

## EDITORIAL

Our world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is so interconnected technologically but still remains very much separated by inequalities, prejudices, violence and hatred. In this world the powerless, or the world's poor, get a raw deal amidst plenty. Across cultures and civilisations, among religions, movements and sects, in the North and the South, seething anger that reveals the bitterness of the powerless is sometimes translated into violent confrontations and terror. The powerless are based not only in the South, or the so called Third World, but also in the North. Globalisation creates islands of the powerful decision-makers located mainly in the Northern capitals and their Southern collaborators. But globalisation also distributes the powerless throughout the globe – not only in the South but also in the North – though not in an even way. Samir Amin in a recent almost alarmist publication, warned of the dangers of the militarization of globalisation in the American style<sup>1</sup>. He called for collaboration and solidarity across the world – North and South – to change the dangerous trend.

This issue of **Bulletin** focuses on collaboration and solidarity across the globe as answer to poverty, to “make poverty history”. Collaboration and solidarity is the answer to religious and ethnic intolerance and violence. Through collaboration and dialogue we discover the close ties between humans who can work together to realise the common project of transforming the world. Our cultural and religious differences and our technological and economic advancement should no longer be allowed to create inequalities that would be exploited by political or religious fanatics. Rather a new internationalism of peoples associating Europeans, Asians, Africans, and Americans would through solidarity and collaboration realise the utopia of a transformed world despite our cultural, religious or civilizational diversity.

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<sup>1</sup> Samir Amin, *The Liberal Virus - Permanent War and the Americanization of the World*. Translated by James H. Membrez. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2004.

Contributions to Volume 17 of the Bulletin are weighted on the side of collaboration and solidarity as mission of the Christian church. The first four contributors, Odozor, Dedji, Njoku and Nwaigbo, tackle the scandal of poverty in Africa and among the powerless of the third world. If poverty, diseases, wars and refugees, etc must be made history there must be a radical reform of leadership, a search for a new kind of interreligious relationship, and a collaborative approach to resolve the ethnic question in multi-ethnic and multi-religious communities of Africa. Solidarity and collaboration between the West and Africa must be taken in all seriousness. It should not be considered a simple question of compassion or pity, but rather a matter of justice and fairness in a world suffused with the ambiguities of globalisation. This eschews prejudicial stereotyping of Africa and the rest of the powerless third world. Justice and fairness would require that there should be no privileged measuring rod in approaching issues of poverty, ethnic conflicts, and disease in Eastern Europe and the same issues in Africa.

The next contributors, Okere and Okafor, call for radical reform in the Church's structures to move the Church away from crippling clericalism that could be traced to copying the regime of Caesar. Solidarity and collaboration in the church would empower laypeople and display the whole church as servant and witness of the reign of God. This will have a healing or transforming effect on Africa and the world. The proposal of a radical structural reform in form of democracy or synodality not only draws from the earliest experience of New Testament Christianity but also from the dynamic egalitarian and communitarian structures of some African societies.

The final contribution by Claffey draws attention to the pertinence of Edward Said's critique of the mistaken but popular thesis of "clash of civilisations", a sabre rattling ideology proposed for the realisation of the economic and political objectives of America and the West. It calls on all to embrace the humanist project and to set aside stereotyping, prejudice, essentializing theories and ignorance. In the dangerous world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century solidarity and collaboration, dialogue across religions and cultures bring together the gospel ideal and the ideal of secular humanism. The power of the powerless rests on the faith that today across the globe men and women do, and can, mobilise to build a better world based on the universal principles of justice.

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