Editor

“Is it your sincere purpose to live according to the precepts of God’s Word, and to teach nothing but the truths and doctrines contained therein, as received and taught in the Moravian Church?” Moravian clergy will recognize this as one of the vows taken in ordination. It is one indication that the Bible is at the center of Moravian worship, work, and doctrine. Moravians have contributed greatly to the translation of Scripture into the many languages of the world. We preach only from the canon of sacred Scripture, and we ponder the ancient text when confronting modern social problems. At times, we even fight over Scripture.

But what does it mean “as received and taught in the Moravian Church?” Is there a Moravian approach to Scripture that is distinct from other ways of interpreting the text? How have Moravians read the Word in the past? How do we read and interpret today? Can we identify principles of Biblical interpretation that are authentically Moravian?

These are the questions addressed in this issue of *The Hinge*. We have a different format than normal. Rather than having a lead article followed by responses, we have five scholarly articles addressing different aspects of a common theme: Scripture.

Janel Rice, who recently graduated from Harvard Divinity School, examines the approach to Scripture in the Unity of the Brethren. She draws attention to the fact that the Unity had a canon within the canon in that the synoptic gospels were held in higher esteem than the Hebrew Scriptures. The Bible was ministerial for the Brethren rather than essential.

Tracy Pryor, who wrote a study guide for Arthur Freeman’s book on the theology of Zinzendorf (*An Ecumenical Theology of the Heart*), explores Zinzendorf’s Christocentric and subjective hermeneutic. Zinzendorf was a pioneer of the modern approach to interpretation elaborated by Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard. His work should be taken seriously by Moravians and non-Moravians alike.

Amy Gohdes-Luhman, a professor of Old Testament and Moravian pastor, shows how she draws meaning through a careful reading of the Hebrew texts. In her article we see the creative conversation of text, theology, and pastoral care.

In her reflections, Lynette Delbridge brings together her identity as a New Testament scholar and Moravian pastor. She shows that Moravians do bring things to the text that other people may not, such as a commitment to community. She also shows how the epistles of early Christianity can be a resource for dealing with conflict in the Moravian Church today.

Keith Stanley is best known to Moravians in North Carolina through the Gemeinschaft program, but he is also a professor of classics. Keith gives a helpful analysis of Moravian hermeneutics and identifies principles that run throughout Moravian history.

We also have a commentary on the Iraq War and a poem on the church.