

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