

2003

From the Publisher

Arne Selbyg

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Augustana Digital Commons Citation

Selbyg, Arne (2003) "From the Publisher," *Intersections*: Vol. 2003: No. 18, Article 2.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/intersections/vol2003/iss18/2>

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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

The churchwide organization of the ELCA is currently in the middle of a strategic planning effort. The ELCA Church Council has approved new statements of mission and vision for the ELCA, and new strategic directions for the churchwide organization. For the colleges and universities that are related to the ELCA, the good news is that among those strategic directions is that the churchwide organization will "Assist this church to bring forth and support faithful, wise, and courageous leaders whose vocations serve God's mission in a pluralistic world." The churchwide organization will clearly look to the colleges for help in moving in that direction, and will also look to the colleges and universities for help in reaching some of the other strategic directions. The whole document can be found at www.elca.org/planning/.

In setting the strategic directions, the church at large also included the following statement: "In the course of implementing these strategic directions, the churchwide organization must and will recognize and encourage the vital contributions and deepening relationship with institutions and agencies of this church." Some of us wish they had stated "with colleges, universities, and other institutions and agencies," but we are clearly included even though we are not named.

While these are nice goals and conditions for planning, we need to know "What does this mean?" What exactly are we supposed to do, how will the goals be reached, and how will we know that they have been reached? Right now, a series of roundtables and task forces are developing specific goals and time tables. When the results of their work is known, we will sit down and see how our activities can be focused to achieve the goals.

We feel pretty confident that the church will have to rely on the colleges and universities to accomplish many tasks in order for the more general goals to be reached. At this time we do not know what those tasks will be. But I want to assure the readers of *INTERSECTIONS* that nobody has proposed to do away with this journal, with the conferences on which it is based, or any of the other programs that help illuminate the difference it should make at a college or university when it operates in relationship with the Lutheran church. We suspect that *INTERSECTIONS* will be one of the tools the larger church will use to reach its strategic goals.

Arne Selbyg

Director, ELCA Colleges and Universities

FROM THE EDITOR

Two years ago I oversaw the creation and mailing out of a questionnaire for ten-year alumni / alumnae of the university where I teach. We asked them a number of questions including asking them to rank the importance of our stated learning goals, asking them to assess the kind of job the university had done in teaching these goals, and where, if at all, they had learned the skills, attitudes and knowledge the goals talked about. Many of the outcomes of the questionnaire were surprising. One of the surprising patterns of response was the large numbers of students who said that they learned these essential skills, attitudes and knowledge in programs and experiences they had outside the classroom and outside the domain (physically speaking) of the university. These things had been learned best, or most thoroughly, or most memorably, in practica, internships, travel-study occasions, service-learning projects, or in unprogrammed intersections between their lives, their part-time jobs, and their classroom studies.

The responses to this questionnaire taught us at least two things: 1) to take off-campus experiences more seriously as part of the learning agenda of students; 2) to see that learning matters most that coincides with the personal development of students.

Last summer's Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference focused on education and global outreach, as all the papers in this issue of *INTERSECTIONS* testify. Global study programs, particularly those that are service-connected or where students get to live with the native populations, are life-changing. I only wish every one of our students could have such experiences.

Tom Christenson

tchrste@capital.edu

October, 2003