

Notes from the Editor

This issue of *The Hinge* is my last as editor, and I am happy to hand the reins over to the new editorial team of Ginny Tobiassen, Janel Rice, and Christian Rice. In July I assumed new duties as Director of Admissions at the School of Divinity of Wake Forest University, where I have been teaching theology and Moravian studies for the past four years. I am confident that *The Hinge* will continue to play its unique role in the Moravian Church. *The Hinge* was established nearly two decades ago as a way for Moravians to discuss controversial issues in the hopes of coming to better understanding and work toward reconciliation.

In this issue Margaret Wilde addresses the core mission of *The Hinge* directly. She draws on biblical exegesis and her long experience in peace and justice advocacy to develop strategies for reconciliation and forgiveness in the Moravian Church. Like almost every church in the world today, the Moravian Church has been riven by numerous conflicts such as homosexuality, abortion, church governance, charismatic gifts, the sacraments, the AIDS epidemic, and the role of women in the church. Every seven years Unity Synod spends much of its time on conflict resolution and proper exercise of church discipline.

Many of these conflicts involve common themes, such as how to interpret the Bible, but each conflict has its unique history and context. For instance, Moravians in Central America are dealing with the aftermath of the Sandinista war and the corrosive effect of the drug trade while Moravians in Europe are still trying to heal the wounds caused by years of Communist oppression and the Cold War. One of the things that make reconciliation difficult in Christian communities is that spiritual language often masks political, social, and historical realities. Genuine reconciliation requires honest appraisal of the conflict.

Some of these conflicts are so bitter and entrenched that it is tempting to give up and simply let the church split asunder. The history of Christianity demonstrates that divisions are much easier to create than to resolve. Ecumenical efforts have often been successful in resolving old doctrinal disputes, but it is much harder to overcome the memory of past wrongs. Our identities are often forged in opposition to others, and it is tempting simply to ignore the biblical mandate for reconciliation and forgiveness. But we cannot do so and remain true to the Gospel. Running throughout the New Testament is the message that Christ reconciles humanity to God and that those who are in Christ should be reconciled to each other.

This issue of *The Hinge* includes voices from around the Moravian world, including South Africa and Ireland. Many of the authors have been involved in conflict resolution, and they represent a variety of theological perspectives, but they share a common belief in the ability of Christ to break down the walls of division that we build through pride, fear, greed, selfishness, self-righteousness, idolatry, and ignorance. Perhaps one day Christians will learn how to make real our prayer that we forgive those who trespass against us just as we have been forgiven of our sins.