



THE HINGE

*A Journal of Christian Thought
for the Moravian Church*

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Volume 9, Number 3: Autumn 2002

The Hinge is a forum for discussion in the Moravian Church. Views and opinions expressed in articles published in *The Hinge* are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial board or the official positions of the Moravian Church and its agencies. You are welcome to submit letters and articles for consideration for publication.

One of the early offices of the Moravian Church in Bethlehem, Pa. was that of the Hinge. “The office of the Hinge requires that the brother who holds it look after everything and bring troublesome factors within the congregation into mutual accord without their first having to be taken up publicly in the congregation council.” September 1742, The Bethlehem Diary, vol. 1, tr. by Kenneth Hamilton, p. 80.

This idea from the Moravian past has been chosen to represent the character of this journal. *The Hinge* is intended to be a mainspring in the life of the contemporary Moravian Church, causing us to move, think, and grow. It is especially sensitive to troublesome factors that may be an obstacle to our mutual accord. Above all, it is to be an instrument for opening doors in our church.

The hinge design was provided by Todd Tyson of Kernersville, N.C.

Notes from the Editor

In this Issue

One of the enduring controversies in the history of Christianity involves the relationship of the church and the state. This old debate has special relevance in the United States since ours is the first nation in history to be founded as a secular government. This was a radical departure from the common wisdom that religious authorities must validate the ruler and that religious symbols must be united with the symbols of government. Since the dawn of civilization, it has been assumed that religion is necessary to insure social stability and basic morality. In the distant past, kings were seen as the sons of gods. In Christendom, kings were anointed by archbishops in order to establish their “divine right” to rule. Not only the Bill of Rights but also the actions and attitudes of the founders of the revolution and the writers of the constitution established the U.S. government as a secular government. The first President was sworn in by a justice, not a priest or minister; there was no test of religious beliefs for government office; and George Washington assured Catholics and Jews that they would be tolerated and protected by the new government. The Bill of Rights was such a radical departure from the common wisdom of the ages that two hundred years later, we are still working out the meaning of the disestablishment clause.

Since the middle of the last century, the Supreme Court has increasingly been asked to rule on the legal aspects of the First Amendment: from required prayer in public schools to wearing religious symbols while in uniform. The terrorist attacks on American soil on 9/11/01 and the United State’s response has again raised the issue of what it means to be a Christian and a citizen. Is there any conflict between patriotic and Christian values, or is the church the “praying arm” of the state? Can we even imagine a time when we, like Bonhoeffer, would feel called to pray for the defeat of our country rather than for victory? Do Muslims have the same civil liberties as Jews and Christians? What does it mean that the Pledge of Allegiance (since the 1950s) states that we are “one nation, *under God*, indivisible?”

The Hinge asked the imminent Baptist scholar James Dunn, who also maintains an active presence in the halls of Congress, to address the basic issues of religious freedom and civic responsibility in the United States. Dr. Dunn’s article is informed by years of study and political debate, and it raises important questions for us Moravians. Our respondents include active pastors in both provinces, lay persons, and a Moravian who has a life-time of service in state government. They approach Dr. Dunn’s challenge in a variety of ways: some give a ringing “Amen” to his position, while others take opposition to his views. It is clear there is

no apparent consensus on this matter, but such open debate and discussion seems to me to be its own endorsement of the Bill of Rights.

Announcements

Free copies of *The Hinge* for Moravian clergy!

The Hinge continues to develop and grow. Our relationship with the Center for Moravian Studies is bearing rich fruit. Thanks to the generosity of the Center, *The Hinge* will now be provided to all ordained clergy free of charge. If you are listed in the *Daily Texts* as clergy, you will automatically receive *The Hinge* unless you tell us to remove your name from our database. This will allow *The Hinge* more effectively to serve as a forum for the entire Moravian Church.

Lifetime subscriptions!

Laypersons can still subscribe to *The Hinge* as well. If you are already receiving *The Hinge* you will continue to do so without the need for renewing your subscription. New subscriptions will require a one-time fee of \$30. You will remain on the mailing list until you either indicate to us to remove your name or you move and do not change your address! Changes or corrections in addresses should be directed to Jane Burcaw at Moravian Theological Seminary (1200 Main St., Bethlehem, PA 18018). New subscribers should use the form at the end of this issue.

New Publication schedule:

In the future, *The Hinge* will be published three times a year. It was intended to be a quarterly journal, but as long-time subscribers know, the goal of four issues per year has rarely been met. Since everyone involved in *The Hinge*, including the editor, does this as a voluntary service to the Moravian Church, it is difficult to maintain a rigorous publishing schedule and maintain its quality. You can expect to receive issues in the spring, summer, and fall from now on.

Separation no Myth

Dr. James Dunn

Let's begin at the very beginning, a very good place to start. Genesis 1:26-27 reminds us that all humankind is made in the "image of God." Whatever that means, it means at least that we are made "able to respond" to God. We are "response able" (see: responsible), and if responsible, then free. Freedom and responsibility cannot exist apart from each other. Every freedom carries a responsibility piggyback. Every free choice implies certain consequences. Every decision bears some duty. The entire scheme of things links freedom and responsibility. It is not always easy or fun, but it is the way that being made in God's image works.

Beyond that, it has appeared to biblical Christians from the very beginning that God chose to allow us, required us, and created us to decide for ourselves about our relationship to God. We are not sure why it is that way, but every wonderful "whosever will" in scripture reminds us that even the Eternal One will not force us into the Heavenly Kingdom. "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve!" Jesus himself watched the rich young ruler go away sorrowful rather than violate his personhood.

Religious freedom is the most personal, most precious, most basic, most seminal, most clearly biblical, most universal, most endangered, and most fundamental freedom of all the freedoms one might have. All other liberties and liberations claimed by

thinking believers come from this basic freedom. Every distinction that separates human beings from dumb things, automations and puppets, is rooted in the religious freedom that is the gift of God.

