

Old World, New World?

*For me doing theology is writing a love letter to God,
to the Church to which I belong,
and to my people: and this is my project.*
(Gustavo GUTIERREZ)

The topic of the thirteenth *Mozaik* is *Latin America and Europe: Worlds Apart or on the Same Track?* This theme was dealt with in the WSCF conference in Agape, Prali (Italy) in June 2004: *Window on the World: Economic, Cultural and Political Relations between Latin America and Europe*.

Do Europe — the continent of the ex-colonial powers — and Latin America — the formerly colonised continent — have anything in common apart from historical links and current economic ones? Though formal colonialism has long since come to an end, even today some of the relations between these two continents are still hierarchical ones. The economic relations between Western Europe and Latin America have been often marked by inequality, be it in the form of EU protectionism or in creditor–debtor relations.

In our first section, *On the Same Track?*, we look at some similarities in the transformation processes many countries, both in Latin America and in Central and Eastern Europe, have gone through during the past two decades. Many South American countries have turned from military regimes towards democracy and have changed their economic models towards market-oriented ones. The whole continent has increasingly implemented neoliberal economic policies.

With the fall of the Soviet Union, most of the Central and Eastern European countries introduced democracy and abolished their state-led economic regimes by implementing market-oriented reforms. In our second section on *Windows Between Two Worlds*, we will look at different countries' experiences and compare processes between the regions.

In the humanities, liberation theology has also transformed the ecumenical theological landscape during the past decades. While developed in Latin America, contextual and liberation theologies have been taken up world-wide by the ecumenical movement. In our third section on *Theology and Liberation*, we will explore the challenges of contextual theologies today and how liberation theologies have influenced ecumenical theological thinking in other parts of the world.

We are grateful to our friends from the Americas who have contributed articles, especially to Martin ALMADA, a winner of the Alternative Nobel Prize; Pablo ROMO CEDANO, former director of the Dominicans for Justice and Peace; and Manuel QUINTERO, former general secretary of WSCF.

As always, we encourage our readers to write in with responses to the essays contained in this issue of *Mozaik*. Please send all comments, feedback, questions and further ideas on our ecumenical journal to our email address (wscfmozaik@yahoo.co.uk). We are also looking for volunteer editors, illustrators and section editors, who could participate in making *Mozaik* more colourful, challenging and interesting.

With this issue, Rebecca BLOCKSOME joins the *Mozaik* editorial board as an editor and copy editor, both in connection with her new role as publications intern in the WSCF European Regional Office in Budapest, Hungary. She also serves as an editor for *Student World*, the Federation's ecumenical review. A native of the United States, she studied art and journalism in Kansas before moving to Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina, in 2002 to volunteer with the Church of the Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS). As an American Baptist with Mennonite roots, she is ecumenically minded for reasons practical as well as theoretical.

Finally, we are proud to introduce our illustrators: Maaïke VERGOUWE (dazu@worldmail.nl) and Daan ZUIJDERWIJK (zwijk@tiscali.nl), two Dutch photographers based in The Hague, The Netherlands. They both studied photography at the St Joost Academy of Fine Arts in Breda, and now they work together as 'Zeevonk' (Sea-Spark). In this issue of *Mozaik*, you will see photos from Estonia, Latvia, the Rhine in Germany, Serbia and Montenegro, Suriname, and Transylvania in Romania. They try to portray each person in her or his own role in the world, be it in Latin America or in Europe.

