

## About the Co-Editors: Ginny Hege Tobiassen

Moving into a position as a co-editor of *The Hinge* along with Janel and Christian Rice is an exciting opportunity in a life that lately seems to have about all the excitement a person can stand. In August 2007 I left a 25-year career as an editor in the book industry to pursue the Master of Divinity degree at Wake Forest University School of Divinity. This change brought me back to my hometown of Winston-Salem, making it possible for me to worship again in the Moravian Church. As I write this, I am serving as a pastoral intern at Konnoak Hills Moravian Church in Winston-Salem.

Living outside of a Moravian region, I had spent most of my adult life worshiping in other denominations, but I never stopped identifying myself as a Moravian. A pastor's daughter, I considered myself as Moravian as they come. It was a surprise, then, to realize that I had actually never been an adult in the Moravian church. Paul Peucker's article in this issue reminds me that my "history" with the Moravians is heavily flavored with nostalgia for the lovefeasts, candle teas, music, and camp experiences of my very happy childhood and adolescence.

Nevertheless, studying under Craig Atwood at Wake Forest showed me that somehow, between all those lovefeast buns and cups of coffee, in my childhood I had absorbed not just real Moravian history but Moravian theology. Scratch me and you'd find a pietist whose theology bore the unmistakable hallmarks of Zinzendorf's "religion of the heart." I am discovering that underneath the nostalgia is an authentic Moravian with roots in the 18th century (we'll lay aside the question of whether those roots go back farther!). History, real history, does shape us. The challenge for me now is to bring that rich historical background into the 21st century and into my own adulthood, which requires living within and loving the church as a human institution with all the flaws, hurt feelings, structural problems, and good intentions that involves.

I believe that working on *The Hinge* will help me reshape my memories of the church of my childhood into a realistic picture of that church today—and, best of all, to make a deeper and wider acquaintance with members all over the world, all living out their convictions about what it means to be a Christian who identifies as Moravian.

I thank Paul Peucker and the respondents for this issue. We editors encourage readers to send us their own thoughts about history and the Moravian identity. You can write to us through my e-mail address, [virginia1@bellsouth.net](mailto:virginia1@bellsouth.net).

I thank Craig Atwood and the board of *The Hinge* for the opportunity to serve, and I look forward to working with Janel, Christian, and the *Hinge* readership.

— Ginny Hege Tobiassen

## About the Co-Editors: Janel Rice

It is an honor to serve as co-editor of *The Hinge* with Ginny Hege Tobiassen and my husband, Christian Rice. After I reentered the Moravian orbit at the Moravian Theological Seminary, I discovered *The Hinge*, and I have found its conversations and theological dialogue crucial for both our Moravian Church and my own personal development.

Baptized a Moravian as a child, and a happy product of Palmer Moravian Church in Easton, PA, I didn't truly connect with my faith on a personal and intellectual level until college. As I got more involved in Ursinus College's chapel program and felt my heart stirred by worship, community service and reading groups, I began to read about the Moravian Church's history. I found it fascinating. Following college, I recognized that God was calling me to pursue the study of religion, and I entered the Master of Divinity program at Harvard Divinity School. After spending four years in Boston (and working as a Presbyterian Church intern, a prison educator, and a religious bookstore employee), I entered the Moravian Theological Seminary for my "Moravian year." Soon I received a call to serve on the pastoral team at Central Moravian Church in Bethlehem, where I have been for nearly five years.

Brother Paul Peucker's article in this issue of *The Hinge* brought me many smiles as I realized how his analysis fit my own faith journey. My reengagement with the church began in college as I read Moravian history in books like Bishop Art Freeman's *An Ecumenical Theology of the Heart*. I carried that engagement with me to Boston, where classmates or curious strangers who asked about the Moravian Church would hear a polished five-minute synopsis of 550 years of history, from the Ancient Unity through Zinzendorf to today. Living as (and feeling like) a Moravian exile in New England, studying with the goal of becoming a Moravian pastor, I certainly embodied de Schweinitz's claim that an identity could be found in history.

Serving now at Central Moravian Church, I am surrounded by the history of the early Moravians in Bethlehem, and I work amidst the beauty of a 269-year-old church community. Paul's call to construct both an appreciative and critical inquiry into our history rings true for me as I minister to a living, growing congregation which also honors its heritage. I hope that this issue is just one of the ways that we can continue this dialogue about our "usable past" and current engagement in our world. I thank Paul Peucker, the respondents and my co-editors for this fascinating conversation.

— Janel Rice

## About the Co-Editors: Christian Rice

I am honored to have this opportunity to serve as co-editor of *The Hinge* with Ginny Hege Tobiassen and Janel Rice. I recently graduated from Harvard Divinity School with a Th.D. in Christian Ethics. I am now on the faculty of Ursinus College in Collegeville, Pennsylvania, teaching in the Philosophy and Religion department, as well as directing the college's civic engagement efforts.

In Cambridge, I saw myself as part of the Moravian diaspora, worshipping out of necessity with Presbyterians and Congregationalists. When I returned to Bethlehem a few years ago, I was delighted to rejoin the Moravian fold as a member of Central Moravian. It was a chance to reconnect with the faith tradition of my childhood and youth, as I was raised in a Moravian church. Certainly the nostalgia of which Paul Peucker speaks in this issue of *The Hinge* will always remain vivid to my senses. My memories of lovefeasts, trombones, and distinctively Moravian hymnody all coalesce to create a warm feeling deep in my subconscious—the feeling of being home.

Yet I believe that my affection for the Moravian Church is grounded in something more than nostalgia. Despite being born into the tradition, I would like to think that I might have also chosen it, were I to have simply and fortunately stumbled upon it. I resonate deeply with the tradition's ecumenism and non-dogmaticism. I often have thought that Moravians say a lot about their understanding of God by not saying much at all. We tend to be reticent about points of Christian doctrine that have divided Christians for centuries. Quite to the contrary, I have heard it said that ours is a tradition whose greatest heresy is to break relationship with each other. What a precious gift we have to offer!

I am thankful for this opportunity to serve, and am grateful to be working with Ginny and Janel.

— Christian Rice