Thomas Jefferson, no orthodox Christian, understood this and expressed it powerfully: "The God who gave us life gave us liberty at the same time." It is relevant to point to Jefferson because he and others in his crowd tried, for the first time in history, to write into the documents of governance safeguards for that profound freedom. Religious liberty, as we in this country know it, is not rooted in some primitive social contract, nor in enlightenment theory, as important as that is, nor in primal democratic processes, nor in popular religion, nor in some biblical proof text, but in the very person and being of God whom all humankind, in some wonderful and mysterious way, replicates, echoes, spins off, responds to and answers to. We can do no other than admit that all worth, value, dignity, and, yes, even our very humanity is derived from our being made in God's image. We must take value from that creaturely nature; our software demands it; our built-in receivers can only pick up those frequencies.

So, the American experiment in religious freedom has a high, but not unrealistic, view of human beings. James Madison, one of the most influential founders, was in touch with

the frailties, limitations, and sinfulness, if you will, of all mortals. He studied with John Witherspoon at what would become Princeton College, and there he got a heavy dose of Calvinism, including an appreciation of the need for checks and balances, fences, limitations. The separation of church and state was born of this period, this philosophy, this political and practical recognition of the need for a hedge, a guard rail, a means to protect the freedom of religion that had been abused, violated and ignored in the Europe of that day.

Yet, today there are those who do not understand this greatest contribution of the United States to the science of government. Some still act as if the separation of church and state does not exist. Pat Robertson calls it a "myth." Others make odd claims for the principle that would deny the religious nature of all people. Still others act as if the principle were designed only to protect freedom of worship.

Separation of church and state does not require separation of God from government, separation of religion from politics, or separation of Christians (or those of any other religion) from their citizenship. But the separation of church and state is no myth. Church and state have different purposes, different constituencies, different sources of funding and different methods for gaining their goals. It is their distinctive methods of operation that so often causes confusion.

Christians who take the Bible seriously must simply read Romans 13:1-3 to see that scripture affirms the use of force by the

state. One does not need to multiply the passages in Old and New Testaments to demonstrate how often the use of force by the state is seen as proper. But it is never right for the church to coerce in matters of faith. To violate the conscience of any individual in spiritual concerns is a serious offense. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord" is a biblical notion that has not been repealed.

So, when the majority in any particular instance tries to use the offices, influence, image or legal force of the state to advance its religion, then that majority is out of bounds, at least in this country. We have had the good sense through the years to use legislation, court decisions, and the power of public opinion and popular pressure to keep both church and state in line. We understand that when government meddles in religion it always has the touch of mud about it. The Lemon test has offered good guidelines: laws must have a primarily secular purpose (not religious); laws should neither advance nor inhibit religion; and laws should not make for the excessive entanglement of government and religion. We have seen what has happened in other lands when those basic boundaries are ignored or flouted.

One must simply examine the many violations of the spirit of church-state separation to see how easy it is to get in real trouble. When anyone's religious liberty is denied, everyone's religious liberty is endangered. Yet, Supreme Court decisions would allow government to require all citizens to pay taxes for the support of the religious

education of a few. Some would like to insist that our Ten Commandments be posted in public schools, paid for with tax dollars supplied by all citizens, even Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and those with no religion. Others would like to insist upon all public school children hearing or engaging in some sort of "prayer" in their classrooms, making them required participants or captive audiences doing religious exercises whether they want to or not.

Then, there are those controversial issues in which, without government intervention, we believers manage to find ways to confuse the coercive power of the state with what we claim to be spiritual, Christocentric, God-fearing faith. Some church leaders, lay and ordained, plunge their local church (or worse, their denomination) into secular politics thereby secularizing the spiritual, polarizing the congregation, politicizing the theological, and damaging the witness of the church in the world. More commonly, some church people in most denominations bring the nation's flag into the worship center and permit it either to overshadow the Cross or to stand gathering dust until it becomes part of the furniture. Most often the use of the United States' flag in churches falls into misuse by giving it too much or too little attention.

A good many of the problems relating to church-state separation are those we bring upon ourselves by simply not insisting that the church be the church and the state be the state. It has worked well in the history of the Republic. It has been a system that is best for the church and best for the state.

Look at every other nation on the face of the earth. In "Christian" nations with established religion, attendance, giving and involvement do not begin to compare with that in the United States. In Great Britain, with a state church, less than 10% of the population is at worship on any given Sunday. In the United States every weekend about 50% of the people are in church, synagogue or mosque. For religion to be vital it must be voluntary.

It is essential in our participatory democracy for Christians to study, work, keep up, take part in partisan politics (that's where the decisions are made), complain, commend, and to vote. Thomas Jefferson said, "If a people in a Constitutional democracy think that they can be both ignorant and free, they imagine a thing that has never been and that will never be."

James Dunn is Visiting Professor of Christianity and Public Policy at Wake Forest Divinity School in Winston-Salem, N.C. and former director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

Responses

Margaret D. Wilde

I agree with Dr. Dunn's defense of church-state separation, and with the logic behind it. Here I would like to expand that logic a bit, and project it into the near future. The opening point is especially important and often forgotten: religious freedom comes not from the state but from God who made us both free and "response able." That we are free to choose whom we will serve is one of the wonders of creation. That the framers of the Constitution respected that freedom, and that it has survived so many theocratic temptations since then, is another wonder.

What makes its survival a wonder is that, like most human rights, religious freedom is easily and often abused. Also, the responsibility that goes with it is hard to define and monitor. In the schools of my Oklahoma childhood, no one doubted the fundamentalist teachers' right to launch into prayer after the pledge of allegiance each day. Later, however, I realized they were neglecting a responsibility to my one Jewish classmate and even to Christian children like me who were not yet certain of their spiritual identity. Although (or because) I'm not sure what the teachers should have done differently, that memory made me an opponent of prayer in the public schools.

