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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

From its inception, this journal has been published in order to contribute to an ongoing discussion of why there is such a thing as Lutheran higher education. Many people wonder why the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America still sponsors colleges and universities, and many wonder why colleges and universities still choose to maintain a relationship with a church.

Some of the answers to these questions have been presented at the annual conferences called "The Vocation of a Lutheran College," and then those presentations have been given wider circulation by being published in Intersections.

But the discussion does not take place only at those conferences. Last year St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, celebrated its 125 years of existence by publishing a book, Called to Serve, edited by Pamela Schwandt, available from St. Olaf's college bookstore, with many excellent articles about these questions. The college also hosted several other events, and I had the pleasure to attend a conference where the Lutheran identity of the college and the relationship between the college and the church was discussed. Those presentations led to some interesting discussions, and at the end of the conference some other participants suggested to me that the presentations deserved wider circulation. I agreed, and so it was decided to publish an issue of Intersections that was not based on the "Vocation" conferences, but dealt with the same theme as the "Vocation" conferences.

Both the conference and the book take the specific history of St. Olaf as the point of departure. But in both,

many arguments are made that would apply to any Lutheran college, and the theology and educational perspectives behind the presentations have general relevance. Therefore, we hope that you will find that the articles in this issue help clarify what it is about our church related colleges that make them excellent institutions for the higher education of students of any faith, and excellent examples of how the church should respond to the needs of the people.

September, 2000

Arne Selbyg

Director for Colleges and Universities

ELCA-DHES

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## FROM THE EDITOR

At several points in the addresses that make up this issue the authors refer to the St. Olaf 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Volume, *Called to Serve*, edited by Pamela Schwandt and co-edited by Gary de Krey and L. DeAne Lagerquist. This volume contains some fine essays on the Lutheran character of higher education and the vocation of the Lutheran Church College. Two essays in particular make important contributions to this ongoing discussion: "What Does It Mean To be Lutheran?" by Walter Sundberg and "The Lutheran Tradition and the Liberal Arts College" by Darrell Jodock. But what interested me most about the St. Olaf volume were the numerous biographies of persons who found their vocation at St. Olaf. For many people the story and the reality of St. Olaf is the story of Lars Boe, president; F. Melius Christiansen, choir director; Ole Rolvaag, novelist and teacher of literature; Emil Ellingson, chemist; Agnes Larson, historian; John Berntsen, superintendent of buildings and grounds; Arne Flaten, artist; Howard & Edna Hong, Kierkegaard scholars; etc. As one reads these short biographies it becomes clear to what degree the life of an institution like St. Olaf is the committed life of the people who work there. In this economics shaped age, in an age when ever more services are "outsourced", we are tempted to think like a personnel director, and to suppose that an employee is merely a place holder, the person who is hired to do X for Y amount of time for Z dollars. The stories of these people show clearly what a thoroughly inadequate view that is. What a different place St. Olaf would have been without the choral tradition of a Christiansen, without the sculpture and person of Arne Flaten, without the scholarly discipline of Agnes Larson and the Hongs, without the inspired leadership of Lars Boe, without the long-term care of John Berntsen, and so on and on. It is truly unimaginable. We are inclined to say, "but that's what St Olaf is."

So *Called to Serve* is aptly named. This book is a study in the meaning of vocation for it details concretely the ways in which persons and community and purpose and needs and gifts are co-creators and co-realizers of each other. Kristine Carlson, St. Olaf alumna and now Lutheran pastor in Minneapolis, concludes her short contribution to the volume with this reflection:

*We Lutherans assert that 'the finite is capable of bearing the infinite.' . . . this is important for our understanding of vocation: that who we are, what we do in the ordinary, daily events of our lives, conveys Christ. This is the perspective on vocation I began to see at St. Olaf.*

Reading this volume we begin to see it too.

Tom Christenson, Capital University