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From the Editor

Tom Christenson

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From the Editor

On this Issue— One of the traditional functions of INTERSECTIONS has been to publish papers shared at the annual Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference. Of the five papers presented at last summer's conference at Wittenberg, only three, because of length, are included here. The remaining two, by Robert Scholz and Cheryl Ney, will appear in the next issue.

Books for Belarus— An acquaintance of mine, Prof. Andy Sheppard of Southwestern College, wrote to me asking me to solicit help for his efforts to send books to the University of Belarus. He informs me that they have no resources for purchase of books and that their collection is, at best "embryonic." They are particularly interested in books in philosophy, theology, cultural history, literature, criticism, in other words books in traditional humanities areas. Sheppard asks us if we would "weed" our personal and library collections and send to him any texts we'd be willing to part with. He will send them on to Belarus. If you're able to help, send books to:

Books for Belarus
Dep't. Of Philosophy
Southwestern College
Winfield, Kansas 67156

If you wish to contact Andy personally his e-mail address is: sheppard@jinx.sckans.edu

Salt, Yeast and Light— I recently read another provocative book authored by Douglas John Hall, *The End of Christendom and the Future of Christianity*. In it he writes:

Christianity has arrived at the end of its sojourn as the official, established, religion of the Western world. The churches resist coming to terms with this ending because it seems so dismal a thing. But in Christian thinking, endings can also be beginnings; and if we are courageous enough to enter into this ending thoughtfully and intentionally, we will discover a beginning that may surprise us. The end of Christendom could be the beginning of something more like the church

Hall goes on to argue that by disengaging ourselves from a central and dominant position and the rhetoric of dominance we may find ways of serving the society in ways that are both more faithful and more humanly needful than Christendom traditionally has done. Disengagement is the necessary pre-requisite for faithful and authentic re-engagement. Can we, Hall asks:

*make the awkward relationship between church and the dominant culture of our nations serve the Christian evangel?
Could it not become a highly provocative situation - a modern application of the scriptural dialectic of being 'in' yet not 'of'?*

So, rather than imagining Christianity as serving the culture from above, i.e. as ruling it, or imagining Christianity at the center, i.e. as in some way controlling culture, Hall suggests we once again pay attention to the metaphors Christ himself suggests for the role of Christians in the world: "a little salt, a little yeast, a little light."

Hall has little to offer by way of fleshing out this suggestion. It is a deliberately short book. Perhaps that is why I find his proposal to shift metaphors so provocative. I do not know what this realization implies for the vocation of Christians involved in higher education, but I certainly would enjoy entering into a discussion of such a question with you, as colleagues involved in living out such a role. Maybe a table or a session at a future VLC Conference could focus on this topic?

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