Some other church-state issues are even harder to work out. In principle, I strongly favor public funding of faith-based social service programs; they are usually more responsive to human need, and are sometimes better able to engage people in solving their own problems than government bureaucracies. But we need a new understanding of what religious freedom means when church agencies are setting goals and selecting staff, and we need a clear agreement on the agencies' responsibility to voters and taxpayers whose motivations and criteria may be different from theirs.

Similarly, we need the moral guidance and activism of religious leaders, including clergy, in the political arena. Black churches for generations have modeled that role in the United States; local Christian communities in Latin America reinvigorated the Catholic Church in the midst of political struggle; Archbishop Desmond Tutu helped lead South Africans to freedom and then gave new meaning to the word "reconciliation."

So, Dr. Dunn's last point is right on: Christians should contribute moral leadership to political decision making. But he also reminds us not to forget the difference between moral and political authority. Church-state separation helps ensure that public officials implement laws and pro-

grams established by a pluralistic political process, not based on their own reading of scripture or their vision of the reign of God.

On the other hand, I don't think it's enough to insist "that the church be the church and the state be the state." First, we usually try to draw the line between them through legislation and litigation (which are both state-based processes), leading generally to a "political correctness" that feeds resentment and trivializes the need for church-state separation. Second, the line-drawing fails because both church and state keep changing. Locally and globally, the traditional nation-state is losing relevance with the emergence of "civil society" that gives new voice to grass-roots movements and non-governmental organizations (including churches). And churches as we once knew them, religious institutions that spoke authoritatively to the state and other secular powers, are also losing relevance.

This is happening in part because both church and state have so often abused their power. That is why the separation between them is important to both their constituencies, and church members belong to both. But the problem will not be solved by simply reasserting the separation of church and state; it is more important to find ways of respecting the purposes for which each was created. We need to protect religious freedom against abuse by political power and the integrity of our pluralistic political process against the abuse of religious authority.

This certainly includes continued vigilance for the separation of church and state. But legislation and litigation are not always helpful, and may be even less so in today's environment of changing institutions and shifting powers. In my view the health of both church and state, and of the emerging civil society, can best be protected not by legislation and litigation but by tolerance, flexibility, common sense, and community-building.

Tolerance, flexibility, and common sense are central to our culture; "pragmatism" is another word for this combination of values. It already helps us work out most civic differences, even many public policy disputes, without resorting to either legislation or litigation. Indeed these two processes are narrowing our space for negotiating pragmatic solutions to church-state issues by making laws and setting precedents based on local disputes that could have been more creatively resolved among neighbors.

Here are two situations in which legal maneuvering has foreclosed possibilities for common-sense problem-solving in local communities. First, we didn't need the courts to tell us that Christmas displays on public property are more cultural than confessional. We knew that, but by making a legal case of it, we have further trivialized Christmas and lost opportunities for sharing with people of other traditions. The second issue has had more serious consequences. Legal wrangling over religious content in the schools has limited teachers' academic free-

dom, including their ability to foster dialogue on religious questions, an essential part of education for a pluralistic society.

In short, church-state legislation and litigation are eroding the other condition I mentioned as necessary for the health of church, state, and civil society: our sense of community. Individualism and community are always in tension. In our culture the balance has always tipped toward individualism but not to the utter exclusion of community. Today, however, I believe our sense of community is more at risk than church-state separation. We see growing fragmentation among Christians, Jews, people of other faiths, and secularists – with radical, liberal, moderate and/or fundamentalist factions in each. I believe church-state legislation and litigation are both an effect and a cause of

that fragmentation. So long as there are radical religionists, atheists, and secularists bent on imposing their will by political means, pragmatism and community-building cannot completely replace legislation and litigation for the protection of church-state separation. But these are not always the best tools for the job, and they should not be allowed to close off opportunities for neighborly, common-sense problem-solving.

While we defend the separation of church and state, we should also work to build bridges across it. With power shifting and institutions changing in the emerging civil society, we need to widen our resources of dialogue and community. As members of both constituencies, church and state, American Christians are well placed to begin building those bridges.

Margaret Wilde is a member of Prince of Peace Moravian Church in Miami, Florida.

Hamilton Horton, Jr.

My guess is that no part of our United States Constitution has been so misunderstood as the First Amendment clause, “Congress shall pass no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” Read carefully and in context, the clause is obviously intended to forbid *Congress* from involving itself with churches which the various states had already *established*. For in 1791, when the amendment was adopted, several states had “established churches” which were being supported by public taxes. In proposing

that amendment they intended to forbid Congress from meddling with their established churches.

North Carolina had, indeed, in its constitution of 1776, disestablished the Anglican Church. Virginia delayed several years after the revolution, until in 1786, in an extremely close vote, they disestablished that church.¹

¹Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee and George Washington, among other leaders, favored supporting religion through taxation.

Other states, however, notably Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Hampshire, taxed every citizen to support the church (although one by one they permitted taxpayers to designate what denomination they wanted to receive their tax). Indeed, it was not until 1833 that Massachusetts finally stopped taxing its people to support religion.

As so much in this life, the issue is one of balance: a strict separation of church and state has never been achieved. Nor should it be. The secular law forbids polygamy. It prohibits religious rites offensive to moral standards, such as Dionysian revels. It enforces Sunday "blue laws." It exempts religious institutions from taxation. Its courts resolve disputes over ownership of church property. Its judges order medical treatment for ill children in spite of parental beliefs. It provides chaplains for prisoners, legislators, and servicemen. The secular law even permits tax funds to transport pupils to sectarian schools.

Which of these obvious involvements of the state in religion would you abolish to achieve a pristine "separation of church and state?"

Again, the issue is one of balance. Certainly, not one of us would want to "prohibit the free exercise" of religion in the sense the framers of the amendment to the Constitution contemplated it. I am concerned, however, that we have gone so far separating

religion from public life that we are instituting, especially in our schools, not freedom *of* religion but freedom *from* religion.

