

Diversity in Spiritual Cultures

Earth is crammed with heaven
and every common bush affire with God.
But only he who sees takes off his shoes.
The rest sit round it and pick blackberries.
(Elizabeth BARRETT BROWNING)

With this issue of Mozaik our community tries to shed light on different aspects of our spiritual life, personally and in community; on spiritual encounters among people of faith; on spiritual struggles in the contemporary and in the eternal soul; and we also gather prayers, poems and meditations from young ecumenically-minded intellectuals.

This issue of Mozaik, "Roots and Fruits of Ecumenical Spirituality", is connected to our Theology Working Group (ThWG) within WSCF Europe, coordinated by Elisabeth Krarup. Our last conference, co-organised by the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe, in Tihany, Hungary (November 2002) dealt with Celebrating Diversity in Culture and Spirituality. Four of our editors were members of the planning team of this event, including Rozs-Nagy Szilvia, a member of the executive committee of EYCE, whom we would like to thank for accepting the invitation to be our guest editor.

The seventeen articles inside this edition reflect upon the possibility of an ecumenically broadened spiritual sharing among Christian mentalities and faith traditions. We are honoured to receive inputs not only from Belarus, Denmark, England, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Wales, but also from three countries of other continents: Canada, Cuba and Korea.

There are five sections of dialogue within the journal. The opening section, On the Path, follows the line of enrichment of a personality towards the fullness of life. The way of this enrichment leads through our neighbor, the image of God who is as close as our skin.

The section, Getting back the Hundredfold comes at the discussion from another angle. In a kenotic (self-emptying) and detached way, through desert, fasting and silence, it arrives at the love of God, life in abundance.

From the branches and fruits we move towards the roots in the section Water for the Roots. We acknowledge ways that our traditions and environments penetrate our spiritual life and provide fresh and abundant nourishment.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) recently issued a framework for Common Prayer. In our fifth section, this document (The WCC Framework for Common Prayer) is introduced and evaluated by SCMers from three different branches of Christianity: Protestant, Orthodox and Roman Catholic.

Bible studies come in the form of Biblical Role Models, which are slightly different than what is typically seen in this genre. The last meeting of the European Regional Committee (ERC) shared life examples of personal encouragement from the Scripture. From these inputs we chose three essays.

We still encourage our readers to write-in with responses to the articles contained in this issue of Mozaik. Please send all comments, feedback, questions and further ideas on plants, branches, roots and fruits to our email address (wscfmozaik@yahoo.co.uk).

This Mozaik on Ecumenical Spirituality is illustrated by Thomas SANDNAES from Norway. His little bearded philosopher, a Socratic character acts as a little mascot for the whole issue. The artist tried to offer two sides of his mentality and style, sometimes being smooth and ethereal in a soul-lifting way, at other times being ironic or sarcastic. As he makes clear through his drawings, spirituality can hardly be limited to a simple definition or one particular meaning, but if anything, it is creating meaning through observation and reflection.

