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From the Editor

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From the Editor

This issue includes papers presented at the Vocation of the Lutheran College conference held last year at Luther College in Decorah, IA. The theme of that conference was “Educating for Responsible Citizenship.” The papers in this issue clearly reflect that theme.

What is the relationship of Lutheran colleges and universities to the role of citizen? In some educational settings, educating for citizenship is the center of the declared mission. Other schools may have a more ambivalent attitude toward this role. The nature of the relationship between the church and the state (and the Christian and society) has been answered in differing ways throughout history. In some times, Christians have felt that their faith demanded that they retreat from society—either to isolation or to form an ideal society of their own. At other times, Christians have not only been involved in the social order, but have sought to define and control it. H. Richard Niebuhr’s classic *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper Row, 1956) outlines some of the options.

Luther (and Lutherans) had a complex understanding of the role of Christian as citizen of the state. The complex understanding of this relationship is illustrated in the diagram found on the cover (and more completely reproduced on p. 10). Paul Pribbenow, president of Augsburg College, presents the complexities (and the clear vision) of Augsburg’s relationship with their communities as a Lutheran college in an urban setting. “We believe... we are called... to serve our neighbor.” Each word and phrase powerful when taken seriously.

Jose Marichal brings into question the very concept of “community” in the twenty-first century. He asks the question (and poses some answers) to the idea that the very idea of community has changed in non-trivial ways with the existence of the web. What does it mean to be a “citizen” of a virtual community? Is there a context from which we as educators at Lutheran colleges and universities should be approaching the response to this question?

Wanda Deifelt returns to the teachings of Luther and the confessions for another way to offer a critique of the understandings of citizenship current in our culture. Citizenship is tied up with notions of the role of the individual and rights and responsibilities. Is there a distinctive “Lutheran” way of approaching these issues?

The Vocational of the Lutheran College conference marked the last “official” duty of Arne Selbyg who approaches the question of citizenship from an experiential and personal point of view. He observes how the concepts and practices of being a “citizen” vary from culture to culture and time to time. Norwegian Lutherans might have a different understanding of citizenship than Lutherans born and raised in America. As a lover of jazz, he offers a metaphor for social interactions in America that he feels is better than the traditional “melting pot.”

In a fitting farewell to the long-time organizer and visionary for the Vocation of the Lutheran College conference, Arne was ‘sung out’ of office by Mike Blair, chaplain at Luther College.

A Fine Norwegian—also known as “The Arne Selbyg Blues”

When Arne was young, he was such a prodigy,
He excelled in confirmation and sociology.
They said, “Faith and learning is just the thing for you.”
Arne replied, “This vocation is most certainly true!”

Chorus:

*You’re such a fine Norwegian-(echo) a fine Norwegian.
Oh, your gifts are legion-(echo) gifts are legion.
We’re here to express our appreciation.
For all you’ve done for Lutheran higher education—
such a fine Norwegian!*

A servant and leader, gifted with good cheer;
In life's next chapter Arne has nothing to fear—
Except the pension reports that can make you less serene,
When you read the bottom line and wonder,
“What does this mean?”

Chorus:

Whether coming or going, Arne's always hip;
He travels with a case of dual citizenship.
The pathway of a scholar can lead from place to place;
Lutherans find their way by paradox and grace.

Chorus:

—By Mike Blair
Vocation of a Lutheran College, 8/2/2008

On that note we will end. With thanks for all the participants at the conference... and especially to Arne Selbyg, who led us at the conference, and many others before—who has served us all in the colleges and universities with his wisdom and guidance for many years as Director of Colleges and Universities for the ELCA—and from whom I learned much when he was Dean of the Faculty at Augustana College in Rock Island.

This year's Vocation of a Lutheran College conference will be held July 30th—August 1st at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, MN. The theme is “A Calling to Embrace Hope: Lutheran Higher Education in an Age of Anxiety.” The presentations of this conference will be printed in a future issue of *Intersections*.

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The 74th Annual Meeting of The Association of Lutheran College Faculties

“CREATIVE ADAPTATION”

October 2–4, 2009

Concordia University • Ann Arbor, Michigan

How does the adaptation of earlier forms, methods, works, etc. become a creative act in itself? And what are the ways—as Lutheran educators/educators at Lutheran colleges—in which our own subjects and methods are rooted in a “useable past” even while straining toward the future?

Adapting Pedagogy: How can innovative approaches and new technologies incorporate and build on traditions of teaching and learning that go back to Plato?

Adapting the Arts and Sciences: What can we learn from the way artists, writers, composers, etc., respond to and appropriate their precursors? Is there a useable “tradition” in the sciences as well as the humanities?

Adapting the Gospel Message: capitulating to contemporary culture or engaging a new generation?

Keynote Speaker

Michael Daugherty

Award-winning composer and professor of music at the University of Michigan

For more information cf. <<http://www.lutherancolleges.org/lecna/alcf>>