It's tough for a school to achieve total neutrality toward religion without slipping into antagonism toward religion, or worse, treating it as irrelevant. Otherwise put, when the state uses its law to require school attendance and ordains a curriculum of studies which every child is required to pursue, the state is implicitly telling its pupils "this is what your government considers important to your life." When the study of religion is excluded from the curriculum, what can the student conclude other than that his government considers religion of little or no value to his life – that it is irrelevant or merely a superstition.²

I would argue that one cannot understand our Western civilization without a serious consideration of the religion that made it possible. I would argue, too, that when Count de Tocqueville in 1835 concluded "Americans consider religion indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions," he was not writing about religion as a mere academic study but rather as a set of beliefs requiring standards of moral conduct

²Of course the law does not forbid the teaching of religion, including Christianity, in a factual way which excludes a worship aspect. But most public school officials live in such fear of lawsuits filed by quibblers of one ilk or another that they decline to address religious study at all.

or “right” behavior, positing good and bad, right and wrong.

Indeed, can it be pure coincidence that the current way of corporate scandals should involve the first generation of top management schooled in moral relativism and situational ethics?

But here we come acopper. For as Dr. Dunn correctly points out, under current court rulings, the public schools cannot indoctrinate any religion. Nor would you and I want them to force-feed sectarianism of any stripe (even Moravianism!). Yet any society requires a moral consensus if it is to survive, and religion is historically the practical means of inculcating morality.

A uniform public school system such as ours worked well in earlier days. Now, however, we are faced with the need to instill moral standards in a fractious, pluralistic society that includes various faiths as well as various denominations of the Christian faith.

Perhaps we need to step back and consider that the aim of our school system is

not to perpetuate a monopoly of our public school system, but rather the aim is to educate young people. And perhaps the way to do this in a diverse population is to allow parents to choose what school approach is best for their children. Let the parents choose a parochial school, a conventional public school, a classical academy, a Montessori school, or whatever they prefer – and you immediately find that religious instruction is removed from contention.

Of course, the state would need to continue to ensure the curriculum and ensure, too, a standard of quality through uniform standardized tests. The state would issue scholarship vouchers which the parent could “spend” at the school they thought best. We have ample precedent for this in the GI Bill and in Pell grants, both of which allow the recipient to choose his school (even a theological seminary).

In this way education for our young people could again include the moral and religious instruction without which no civilization can long endure, in a way of which their parents approve.

Hamilton Horton, Jr. is a Senator for the state of North Carolina and a member of Calvary Moravian Church in Winston-Salem.

Joe Nicholas

This is clearly a most relevant topic and I commend the publishers of *The Hinge* for taking it up. Of course, in the aftermath of 9/11, when there were so many religious services as ways of helping people deal with their grief, it was easy to forget that this is a country where there is a clear separation of church and state. However, it is encouraging that so many people found those services most acceptable in marking such a national tragedy.

I agree with Dr. Dunn's assertion of the companionship between freedom and responsibility, especially as he locates it in the story of creation in Genesis. A further reading of the passage shows that it was the exercise of freedom that led to the Fall of humankind. It came from a desire to be more than human. Thus, the temptation offered was that of being more than human and to be like gods (Gen.1:26-30 and Gen. 3:5). It is consistently the case that when we fail to act in accordance with what we are called to be, our freedom works against us.

The suggestion that the principle of the separation of church and state was intended "to protect the freedom of religion that had been abused, violated and ignored in the Europe of that day" is a very important point and should be repeated again and again. In listening to some of the discussions these days, the thinking seems to suggest that the separation was intended to keep

religion out of the affairs of state. It is to our benefit to bear in mind that laws and regulations must always be read in their context.

The fact of the matter is that the constitution of the USA was really a critique of the Europe of that time as the Founding Fathers sought to put this republic together. Likewise, in the biblical account of our Lord's crucifixion, it is made clear that he was put to death by the Roman government at the instigation of the Jewish leaders. In early fifteenth century Europe, our spiritual founder, John Hus, was put to death by the Roman Church with the complicity of the Bohemian government. The record is unambiguous that Prince Sigismund of Bohemia had assured Hus of the support of the State as he journeyed to the Council of Constance in 1413. He was even accompanied by two barons. Yet when Hus was arrested, Sigismund listened more to the voice of the Church than to the voice of his nobility as he abandoned Hus to his fate.

It must be affirmed that the Church in Europe did not come to such a high position of respect and authority in the governance of state through scheming at one level or another. When the powerful Roman Empire fell in the fifth century, it was to the Church that the people looked for continuity and stability. To the credit of the Church up to today, there were some outstanding bishops and popes who knew how to govern Church or State. The problem came when the Church did not easily give up its

power and remained a rival power to the State for centuries.

While there are some obvious differences between the two entities, some of the differences listed in the article are debatable. Surely, they do share similar constituents, similar sources of funding and even some purposes, but they differ vastly in methods and goals. It is a weak argument to suggest that government should not be required to provide support “for religious education of a few” and many other things mentioned in the article. Dr. Dunn could be betraying his own argument here. For example, by providing ten minutes of ‘quiet time’ at the start of the school day, you allow like-minded groups to meet for some form of bonding which is always going to be a plus for morale in school. We are now in the football season and even with the cost of television time, most teams get together for their ‘bonding’ session right before the whistle is blown.

The removal of that kind of bonding session from our children and young in the name of the separation of church and state is being unfaithful to the Founding Fathers. By providing it, we are recognizing that that kind of bonding time is essential to at least 50% of the people in this country. When we factor in those who must work, those who are physically unable to attend, and those who alternate between sports and worship on the weekend, the percentage of those connected to church, synagogue and mosque is much higher.

When the separation is practiced in this way, it could be seen as discrimination, but I do not believe that this is the intention of Dr. Dunn. However, let us follow the same argument some more. There is no argument about the wheel chair ramps, community playing fields, and parks with wonderful play areas for children; and the list could go on. Why should those who need no wheel chair, have no interest in sports, and who have no child pay for these through their taxes? It is simple. The government provides services for its citizens and certain groups require particular services.

