2007

From the Publisher

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Purpose Statement. This publication is by and largely for the academic communities of the twenty-one colleges and universities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It is published by the Vocation and Education unit of the ELCA. The publication has its home as Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois, which has generously offered leadership and physical and financial support as an institutional sponsor for the publication. 

The ELCA has frequently sponsored conferences for faculty and administrators that have addressed the church-college/university partnership. The ELCA has sponsored an annual Vocation of the Lutheran College Conference. The primary purpose of Intersections is to enhance and continue such dialogue. It will do so by:

- Linking up the vocation of Lutheran colleges and universities
- Encouraging thoughtful dialogue about the partnership of colleges and universities with the church
- Offering a forum for concerns and interests of faculty at the intersection of faith, learning, and teaching
- Raising for debate issues about institutional missions, goals, objectives, and learning priorities
- Encouraging critical and productive discussion on our campuses of issues focal to the life of the church
- Serving as a bulletin board for communications among institutions and faculties
- Publishing papers presented at conferences sponsored by the ELCA and its institutions
- Raising the level of awareness among faculty about the Lutheran heritage and connectedness of their institutions, realizing a sense of being part of a larger family with common interests and concerns.

From the Publisher. The most recent issues of Intersections include papers delivered at the annual conferences on “The Vocation of a Lutheran College,” organized by the Vocation and Education unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for the colleges and universities that are related to the ELCA. But most of the papers in this issue grow out of a pan-Lutheran conference organized by the Association of Lutheran College Faculties in the fall of 2007. This is an association of Lutheran faculty from public and private institutions, and from Lutheran colleges affiliated with different church bodies. The ELCA is an ecumenical church body, committed to friendly and cooperative relations with people and organizations of many faith backgrounds. We have no difficulties working with and discussing issues with Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Jews, Muslims, or with other Lutherans who are not feeling at home in the ELCA. We know we can learn from them, and we hope that they will learn something from us.

It is always challenging to work with people who are not ecumenically oriented, who believe that they or their church body have the whole truth and do not need to learn from anyone else. We who are in the ELCA also know the truth, but we recognize that the truth that we know may be limited. Just like the disciples who were following Christ, we try to figure out what his sayings mean, and some times we discover that we have misunderstood him. We think that this applies to all humans. While God is infallible, we humans are not.

The ELCA view is a good foundation for institutions of higher education. Like the faculty members at the Lutheran colleges, the ELCA professors. Like the faculty members, we recognize that what we profess is subject to change based on new research, new discoveries, and new insights. That is the beauty and the value of the conferences of the ALCF. They bring together faculty who know the truth, truth that has set them free. And these faculty members listen to each other, and they may learn the conferences with a different truth than when they arrived. We hope that the articles in this issue will stimulate you to attend future ALCF conferences (and, of course, “Vocation of the Lutheran College” conferences!), and we hope that they will add new insights to your truth, so you will be a professor with a stronger base from which to profess.

Rather, it is a reaffirmation of “the valuable parts of the liberal Protestant heritage” too often rejected by postmodernists and communists “commitments to public participation, justice, and critical reflection on inherited traditions.” (Boudon 172) At its best, this open, generous stance comes out of the shared life and struggle of people struggling against “the all-pervasive neo-liberal logic that undergirds and directs economic globalization as a totalitarian system” (Bloomquist, 294). This is an affirmation of justice and human dignity. Part of our academic work, I contend, is to develop a richer understanding of rights, particularly universal human rights. Our aim is, as Peter Pové (J/EW staff for international affairs and human rights) eloquently charges, for “all people of faith and goodwill...to claim and use them on behalf of our communities and on behalf of the whole human family, in order to remove right purposes to the process of globalization” (154).

Works Cited


