

The Courage to Search for New Meanings of Old Things

*The avoidance of risks must not govern the work ...
We need for our science the spirit of brave explorers.*

Paavo RAVILA

The courage to know (sapere aude) has throughout the centuries been one of the main motive powers which made it possible for Europe to be a place of new discoveries. Even if many groundbreaking discoveries happened in the silence of a room, where no audience could applaud the birth of a new idea, medicine or machine, the European culture of education and original thinking is unthinkable without the collective dimension of the courage to know.

Ever since her foundation in 1895, WSCF has functioned as a forum for both formal and informal education, creating a vital space for students to discuss the burning issues of the day. The ecumenical nature of this educational forum was a historical novelty, providing for Christian students a brand-new platform for learning about the concerns of students from other denominations.

The question of higher education and its cultural and ecumenical dimensions was also at the centre of the thematic discussions of the European Regional Assembly (ERA) of WSCF Europe, which bore the title Higher Education in Europe: Universities as Service Stations or Laboratories of Universal Questions?, and took place in September 2005 in Feketić, Serbia and Montenegro. The lectures, presentations and discussions of the ERA are at the core of this issue of Mozaik, which focuses on perspectives of higher education in Europe and beyond.

This time we are especially honoured to be able to publish in Mozaik a number of articles from outside 'the old continent' that make us familiar with non-European views on education. In this way the readers can get an interesting glimpse of the educational issues dealt with in Cameroon or Ghana. Two other contributions are from the pen of U.S. authors. From Europe we have this time articles from Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, the Netherlands and Ukraine.

Many of the published articles deal with the topic of education in a direct way, examining the current state of the institutions of higher education and their possible (and at times very much needed) reforms. Other contributions take a broader view of the issue and focus on informal education, analyse determinative stereotypes or elaborate on the element of teamwork that is so necessary at any level of education. The gender perspective is a key tone in several of the presented studies. The ecumenical and spiritual dimension of education is brought to the readers both through articles and in our regular sections of liturgy and mini-biography.

We hope that the engaging style of the writers will be received with authentic open-mindedness by the readers, who are cordially invited to send comments, feedback, questions and further ideas to our e-mail address: wscfmozaik@yahoo.co.uk.

This issue of Mozaik presents to its readers the artwork of Dominika MARTONOVÁ, a young photographer and textile designer from Slovakia. We chose her photographs, as we found her art an interesting artistic metaphor for our theme. Throughout the Psalms, feet are metaphorically bound up with wisdom—sureness of foot is a blessing which springs from learning and obeying well the precepts of the Master (see 17,4–5; 37,30–31; and 119,104–105). Over the millennia since then, we've come up with a wide range of accessories—socks, shoes, sandals, slippers—all man-made attempts to ensure the soundness of our steps.

Such attempts are not bad in and of themselves, and they can become objects of beauty, reflecting the richness and diversity of human cultures. These photographs, however, aim to remind us that no matter how fancy the footwear, inside it remains hollow; progress along any path still depends ultimately on the feet and on the discernment of the mind which directs them.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank my co-editors Rebecca BLOCKSOME and Dan GRIF-FITHS for their excellent work and their creative approach to editing that has made our cooperation a truly pleasant experience.

Ut omnes unum sint.