It is a valid point that Church leaders should exercise great care in how they get involved in politics since their members are the same people who are sometimes fiercely divided politically. However, it would be a neglect of responsibility if the Church did not maintain its role of advocacy with reference to particular issues as they relate positively or negatively to its known teachings. The indifference to matters of the church in the United Kingdom is probably reflective of the failure to hold church/state relations in creative tension. It could be that they are where they are because their failure has continued for too long. Who knows what more will happen to our young ones as we keep pushing this brand of church/state separation?

Surely, there is separation of church and state here, but I suggest that it is under pressure because it is not what the Founding

Fathers wanted it to be and what it is now has not been defined. The Founding Fathers wanted *freedom of religion*, but too many of the advocates today are pushing for the *freedom from religion*. A part of the heritage of this country is its religious heritage. Going back to the creation story, when we strive to be what we are not called to be, we lose our identity. Already many parents are asking

questions about the identity of their own children.

When this separation is proclaimed and practiced in terms of the principle of governance rather than in the policies of governance, this republic will fulfill the dreams of the fathers and prepare the next generation for its future.

The Rev. Dr. Joseph E. Nicholas is pastor of Prince of Peace Moravian Church in Miami, Florida.

Dorothy O. Burcaw

It is tempting to just say "Amen!" to Dr. James Dunn's article on the separation of church and state. I echo the comment on the last page of his paper noting, "A good many problems relating to church-state separation are those we bring upon ourselves by simply not insisting that the church be the church and the state be the state."

I was aware of the data he presented that fifty percent of the people in the United States are in weekly worship at a church, synagogue or mosque. In countries such as Great Britain where there is a state church, only ten percent of the population is in worship, yet every citizen is supporting the state church through taxes. Dr. Dunn notes, "For religion to be vital it must be voluntary." I echo another "Amen" to that.

If we, in the United States of America, strictly adhered to "let the church be the church and the state be the state" ideology

we would not have problems. Yet political expediency makes the separation fuzzy. There are certain religious ideologies which stress that they have the truth and will support candidates who have the truth as they see it. This would sometimes exclude women, even Christian women, and certainly those of another religion.

The fact that his discussion is titled separation of church and state, instead of separation of religion and state, suggests that we haven't even begun to recognize that Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and every other large or small religions should receive the same "rights" as Christians do. If we have true separation of church and state, has our democracy the right to deny building permits just because the locals don't want "them" in our neighborhood?

How far does our "religion" dictate how we deny good people election? There were those who expounded that if John F. Kennedy was elected, then he would have been the puppet of the Pope. I received an e-mail

from someone in our church who encouraged us not to vote Democrat, because if Joseph Lieberman became president, he would be unable to make a decision on a Jewish Holiday. This was posted to an online group within the Moravian Church and many responded that his comments were inappropriate. Still, these views were raised only two years ago.

I agree that being created in the image of God means that we are able to respond to God, and every freedom brings responsibility. My concern remains that, for many, religious freedom means that every one is free to think as he or she pleases, as long as he or she thinks as I do. Televangelists are masterful at this. There was such a hue and cry across the nation when some televangelist tried to link the horror of September 11 with the decrease in moral values, claiming that the terrorist attack was God's retribution. That is part of religious freedom, to let them

say such things. Another part of religious freedom is to remind them of the reality that not all think as they do.

I agree that separation of religion and state does not require separation of God from government, but I wonder if we will feel the same if the Muslim population grows, as predicted, to be majority religion in this country by the middle of this new century. Will we be in the minority? Will we continue to be free to worship as we choose? Will we be free to take our holy days from work?

If we can say "yes" to those questions, then we can truly say that religion is separate from state, just as our ancestors tried to say in our constitution. My prayer, yes my Christian prayer, is that the framers of the constitution got it right at the beginning. Only time will tell.

The Rev. Dorothy Burcaw recently retired as pastor of Lititz Moravian Church and is now serving as chaplain Moravian Manors.

Robert Peek

The discussion about government versus religious freedom is still evolving in our society and the courts. The focus now seems skewed from its original intent. Joseph Story (1833), founder of Harvard Law School, writing about the First Amendment points out that it never intended for the government to be completely neutral about our Christian religion. The intention was to only

ensure that the government would not coerce others in their religious understandings whatever that might be.

In response to Dr. Dunn's theme, I was taken back to another time forty years ago. It was some time ago, but in hindsight it was a time of some stability for our society. I cannot remember an incident where a policeman was needed at our school. Student misbehavior in the classroom and teachers

being insulted by students were rare events. We had devotions in school. Most of us attended church somewhere. It was a time when if one had a problem in school there was also a good possibility that there would be a greater one waiting at home. Peer pressure, like today carried great weight. We found ourselves accountable to the teacher, the school, each other, our parents, the church, and God. There was a value system where one part of the equation was not separated from the other. I cannot recall an incident where a student was ever abused (other than his or her budding ego) by a teacher or a teacher was sued by a parent. The important elements included in our learning were discipline, God, and this word "responsibility" that Dr. Dunn mentions in his theme.

I believe that as one can not separate discipline and a nurtured spiritual life from learning; neither can one separate responsibility and a focused spiritual belief in God from our living, our work, and, yes, our political life too.

Thomas Jefferson, one of the writers of our Constitution, was no orthodox Christian. In fact, Jefferson leaned more heavily toward Unitarian than Christian views. Jefferson's and James Madison's motives for pushing religious freedom may well have been due to their religious differences with the mainstream Christian orthodox religious movement of their day. This separation of church and state advocated by Jefferson and Madison was never intended to take God

completely out of society to accommodate every whim of every citizen, but rather to stifle any coercive benefits by any one church or denomination.

Dr. Dunn uses the Bible to illustrate his points several times. Jefferson would be more apt to use the teachings of Jesus when Scripture did not conflict with his own reason and motives. The Constitution protects and advocates the toleration that Jefferson espoused, however, it was never the intention of the writers (including Jefferson) to take God and faith in God out of the seats and symbols of government.

