

FOREWORD



The 13 chapters in this volume deal with a range of issues related to culture, religion and politics in European societies. The authors have focused both in their regional analysis and national case studies on: secularization, the legacy of the Communist past, religious freedom and toleration, the politics of religion by the state, the political doctrine of Christian traditions, religious legitimacy of terror and violence, religion and democracy, national church-state relations, tensions between secular understanding of human rights and traditional Christian values, and on the working balance between cultural cohesion and multicultural pluralism.

The main regional focus of the volume is on Western and post-communist Europe. Individual case studies extend from United States to traditionally Orthodox Romania and the Russian Federation.

The contributors to this volume come from a wide range of academic disciplines (Theology, Political Science, Law, Ethics, and Strategic Studies). The editors believe that the interdisciplinary perspectives and a dialogue of various academic approaches contribute to an advanced knowledge of the interaction between religion, culture and politics in contemporary Europe.

The introductory chapter by *Alar Kilp* and *Andres Saumets* provides a general framework for the volume – it presents the theoretical discussion over multicultural society from the perspectives of culture, religion and democracy; analyses external and internal civilizational, cultural and religious ‘others’ from Medieval European societies until the dynamics of European identity in the light of recent waves of European enlargement; and compares issues related to multiculturalism and religion in post-communist and West European societies.

The four following chapters deal with the ideas – such as the conception of the state-nation or cultural nation, the command to Love Your Enemies, and the Doctrine of the Third Rome – both of which have molded the cultural identity of political societies and perceptions regarding religious or cultural ‘others’.

Andreas Pawlas traces the multifaceted nature of the relationship between nation, people and religion from the emergence of the nation-states to contemporary societies, where the 19th century conceptions of “Staats-Nation” and “Kulturnation” need to be reevaluated due to increasing presence of ethnoreligious pluralism within the national community.

Ain Riistan discusses the interpretations offered by Robert Eisenman, Gerd Theissen, N.T. Wright, the Jesus Seminar and the Context Group over the Command to Love Your Enemies in the Sermon of the Mount. He concludes that the definition of our enemies to be loved continues to challenge

us nearly two millennia after this phrase was first articulated. According to Riistan, today “it is actually up to us whether we let ourselves be determined by our ‘enemies’ or we try to live and act as the ones who are trying to positively overcome the boundaries around us.”

Alar Laats traces the pre-history of the idea of the Third Rome, and its emergence in sixteenth century Moscow. Thereafter he outlines its doctrinal content and three essential elements – universality, symphony of powers and its eschatological setting. Lastly, he discusses the possible reasons, why the idea has been unable to be a stable guideline in Russian history.

Wilfried Gerhard focuses on the extent to which religion has determined the cultural fundamentals and political culture of the United States of America. Particularly, he concentrates on the theological ideas such as creation theology, exodus theology, covenant theology, eschatology, the theology of spirituality and the mythology of redemption.

The second part of the book deals with religion-related challenges to society, values and political order. *Perry L. Glanzer* and *Konstantin Petrenko* find that the practical policies in the field of religious education in the Russian Federation often do not match with the church-state ideals set forth in national constitution or federal laws. They argue that in state-sponsored primary and secondary education, the tendency is from pluralism and partial establishment towards a form of strict separation. In state universities, however, the treatment of religion resembles the managed historical pluralism model. The practical policies regarding religion in private education has followed an even more multi-faceted set of church-state principles.

Erik Männik analyses the recent unorthodox challenges of international terrorism that any contemporary European state have to face. His contribution also concentrates on the religious wave of terrorism which started in 1979 and has “Islam at its heart”. Männik reminds the reader that the efficient combat against terrorism should extend further than from strategic policies and various security measures. It is also a struggle of minds.

Lavinia Stan and *Lucian Turcescu* survey the Romanian church-state relations before, during and after communist rule. They compare the managed quasi-pluralist model of church-state relations proposed by the Romanian political class, and the established church model advocated by the Orthodox Church leaders with Alfred Stepan’s “twin toleration” model, which outlines the minimal requirements for religion and politics in democracy. In the light of Stepan’s model, the authors offer recommendations for both the Orthodox Church and the Romanian state that would help the church-state relations in Romania to be better suited to democracy.

Alar Kilp evaluates the particular influence of Communist regimes on the secularisation of society in comparison to the patterns of secularisation in Western Europe. He argues that the particular influence of Communist

regimes is manifested mainly in the declining level of both religious affiliation and participation in religious services, and in a lower percentage of individuals for whom religion is important and who take time for prayer. People in post-communist societies tend to follow more traditional-theistic beliefs in sin and in hell, and their attitudes regarding family and homosexuality are more traditional-religious than in Western European societies. From a confessional perspective, the social authority of the church has been best preserved in Catholic mono-confessional societies, where historical religious tradition, national identity and national struggles have been closely connected.

The last section of the book offers four essays. *Joseph Ratzinger's*, now *Benedict XVI*, essay discusses the spiritual foundations of Europe. He traces the development of European civilisation and argues that despite the technological and economical success, Europe is on the verge of losing its cultural heritage, values and faith. The outward success of Europe tends to produce increasing emptiness within. Although Benedict XVI does not object to multiculturalism as such, he argues that multiculturalism cannot subsist without shared values, a belief in God and respect for elements sacred for others.

Erich Geldbach's polemical essay concentrates on the theory of “minimum of religious existence” which has achieved axiomatic status in German Court practice. The courts agree that according to this principle the violation of the dignity of the human person is to be assessed. Geldbach analyses the essence of “minimum of religious existence” and assesses its practical application in court practice. He also adds a discussion, whether it is acceptable to make a difference between the dignity of the human person and a person's right to religious liberty, or whether there can be violations of religious liberty which do not violate the dignity of a person.

Meego Remmel's essay outlines the virtue ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre, who concentrates on virtue, practice, narrative and tradition of the ethical doctrines. According to MacIntyre, all the modern theories of universal ethics have been discarded by their opponents as well as by the proponents themselves. Consequently, there are multiple religious, ideological and political groups and movements, who follow their own virtue, practice, narrative and tradition, and may claim that their moral reasoning is superior to their rivals, but none is able to universalize their own moral law.

The volume concludes with the essay of *Maciej Zięba*, who emphasises the dangers related to ideologizing faith. Based on the ideas of Pope John Paul II, Zięba argues that faith cannot be equated with secular ideologies. The fundamentalist versions of faith may resemble radical ideologies in the belief of „possessing” the truth, but Catholicism, in particular, is neither religious fundamentalism nor an ideology.

A good part of the book is based on a selection of papers presented at a conference on “Religion and Politics in Multicultural Europe: Perspectives and Challenges” held in Tartu, Estonia on October 27 2005, under the auspices of the Estonian National Defence College. The volume also includes an added paper by Benedict XVI, and invited contributions by Andreas Pawlas, Wilfried Gerhard, Lavinia Stan, Lucian Turcescu, Perry Glanzer and Konstantin Petrenko.

As editors, we wish to express our gratitude to all the contributors for their papers. We are grateful to Estonian National Defence College who has provided funding for the project. Last but not least, we would also to express our thanks to *Roy Lowthian*, *Kerrie Jo Smith*, *Epp Leete*, and to the staff of the University of Tartu Press, for all their help in bringing this publication to completion.

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