

1997

From the Editor

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Christenson, Tom (1997) "From the Editor," *Intersections*: Vol. 1997: No. 3, Article 3.

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From the Editor:

With this issue of *Intersections* we have deviated from the pattern of the first two issues which featured a principle paper with several responses. In this issue we feature three principle papers, one with responses, two without, plus a page of poetry and one of reflective bemusement. Instead of the single focus issues we have had in the past we here feature work on three completely different issues: the environment, the education of desire and hiring and personnel policies. Yet all of these essays have the same sub-focus namely the Lutheran college/university, its educational mission and its priorities. I am particularly pleased with this issue because of the provocative issues I see raised here. Paul Santmire focusses our attention on the ambiguities about ethics in our own tradition and provokes us to examine the sources of our anti-urban prejudices. He also provides an inspiring picture of what Lutheran education ought to include. Gregg Muilenburg uses an Aristotelian analysis of education to challenge the common Lutheran assumption that a *dialogue* of faith and reason is the best we can do. Bruce Reichenbach, Wendy McCredie and Harry Jebsen provoke us to explore the dimensions and difficulties of relationship between mission and hiring/promotion priorities at our institutions. Gary Fincke has provided us with two poems that explore surprising meanings of food and eating. Finally Chuck Huff comes clean through honest but not very contrite public confession. There is plenty here to argue with and about. We hope to hear your responses.

I wish to use the rest of my editorial space to recommend a text to your reading. Though I will summarize the focal argument of the book very briefly, my point is not to review it (I hope someone else will take on that task in these pages) but to provoke your reading of it. The book is George Marsden's *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*, (Oxford, 1997) mentioned and quoted in Reichenbach's essay.

Marsden tackles head on the prejudice against faith - informed scholarship that is very common in American academic circles. He cites and argues with several influential authors who argue that though it may be appropriate to have one's scholarship informed by one's political views or by one's gender or class - influenced outlook, there is no place in the academy for faith - influenced scholarship. Marsden then goes on to point out that this view is widely held even among most Christian scholars who have a very hard time articulating what difference their faith makes to their scholarship. Christians have thus, for the most part, been silently complicit in the view that faith does not and should not inform really good scholarship. The most interesting and challenging parts of Marsden's book are the two latter sections where he details excellent examples of Christians whose faith explicitly informs their scholarship and suggests some Christian theological principles that he believes could have a positive effect on Christian scholarship in several fields.

Those of us who teach in Lutheran colleges and universities like to think that the "Lutheran-ness" of our institutions makes some substantial difference to the sort of institutions we are. But we are usually quite silent when it comes around to answering the question that Marsden raises: How do the particulars of our faith inform our scholarship and consequently the learning and teaching that takes place in our institutions? Does the difference appear only in *what* we may study (a requirement in religion, a course in Luther)? Or does it also appear in the assumptions we make when we study (assumptions about the nature of humans, the fallibility of knowledge, our relationship to the culture, our responsibility to our neighbor)? Or does it even appear in the way we construct and weigh theories within our disciplines (is a Christian scholar as likely as anybody to be a positivist, a behaviorist, a chaos theorist)?

Calvinists and Christian evangelicals have done a good deal more explicit work on these questions than Lutherans have and have come up with some extremely interesting things in the process (e.g. Nicholas Wolterstorff's *Reason Within the Bounds of Religion* and his subsequent *Art in Action: Toward a Christian Aesthetic*, both published by Eerdmans). I do not want to argue that Lutherans should simply adopt the Calvinist approach to Christian scholarship. What I am suggesting is that Lutheran scholars ought to become sufficiently familiar with the work that Wolterstorff and others have done to be able to state explicitly how our own approach should differ (if it should) from theirs. I believe that this would make a great multi - year project for a team of Lutheran scholars. A project that all of us who teach in Lutheran institutions would benefit from. Run, don't walk, to your nearest bookstore and add Marsden's book to the top of your reading stack.

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