There is another area that needs some airing. "Church and state have different purposes, different constituencies, different sources of funding, and different methods for attaining their goals." Let's wade through these one by one. "Church and state have different purposes, different constituencies." This is true on the surface. The church promotes spiritual welfare and the state maintains the physical well being of a society. However, the state cannot attain its goals without a constituency that has a value system that can support quality decisions that need to be made about the well being of others. Lacking this focus, we evolve (some would say that we have arrived) into a hedonistic society that is about "me" rather than the welfare of all its citizens.

Continuing with the last two points, "Church and state have...different sources of funding and means of attaining their

goals.” It is true that the church and government rely on different sources of funding and means of attaining money. The church relies on moral persuasion versus the state’s use of taxation and the Internal Revenue Service as an instrument of its enforcement. However, this last point needs more meat. While the state uses taxation, there is another means that politicians and the political structure use to fund the state. It is through the contributions made by corporate America and those who have enough resources to sway political opinion. This means that if one is not motivated by spiritual qualities that come from institutions like the church, we are left to less than properly motivated leaders who drive the government and the use of its resources.

The present diabolical situations affecting Enron, Worldcom, and others can only be seen through the eyes of people who pay taxes, go to church, earn an honest living, and vote (hopefully for people who will honestly represent their constituents). Many of these honest people now find themselves living in a society under the control of people who lack spiritual direction. Proverbs 29:2 says, “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked rule, the people groan.”

The tragic September 11, 2001 attack on the Pentagon and World Trade Center further highlights the uncertainties facing our nation. The present economic messes and attacks on our country demand that God and spiritual direction be part of America’s

decision-making processes as never before. Our hope must be to focus on decisions that can be made through a stable value system rather than a system corrupted by rampant greed and those wanting to be all things to all people. The church offers answers to many of society’s problems and offers hope for the future of the state. The values of one’s spiritual qualities, by necessity, must drive the other elements of life and living.

Religious freedom is a “most endangered right.” The danger comes, in my opinion, from those who would separate the worship of God from those who control society and the means of decision-making. The danger is compounded when we trust the legalists to define how we use our God-given rights of religious freedom. The problems we inherit now have come from a spiritual void in many parts of our evolving politically correct society. This present state of affairs by “diminishing the soul” seems much more dangerous to democracy than any perceived coercion by those with religious beliefs.

Harry Mansfield in his theme “The Religious Issue and the Order of Modern Constitutionalism” makes the argument that there is constant tension between religion and freedom. He writes, “Religion offers the highest aspirations for society. Freedom is the choice and cost of having one over the other.... Our three constitutional philosophers (Hobbes, Spinoza, and Locke) had their hopes for a permanent improvement in human freedom, but they were too sober to

believe that this could be done without cost. But did they correctly reckon the cost in human irresponsibility—even to their own project—when men are no longer required or expected to take care of their souls? The measures these men adopted to contain religion by containing the soul seem also to endanger freedom.”

On this occasion I must agree with Pat Robertson. Separation of church and state must be a myth if we are to survive as a nation of people who make good decisions for the benefit of our whole society. Keeping God in the Pledge of Allegiance, the Ten Commandments posted on court house walls, and the nation’s flag in our churches are easier alternatives with a more certain outcome than not realizing our responsibility to drive our nation in God’s light as the key

to happiness and success. It makes little sense to separate one from the other.

While I can agree with the intent of Jefferson’s arguments on separation of church and state, our present day reality begs a different solution than what has evolved. Jefferson assumed a responsible constituency that now seems to be lacking in many of our institutions. Most enlightened citizens know the pitfall of this word “assume.”

In closing let’s revisit Jefferson’s remark as quoted. “If a people in a Constitutional democracy think that they can be ... ignorant and free, they imagine a thing that has never been and will never be.” Please insert the word “Godless” between ignorant and free.”

The Rev. Robert M. (Bob) Peek, Sr., is the pastor of Immanuel-New Eden Moravian Church in Winston-Salem, N.C.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Who broke the covenant? Over thirty years ago my wife and I joined the Moravian Church by signing the *Brotherly Agreement*, now the *Covenant for Christian Living* (CCL). We covenanted together with the Northern Province of the Moravian Church to believe and live that covenant. We have faithfully done that for thirty-one years. However, recent events, including the spring issue of *The Hinge*, make it evident that the Moravian Church has broken its covenant with us.

The CCL has two clear doctrinal statements, which we were told were Moravian “essentials.” The essentials regarding the exclusivity of Christ and scripture come directly from *The Ground of the Unity* and the Unity Synod. We would not have joined the Moravian Church

without such doctrinal statements as a minimum. Now we have seminary professors, bishops, pastors, and lay people saying that Christ is not the only path to God and the inspired Word of God is not the only source of truth on matters of faith and doctrine. Who broke the covenant? We now have numerous pastors arguing for the ordination of practicing homosexuals though the scripture is clear the practice of homosexuality is a sin. To support homosexuality scripture must be undermined. Who broke the covenant? And why?

One thing the writers of *The Hinge* agreed upon was the Moravians no longer agree on what they believe. How sad! John Scepanski says there are no essentials in the Moravian Church. He repeals the CCL. But on whose authority? How did the church get into such a mess?

My years in the church tell me it started at the seminary where professors were allowed to teach doctrine contrary to *The Ground of the Unity* without consequence. Their liberal modernist theology now infects the Northern Province. Hampton Morgan's piece in *The Hinge* is exactly right. The only way with integrity to change Moravian doctrine is do it through proper church protocol and to revise *The Ground of the Unity* at a Unity Synod. For pastors, professors and lay people to assume they have the right to preach contrary doctrine without such a change takes a colossal ego and the violation of the CCL.

I see little hope that the Moravian Church has the moral courage to turn things around and resist the pull of a secular society. Homosexuality, abortion, divorce, adultery, etc. are all now accepted in the names of those politically correct concepts of tolerance, compassion, diversity, inclusion, and non-judgmentalism. Zinzendorf must be turning over in his grave.

