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*Church and Society:
Towards Responsible Engagement*
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Church and Society: Towards Responsible Engagement, published by Verbum in 2015, has been made possible thanks to the support of Acta Sanctorum, Inc. and the Faculty of Arts and Letters at Catholic University in Ružomberok. This publication addresses the issue of the Church and its role in the contemporary society. It makes an attempt at answering the questions: What attitude should the Church adopt to the phenomenon of cultural pluralism, secularism, Islam etc. in open society? And how could the believers get involved in this society responsibly? This topic is current and important, considering the fact that every generation has a duty to deal with the question of Jesus Christ's follower's relation with the world. Our generation is in the third millennium, which means some opportunities and challenges, which are, on the one hand, absolutely new, and on the other, they are as old as the humankind.

The publication *Church and Society* is conference proceedings, which consists of thirteen papers. The authors of those papers come from various professional, cultural, and denominational backgrounds, which gives the opportunity of deeper reflection and analysis of the issues. Many of the authors give lectures at prestigious world's universities and they are the best in their fields. For instance, Harvey Cox at Harvard University, Jean Bethke Elshtain at University of Chicago, David Fergusson at University of Edinburgh, Robert P. George at Princeton University, Tomáš Halík at Charles University, etc. One of the aims of this publication is to present their thoughts to a Slovak reader. The publication is bilingual so its content is not restricted to our geographical location.

The paper by Harvey Cox entitled “Pentecostalism and Global Market Culture” analyzes the role of the Christians in the contemporary global culture. The author agrees with Paul Tillich that religion is the substance of culture and the culture is the form of religion. He tries to show that religion and culture do not belong to separate spheres. He reflects upon the situation of early Christians and concludes that their behavior and attitudes can teach today’s Christians a lot. Harvey Cox presents an idea that in the next century Christians will have to develop ways of living defined by communal sharing rather than by individualistic accumulation.

David Fergusson is the author of “Moral Formation and the Life of the Church.” He deals with the issue of the European Christian identity, which is in crisis nowadays, and of its formation. He maintains that the attention to thought and desire are significant for moral commitment in a range of ways, that is, articulating the source of moral motivation, the seriousness and vocation of ethical practice, the importance of commitment and perseverance across a lifetime, the prospect of forgiveness, repentance, and renewal in the inevitable event of failure, etc.

The paper “Christianity and Secularization” presents the uniqueness of Christianity. The author Tomáš Halík claims that Christianity engendered two inter-linked phenomena. The first one is the church and the second one is the secular society. No other religion ever created an institution that represents a specific religion as a whole and is not identical with the state or nation. The author of the paper analyzes the course and process of secularization. In the conclusions Halík highlights that the history of religion in Europe is not in the end as certain zealous apostles of atheism predicted.

The paper under the title “The Role of the Church in a ‘Post-narratable’ World: Bringing Meaning to Reality through a Credible Narrative” deals with the issue of human identity. Michal Valčo discusses the Slovakia’s post-totalitarian situation and the false political solution and he raises the question of human future. He summarizes that if people and societies wish to be able to defend themselves against any type of ideological manipulation, they should have a solid appreciation of the power and the role of narratives in the human life individually and collectively. In addition, it is vitally important to understand one’s own tradition.

The Editors’ aim was not to provide readers with easy answers to comprehensive questions, but to give them food for thought, which would lead them to critical thinking and also stimulate their interest and formation of new questions. The topic itself is of great importance. In contrast with other valuable publications and academic proceedings of the same or similar type, the intention of the publication *Church and Society: Towards Responsible Engagement* is not to inform, but to form with the aim to transform. This publication has a potential to find its readers among academics, ecclesiastic dignitaries, and general public, too. It is well written and easy to follow. I believe that it would make a valuable contribution to every library.

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