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Foreword

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Foreword

The theme for this volume is *Globalization*. It is difficult to find a clear definition of this term, and even harder to find a reliable evaluation of its effects. So much depends upon who is speaking.

Economists tend to interpret the convergence of cultures and economies in globalization as a continuation of the modernization process. They see globalization as a positive process that promises a better future for everyone. Not everyone, however, is persuaded by this utopian vision. What seems to be overlooked is the fact that many economies, particularly in the Third World, are not in the position to take advantage of the benefits of globalization. Political unrest, lack of infrastructure and illiteracy (to name just a few obstacles) stand in the way of development. Moreover, the growing disparity between the rich and the poor, the centralization of power in the hands of the wealthy minority, regionalism, ecological crises, the displacement of local cultures — all these are reasons for many people remaining critical of globalization. They regard it as a form of neo-colonialism.

Regardless of how we understand globalization, one thing is certain: we cannot ignore the fact that the context for the church to do ministry can no longer be limited to the local congregation, community, or even country. More specifically, theological education can no longer be conducted in the parochial ways of the past but now in a global context.

In the past three years, the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon, has attempted to address the issue of globalization revising the curriculum so as to included a required component comprising a Globalization/Cross-cultural Immersion Experience. So far, three groups of students accompanied by faculty and guides from Canadian Lutheran World Relief have traveled to India and Peru with the purpose of learning how globalization has impacted people living in those places. **Fran Schmidt** is a current student who has participated in two of the Globalization/Cross-cultural Immersion events organized by the LTS and CLWR. In *Cross-cultural Program: Wider Horizons*, She shares with us some of her reflections on the experiences in Peru.

Anita Jantz is on the pastoral team of Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon. She graduated from LTS in 1998 with an M.Div. degree and is currently working toward an STM. As a Mennonite,

Anita is particularly interested in the church developing a counter-culture in a world that is given to a culture of war and violence. In *Life at the Fringes: The Biblical Agenda of Sojourners Community*, Anita analyses the Sojourner Magazine and the community behind it. She traces the commitment of the Sojourners Community to a form of public discipleship that continually challenges the North American society on issues ranging from injustices of oppressive governments to the things of ecology, economics, globalization and health.

The third and final essay in this section is not about Globalization in the strictest contemporary sense, but nevertheless explores a theme that has global significance. How accurate is Mel Gibson's movie, "The Passion of the Christ," as a portrayal of the New Testament gospel story? In *The "Passion" of Gibson: Evaluating a Recent Interpretation of Christ's Suffering and Death in Light of the New Testament*, **Christian Eberhart** examines how the movie depicts Christ's passion and compares this interpretation with the accounts of the Passion in the New Testament. Chris moved to Saskatoon from Germany last year and began teaching at LTS in September as the Associate Professor of New Testament Studies. Besides being passionate about the Bible, Chris is also passionate about music (his wife, Véronique is an opera singer).

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