My wife and I are leaving the Moravian Church and will join an evangelical church that is clear in its doctrine regarding Christ and scripture. While technically we are leaving the Moravian Church, in reality the Moravian Church violated its covenant with us and left us some time ago. Maranatha!

L. James Harvey, Ph.D.

Editor's Note: It is with regret that we publish this letter of separation and we wish Brother and Sister Harvey blessings for the future.

Book Review:

Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry by William H. Willimon.

If you read just one book on pastoral ministry this year, make it this one. Will Willimon is Dean of the Chapel and Professor of Christian Ministry at Duke Divinity School. For over twenty-five years he has been one of America's most astute, theologically informed, and readable writers on the ministry and its various facets. His *Resident Aliens*, written with Stanley Hauerwas, is among the most important books on the Church as a counter-cultural body. His latest book, *Pastor*, may be the capstone of a career spent largely in the area of pastoral formation and reflection on Christian ministry.

In thirteen chapters, Willimon covers the gamut of pastoral roles, dealing with preaching, counseling, leadership, teaching, and a host of others. Above all, he centers on worship as the heart of the pastorate. He writes, "Our worship in the church is a prelude to and the source of our work in the world. When the pastor presides at the Lord's Table in divine service, the pastor is visibly signifying the source of all the pastor's work in the congregation. Therefore, liturgical leadership is the ground for all ministry."

This is a theme that he comes back to time and again, especially when he perceives that other duties are crowding out what should be the central focus of the pastor. For instance, in "The Pastor as Counselor," he lambastes the modern tendency of pas-

tors to rely on caring techniques derived from psychotherapy rather than the older approaches that centered on worship as the setting for pastoral care. He writes, "A major difference between the pastoral care of previous ages of the church and that of our modern era is the switch from care that utilized mostly corporate, priestly, liturgical actions to care that has increasingly limited itself to individualistic, psychologically oriented techniques heavily influenced by prevailing secular therapies." He sees the pastor less as a therapist and more as a guide who in his preaching, teaching, and counseling helps people find their way through the moral thickets of life. He does this as much through what happens in worship when the Word of God is proclaimed and the people pray in confession and intercession as in one-on-one sessions.

For Willimon, worship is central to the ministry of the church at least in part because it is the most counter-cultural thing that the church does. When the church worships, it tells the world that its agenda, its concerns, its ideologies have only relative significance, and in fact are being judged by the One who brought the world into being. When the church adores its Lord, it is saying that he is at the center of its life. When the church prays in worship, it is engaging in the most important, life-changing, world-transforming work it could do. When the church hears the Scripture in worship, it is hearing a

message so crucial to life that the news of the world fades into insignificance before it. When the church comes to the Lord's Table, it isn't having a ritual potluck (with all the connotations of shallow "fellowship" that potlucks signify); it is having an intimate, sustaining meal with the risen Savior. Is it any wonder Willimon gives worship the pride of place in the ministry of the pastor that he does?

This is not to say that he neglects other aspects of the pastor's job description. While he thinks that some have been given too much prominence, he believes that others, such as teaching, need to be recovered as cornerstones of ministry. He would also give much greater weight to the pastor's own spiritual life, contending that those who give so much must also receive in order to give. He writes,

The pastor's life flows from a call, and continues, during difficult days, by being re-called through the refurbishment of our vocations. To know that we are here, in ministry, because God wills us to be here—this is great grace.... It is therefore of great importance to constancy in ministry, in so difficult and demanding a vocation as that of the pastor, to cultivate the disciplines of Sabbath observance, refurbishment, re-creation, and remembrance of vocation. In prayer, the one who is so often talking about God becomes the

one who sits silently and listens to God. The one who so often gives, is enabled to receive. As we have noted, friendship is essential for pastoral perseverance, and prayer is the principal means that we practice our friendship with the one who called us to this ministry.

Every chapter contains wisdom that is practical, biblically based, experientially authenticated, and theologically rigorous. I especially appreciated his emphasis on the Church Fathers, on hearing anew the insights of saints such as John Chrysostom, Augustine (his excursus on the *Confessions* is truly wonderful), Ambrose, Gregory the Great, and other masters of the ministerial arts. The typical Protestant teachers, such as Luther, Calvin, Wesley, and Barth, are also given serious attention. But above all, it is the word of Scripture to which Willimon is listening. Most of his chapters include extended examination of passages that have special bearing on the life and work of the congregational shepherd. The book is worth the price of purchase for these biblical meditations alone.

Don't read it just to glean sermon material, however. Instead, read it to gain much deeper insight into your ministry (or the ministry of your pastor): the complexity of the work, the richness of the rewards, the depth of the pain, and the glorious expansiveness of the grace of God that makes it all possible.

Reviewed by the Rev. David Fischler, pastor of First Moravian Church in Greensboro, N.C.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography by Eberhard Bethge.

(Translated by Eric Mosbacher, et. al., revised and edited by Victoria Barnett. Revised edition based on seventh German edition. Originally published in German in 1967. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000.)

The appearance of a revised version of Bethge's classic biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer offers an opportunity to revisit the life of a theologian many consider a modern saint and martyr. This new version includes much that was left out of the original English edition, but makes for a 1000+ page volume that is, to say the least, daunting to read. I'm not sure the additional material substantively adds to our understanding of Bonhoeffer since it concern mainly details of his judicial proceedings. Bethge wanted to prove to his German audience that Bonhoeffer's participation in the plot against Hitler was both an act of true patriotism and Christian commitment since both had been called into question.

This book introduces us to the world of the German aristocracy in which Bonhoeffer was raised, and we can better understand how a theologian could be so intimately involved in German political life, including the plot to assassinate Hitler. Bonhoeffer was a musically gifted and precocious child who was influenced by his Pietist mother. Although his scientist father did not fully appreciate his son's choice of career, he supported him until his execution, and used his own status as a respected psychiatrist to shield his son from the authorities.

