

1999

From the Publisher

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Augustana Digital Commons Citation

Selbyg, Arne (1999) "From the Publisher," *Intersections*: Vol. 1999: No. 7, Article 2.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/intersections/vol1999/iss7/2>

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Purpose Statement

This publication is by and largely for the academic communities of the twenty-eight colleges and universities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It is published by the Division for Higher Education and Schools of the ELCA. The publication presently has its home at Capital University, Columbus, Ohio which has generously offered leadership, physical and financial support as an institutional sponsor for the inauguration of the publication.

The ELCA has frequently sponsored conferences for faculty and administrators which have addressed the church - college/university partnership. Recently 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:

- * Lifting 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

For the ELCA Division for Higher Education and Schools and the Council of ELCA College and University Presidents, the journal INTERSECTIONS is an important way to stimulate discussion of what it means (and should mean) to a college or university to be related to the ELCA. Another important way is through the conference where most of the papers have been presented that get published in INTERSECTIONS, the annual conference on "The Vocation of a Lutheran College." We thought the 1998 conference went exceptionally well, and the reactions after the presentations were very positive.

Maybe we should not be surprised then, that the INTERSECTIONS issue preceding this one, where we first drew upon that conference for papers, has been the most popular ever (so far), widely used by the Lutheran colleges and universities. But I do want to praise and congratulate our editor, professor Tom Christenson, since he gave as the keynote address at the conference what became the lead article of that issue. His modesty had not allowed us to draw upon his talents and insights in as prominent a manner until now. This issue continues the publication of the presentations from that conference.

Both the conference and the journal are possible thanks to a generous grant from the Lutheran Brotherhood Foundation. Now LB has come through with another great grant, so this summer we will be able to have the inaugural session of "The Lutheran Academy of Scholars in Higher Education." This will be a two-week long seminar at Harvard University for a select group of faculty from Lutheran colleges and universities. The theme will be "Finding Our Voice - Christian Faith and Critical Vision," and the leader will be Dr. Ron Thiemann, the John Lord O'Brian Professor of Divinity and former Dean of Harvard School of Divinity. This will be another way for the Council of Presidents and the Division for Higher Education to stimulate discussion of and publications about the relationship between faith, life and higher education.

I am glad that the institutions of the church and the institutions of higher education have recognized that they need to promote scholarly work on faith related issues in many different disciplines. I am also glad that Lutheran colleges and universities have faculty who respond to the challenge to study, argue, and present in oral and in written form new

insights about the important issues college students must face as they try to find clarity in their lives. And I am glad that you have the opportunity to read this journal to stimulate your thoughts about these issues.

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From the Editor

This issue of INTERSECTIONS contains several things that should be of interest to you: A) A continuation of the papers from last summer's Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference, these by Cheryl Ney and by Robert Scholz. Both papers argue from and for a particular "take" on disciplines in the university, in their cases chemistry and music. B) In addition we have a personal response to the themes and issues of that conference written by Jennifer Sacher Wiley. We hope to include more responses of this kind in future editions. C) An interview with four faculty at Capital University who visited Cuba last summer and came away vitally transformed by it. D) A brief, but very thoughtful, meditation written by Eric Haaland, a student at St. Olaf College. E) An INTERSECTIONS first, a letter to the editor!

Among this variety I am sure you will find things to inspire you, things to provoke questions, and things to argue with. Whatever your reaction, let us know. We don't want this to be the only issue to print a letter to the editor. Share your thoughts with us.

Once again I want to share with you some things I've read. But in this case it is not the content of a book that I want to share, but the thing it models for us. *Wagering on Transcendence* is a collection of essays, all of them written by faculty at Mount Mary College in Milwaukee. In the introduction to this volume, the editor, Phyllis Carey writes:

A few years ago, a small group of Mount Mary faculty members met on a Friday afternoon to discuss George Steiner's Real Presences over a glass of wine in the faculty lounge. From the lively discussion that ensued ... the idea for this volume emerged. Steiner's book sparked a conversation about the relationship of God's existence to a variety of issues. ...in our own time ... God's non-existence has become a given. ... [By contrast] George Steiner argues that even secular transcendence implicitly depends on God's existence: "any coherent understanding of what language is and how it performs any coherent account of the capacity of human speech to communicate meaning and feeling is, in the final analysis, underwritten by the assumption of God's presence"

The essays in the volume are accounts of writers and works that witness to dimensions of transcendence: from Augustine to Italo Calvino, St. John of the Cross to Annie Dillard, Czeslaw Milosz, Etty Hillesum, Joan Didion, and Vaclav Havel.

Though I found many of the essays provocative and informing, what excited me about the volume was the community of intellect and spirit it bore witness to. What a wonderful model; conversation over wine about things of a deep and serious nature expressive of the nature and mission of the institution, provoking excellent academic work by a wide variety of thinkers. I think *we should shamelessly copy this idea*, and we should do it even before we get the faculty development grant that we usually wait for to begin such things. What better use of the Dean's budget than to spend it on a few copies of Steiner's book (or someone else's) and a jug (or a case) of wine? When I pass from this world I hope to leave money to endow many Friday's worth of wine and conversation. This shall be called the Christenson Endowment. *In vino veritas!* How about you?

Tom Christenson
Capital University, Summer, 1999.