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From the Editor

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From the Editor | ROBERT D. HAAK

SO WHAT IS IT that holds us together? What are our shared commitments? What does “diversity” mean on a Lutheran college campus? While the contributions to this issue themselves come from diverse sources, this question is one they hold in common.

Bishop Mark Hanson addresses this question in a talk to the assembled presidents of the twenty-eight ELCA colleges that met in March 2007. At least from the inside, when one looks at the full gathering of all the ELCA colleges and universities, one may be struck by the wide range of diversity—geographic, economic, theological. The understanding of the relationship between the colleges and “churchwide” is another expression of diversity mentioned by the Bishop. Some embrace the relationship closely; others hold it much more gently. Some parade their “Lutheran-ness” on their website. Others mention it as part of the “historical background.”

With all this diversity, what *does* it mean to be a “Lutheran” college or university? I would suggest that this question itself is one that is well worth asking (and attempting to answer) on each of our campuses. I would also suggest that the annual *Vocation of the Lutheran College* conference is a productive place for these conversations to continue. By the time you get this, this year’s conference will be upon us—held this year at Augustana College in Rock Island, IL from August 2-4th. You can check with the president’s office at your institution to find out more information about how to attend.

While this great diversity is evident to those of us within the group called “Lutheran colleges and universities,” Randy Balmer’s contribution shows us that we have some commonalities that may be more evident to those looking at us from the outside. It may be like someone telling me that I look just like my brother. (I’m not sure either of us sees this as a compliment!) Sometimes we can see ourselves better through eyes of “the other.” We might well be pleased with what Randy Balmer sees when he looks our direction.

José Marichal and Pamela Brubaker talk about other sorts of diversity—those that come from our places in our communities and in the world. Each of them sees opportunities in these diversities. Storm Bailey argues that being Lutheran is precisely that which makes us embrace the diversities we find. We do not embrace diversity in spite of the fact that we are Lutheran but *because* we are Lutheran. This surely is a theme that our administrators and faculty need to say in a variety of ways—to each other and to students and to the communities in which they find themselves. What else can we say about ourselves *because we are Lutheran*?

We are also glad to reprint a talk given in chapel by Jaime Schillinger at St. Olaf. This piece might well remind us of the importance of worship, of liturgy, to our formation as communities. Here we are bound together in the story that we tell and that “tells us” from ancient times into the ever renewing present. This also is a gift of Lutheran theology that calls us to unfold and blossom.

Again, I invite you to consider submission of materials that speak to the concerns of the Purpose Statement at the front of this issue. Please submit your work (preferably in electronic MLA format) to me at BobHaak@augustana.edu.

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