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## From the Publisher

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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.

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## FROM THE PUBLISHER

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has begun the process of developing a **social statement on education**. This is a big deal, because social statements are formal expressions of the official views of the church body, developed with input from a whole range of participants, subjected to widespread hearings and discussions, and finally approved by the highest decision making body of the ELCA, the Churchwide Assembly. By requesting such a social statement, the 2001 Churchwide Assembly set education alongside the economy, the environment, abortion, sexuality, health, peace and a selected few other topics that it wanted all members and agencies of the church to think deeply about and discuss intensely; and then make the church take a public stand about.

The process will take several years, but at this time it is crucial that the church hears **which topics** within the field of education that the statement should address. What are the most important issues, on which the congregations or the church need to take a stand? Is there, or should there be, a Lutheran view of access to education, financing of education, prayer in the schools, student financial aid, the curriculum in colleges and universities, scientific literacy, assessment, accountability, the role of private schools and colleges, lifelong learning, class sizes, teacher preparation, teacher salaries, college governance, parental involvement, or any other educational topic?

Can the church speak with authority about these issues? Are they addressed in the bible, or in the writings of Luther? Can we say that a Lutheran view of these issues is based on Christian principles, Lutheran theology, traditions of long standing, recent research, or the clear needs of the society?

This social statement will address the intersections of faith, life and learning, just like this journal. You, the readers, are interested in these topics, even experts on several of them. The Lutheran church needs to hear

from you. Please help define this social statement by submitting input now. You can send it to us at ELCA-DHES, 8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631, and we will share it with the people who are planning the social statement on education.

Arne Selbyg  
Director, ELCA Colleges and Universities

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## FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of **Intersections** once again has a variety of voices to hear. I wouldn't say "something for everybody" because there are lots of expressions we don't include at all. We do, however, include bishops and university presidents, philosophers and poets, students and their teachers, and even a theologian. Stanley Olsen talks about Lutheran colleges and universities from the church's point of view, pointing out that our work may be more important than we, and the church, have realized. Gregg Muilenburg addresses the issue of welcoming "outsiders" to our institutional conversation and in the process brings his reading of Nikos Kazantzakis to bear on a new vision of faith. Mary Theresa Hall and Cora Lazor further demonstrate the value of synthetic thinking, seeing one thing in terms of another, by seeing their own institution in the light of the writings of Francis Bacon and Cardinal Newman. They also demonstrate the fruitfulness of faculty / student collaboration. Don Braxton writes both about the teaching of science and the teaching of religion and the Socratic approaches that both require. Kevin Griffith offers two poems that dissolve the categories we bring to thinking about the religious, the irreverent, with his own wry humor. Baird Tipson offers us much more than a review of a collection of papers (a hard enough thing to do). He sketches an argument for a different model of the faith-related college / university, one that unapologetically embraces many of the legacies of the enlightenment and secular models of higher education.

When the selection from Eliot was proposed for the cover of this issue someone who saw it in my office commented that it was too depressing. But Ida's response is worth communicating: "What would you prefer, lines from *Jolly Old Saint Nicholas*? Lutherans are realists when it comes to the worth of human accomplishments. And we must remember, there is a huge difference between optimism and hope." The selection raises for all learners and teachers the uncomfortable question, "Does our knowledge move in the direction of information or in the direction of wisdom?" Or is that latter concept already too much an anachronism to believe in?

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