

## Notes from the Editor

This issue of *The Hinge* is a little different from the norm. Rather than having a lead article followed by several responses, we have ten essays exploring modern Moravian theology. What makes this issue particularly special is that the essays were written by students in a course titled “Theology of the Heart: Moravian Theology from Zinzendorf to the Present,” which was taught at Wake Forest University School of Divinity in the spring of 2008. Some of the participants in the course were (or are) pursuing the Master of Divinity degree at Moravian Theological Seminary; others expect to attend there after graduating from Wake Forest. Several of the participants, including two of the non-Moravians, had already taken a course on the theology of the Ancient Unity the previous spring.

Almost half of the students were not Moravian, which was refreshing. As you will see, the non-Moravian students dug deeply into Moravian theological statements and found things often overlooked by Moravians. One of the students is working on a master’s in religious studies rather than divinity, and she brought an outsider’s perspective to theological questions. More than half of the students in the class were female, which led to some interesting discussions, especially about the motherhood of the Holy Spirit. All of the Moravians are members of the Southern Province.

The course dealt extensively with the theology of Zinzendorf, but students also read Spangenberg and a variety of documents from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some of the students were initially put off by Zinzendorf’s provocative theological language and ideas, but most of them found something valuable in his thought. Some of the students were much more comfortable with Spangenberg, although some were surprised by how Calvinist his writings are. One of the issues that kept coming up in the course was the question of how did the Moravian Church become so traditional and conventional? Another persistent issue was why is it so difficult for modern Moravians to discuss theology? For a church that is proud of its educational heritage, we have done very little in the area of theology, especially in America. This does not mean that the Moravians do not have a theological tradition, but it does mean that it is often hard to articulate Moravian doctrine.

The students were asked to reflect on Moravian theology today, using current Moravian doctrinal statements, especially *The Ground of the Unity*. Some of the students analyzed and critiqued *The Ground*; others critiqued the Moravian Church itself. Some of the most interesting and helpful essays identified aspects of Moravian theology that could contribute to the wider ecumenical church. Most encouraging for me is that the essays demonstrate the vitality of Moravian theology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.