



INSTITUTE FOR ECUMENICAL AND CULTURAL RESEARCH

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TO: Southeastern Minnesota Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

In addition to the careful and imaginative research that characterizes our Resident Scholars Program (19 scholars from 10 states, Canada (2), Israel, Peoples Republic of China, and South Africa in 2003), the year had special features:

Most important, the Board undertook a search for my successor, and happily has appointed Donald B. Ottenhoff, senior editor of *The Christian Century*, who will become executive director on June 1, 2004.

Last year we reported on the Board's Visioning Consultation, held in June 2002. The executive director search was directly informed by the Visioning Statement that emerged from that gathering, but so were two conversations held during the year.

The first, in April, considered how we might broaden our understanding of "scholar" and "scholarship," especially as the identity and the activity impinge on the life of the church.

The second, in August, probed the meaning of "diversity" as it affects ecumenism and the work of the Institute.

The Board has begun careful study of the reports of these conversations, and will receive initial recommendations from particular committees at its spring meeting, April 15, 2004.

Two consultations were held in summer 2003. "Igniting Biblical Imagination" takes its cue from *The Saint John's Bible* (www.saintjohnsbible.org), but ranges widely into the realm of artistic imagination and biblical interpretation, and will have a second meeting in 2004. "Ecumenical Formation" addressed the question: How do people *become* ecumenical?

I have said it many times before: The Institute's mission is to serve the churches, and we really appreciate the faithful support of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod. I warmly wish for my successor the regular opportunity to thank you!

Patrick Henry, executive director

Report for the Year 2003, Submitted February 2, 2004