

2000

From the Editor

Tom Christenson

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/intersections>

Augustana Digital Commons Citation

Christenson, Tom (2000) "From the Editor," *Intersections*: Vol. 2000: No. 10, Article 3.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/intersections/vol2000/iss10/3>

This Editorial is brought to you for free and open access by Augustana Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Intersections* by an authorized administrator of Augustana Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@augustana.edu.

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

FROM THE EDITOR

At several points in the addresses that make up this issue the authors refer to the St. Olaf 125th 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