The author was a student of Bonhoeffer, and he approaches his topic with love and admiration. The strongest sections of the

book, I think, deal with life in the Finkenwalde Seminary of the Confessing Church. There we glimpse an intimate portrait of a man who was a theologian, teacher, confessor, and church leader. Moravians will be particularly interested in this section since it is clear that this was one of the many points in his life that Bonhoeffer was directly influenced by the hymns of Zinzendorf and the *Daily Texts*. In fact, his image of true Christian community that he attempted to realize in the underground seminary reflect Moravian notions of spirituality.

We often read or hear that there are similarities between our day and the days of the Barmen Declaration (1934) when Bonhoeffer, Niemöller, Barth, and others stood against Nazi theology and proclaimed the Lordship of Christ. Bethge's presentation of that part of Bonhoeffer's life demonstrates just how different his day was from ours. The major issue at Barmen was who would control the State Church – the church and its clergy or the Third Reich. Much of the Barmen story concerns politics as much as theology, but the two are related because the State tried to foster a new theology on the church, namely a bitter anti-Semitic theology that denied even the Jewishness of Jesus. Barmen stands as a witness against those who would make the church's message depend on political agendas and ideologies. We need to remember that most of Bonhoeffer's students did not survive the war.

Bethge also shows us the development of Bonhoeffer's theology. Having grown up in the midst of German culture, Bonhoeffer embraced the refinements of secular life and the achievements of science without sacrificing his deep commitment to Christ. Before the war, his great dream was to study with Gandhi and learn his path of non-violent resistance to oppression. In America, he came to value Reinhold Niebuhr's notion that ethics is the focus of Christian faith, and

during the war, he found more honesty and integrity among those outside the church than those inside. While he was in prison (where he was able to continue his impressive reading) that he developed his idea of "a world come of age" and his definition of Christ as "the man for others." Bethge demonstrates that the "secular" Bonhoeffer was the same Bonhoeffer of *Life Together*.

Craig D. Atwood

If you've read a recent book that you think others should know about, send in a book review! This is a good way to share information and encourage conversation.

Editorial

Normally I simply introduce the contents of each issue of *The Hinge* and do not write editorials; however, I feel that I should say something about *The Hinge* and the importance of theological discussion in the Moravian Church today. The synods of both the Northern and Southern Provinces met this spring. I did not attend the Northern synod, but I have heard many reports from delegates. I was a participant in the Southern synod. It is no secret that both synods confronted controversial and potentially divisive issues.

The controversy in the North focused on the presence of gay men and women in the Moravian church and in the clergy. This was the topic of an issue of *The Hinge* several years ago and has been the subject of much study in the Northern Province during the intersynodal period. Clearly the church is divided and emotions run high in addressing the many questions related to homosexuality. For many it is a black and white issue, but there is sharp disagreement on what is black and what is white. For some in the church, homosexuality is itself sinful and the church should not condone sinfulness, especially among the clergy. For others, though, it is an issue of social justice and Christian compassion.

It is easy to become polarized and reject brothers and sisters who disagree on such a sensitive issue. It is easy to make this a political process where one side pushes for legislation that the other side then works to overturn at the next synod. It is hard to listen and study and think through all of the implications of a very complex matter. It is hard to find what is the uniquely Moravian voice in the midst of all of the shouting we hear in the culture around us, but we must continue to discuss even the hottest issues as brothers and sisters in Christ. We must be ready to listen and to speak.

The founding purpose of *The Hinge* as expressed on the cover is “to be a mainspring in the life of the contemporary Moravian Church, causing us to move, think, and grow. It is especially sensitive to troublesome factors that may be an obstacle to our mutual accord. Above all, it is to be an instrument for opening doors in our church.” In other words, this journal exists to assist the church in the type of dialog we need in order to resolve difficult issues, such as the presence of homosexuals in the church. I encourage you to write letters, book reviews, and articles that will further our mutual understanding.

The controversy in the Southern synod focused on the question of whether ordained clergy should be allowed publicly to disagree with doctrinal statements of the denomination. It was noted in the State of the Church Address that comments that Truman Dunn made in an academic lecture delivered at Moravian Seminary and in an article published in *The Hinge* (Autumn, 2001) went beyond what is acceptable for ordained clergy. Specifically, Dr. Dunn stated that the *Ground of the Unity's* statement “that there is no salvation apart from him (Christ)” needs to be reconsidered. Leaving aside for the moment the issue of academic freedom and church governance, it is important to note that the Southern Provincial Synod officially called for a period of study and discussion on Moravian doctrine. That has already begun. In fact, it had already begun before synod, thanks to Brother Dunn’s article.

My concern here is the role of *The Hinge* and freedom of discussion in the Moravian Church. Many people have discussed Br. Dunn’s article with me and asked why we published it. The answer is simple. This journal is a forum for serious and probing theological discussion. It is the purpose of *The Hinge* to publish articles that encourage us to examine who we are as Christians and Moravians. Along with Br. Dunn’s article, we also published several very articulate and thoughtful responses that took a different position. I was surprised that we received only one letter to the editor as a result of that issue. I was prepared to publish several letters so that the dialog could continue. I was not prepared to find that *The Hinge* played a role in the disciplining of a pastor. This was very disturbing to me.

After much soul-searching, I have decided to continue as editor of *The Hinge* for at least another year because I think that this journal serves a necessary role in the Moravian Church. It is one avenue for the type of dialog and discussion that the Southern synod has called for. While I cannot control how statements made in *The Hinge* may be used, I will continue to foster open and honest discussion of complex and controversial issues. One of the strengths of the Moravian Church through the centuries is that we do not have a ruling hierarchy that imposes certain canons on the clergy and laity. We are a community that can openly discuss our ideas and work toward new understanding. If we lose the freedom to express those ideas in a thoughtful and reasonable way, our community will suffer and our witness will be compromised.

Craig D. Atwood

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