

## Notes from the Editor

*Theology.* It is such a daunting word that many people stop reading as soon as they see it. I can’t say that I blame them. I often stop reading as soon as I see the word macroeconomics or neurology or fiduciary. Every institution has its own way of speaking and writing. The church is no different. We speak a language that helps us communicate within the church, but which confuses outsiders. We call this language theology but often it is just “church-speak.” Increasingly, church-speak does not even communicate inside the church. Books with *Theology* in the title do not sell. The word puts people off even though they want to discuss theology. But the vigorous sales of books by people like Richard Dawkins, Diana Eck, Karen Armstrong, Elaine Pagels, and Bart Ehrman demonstrate a hunger to examine Christian history and doctrine. Even though some of these authors are opposed to Christianity, they are addressing theological issues.

*Theology.* Is it really just a game of rearranging the jargon of church-speak, or does it actually communicate something of importance to those in the church and outside of the church? Is theology just an esoteric mind trip for the high priests who have become masters of divinity or doctors of philosophy? *Theology.* What is it good for?

Steve Simmons addresses this vital question and argues that theology can be and should be a useful part of congregational life. But first, pastors and their flock need to rethink what theology is. Theology is Greek for “God-Talk,” which is different from church-speak. God-talk should not be the alienating jargon of the priestly illuminati; it should be a conversation of the people of God with and about God. Theology is serious reflection on the questions that confront all humans; questions about life, meaning, and vocation. *Christian* theology should be an on-going discussion within the community of faith about God, the church, and God’s intention for the church. The contemporary church can engage in meaningful and faithful theological reflection and discussion by refocusing on the questions of importance in people’s lives.

Our respondents include a lay person who is a professor accustomed to a different type of academic jargon; a pastor in England, where the context for Christian thought and life are quite different; an American pastor who has promoted theological reading in his congregation; and a specialist in Christian education of children.

This issue includes a very special feature. At the annual “Mission Band Lovefeast” at Home Church in January 2007 four young people spoke about their summer mission trips. Two of them worked with AIDS orphans in Africa. *The Hinge* is privileged to share their reflections in this issue. We also have reviews of three books that deal with the intersection of theology and the world. Remember, *The Hinge* is now online at [www.moravianseminary.edu](http://www.moravianseminary.edu).