

Ankica Marinović Bobinac and Dinka Marinović Jerolimov

Vjerske zajednice u Hrvatskoj [Religious Communities in Croatia]
Prometej & Udruga za vjersku slobodu u RH, Zagreb, 2008, 430 pages

This book, written by Ankica Marinović Bobinac and Dinka Marinović Jerolimov, researchers in Sociology at the Institute for Social Research, University of Zagreb, was published by Prometej [Prometheus] and the Association for Religious Freedom in the Republic of Croatia. The work came into being through the collaboration between the Association for Religious Freedom in the Republic of Croatia and the authors who applied and successfully incorporated into this work the experience they had gained in the course of the project *Male vjerske zajednice u Zagrebu* [Small Religious Communities in Zagreb] in which they participated in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

After Croatia gained independence, one of the urgent tasks was to regulate the relationship between the state and religious communities. The state achieved this first with the majority Roman Catholic Church, and then the Law on the Legal Standing of Religious Communities (NN, 83/2002) shaped the legal framework for defining relationships with other religious communities. The Agreements treating the issues of common interest between the Croatian government and groups of religious communities defined specific relationships between the state and the mentioned religious communities. After the regulation of the legal relationship among the state and religious communities, which marked an extraordinary progress in the under-

standing and practice of religious freedoms, the creation and protection of improved conditions of religious activity, and the collaboration in the areas of training, education and culture, it was observed that there is little information available about the religious communities operating in the territory of Croatia, both among members of general public and in academic and cultural circles. This work attempts to fill in this gap and satisfy the need for basic, reliable and relevant information about religious communities.

The book is divided into several sections. In the introduction the authors provide a socio-cultural context for the Croatian society in which religious communities operate. The central section comprises the survey of religious communities which are registered in the Register of religious communities in the State central administration office. Taking into account the socio-cultural context of the Croatian society (with more than 90% inhabitants declaring as Christians), the authors divided religious communities into Christian and non-Christian communities. Christian communities include traditional Christian churches, Christian churches rooted in the original Protestant tradition, Christian churches which developed within the broad Reformation heritage, and other Christian churches. Non-Christian communities include traditional non-Christian communities and other non-Christian communities.

A brief survey of traditional Christian churches in Croatia in the first chapter includes Roman Catholic Church, Serbian Orthodox Church, Bulgarian Orthodox Church and Macedonian Orthodox Church.

The second chapter presents Christian churches rooted in the original Protestant tradition: Evangelical Church, Protestant Reformed Christian Church, Reformed Calvinistic Church and the Evangelical Waldensian Church.

The third chapter provides a survey of Christian churches which developed within the broad Reformation heritage includes: The Union of Baptist Churches, Churches of Christ, Church of the Good News, Evangelical Methodist Church, Church of God, Evangelical Pentecostal Church, Christ's Spiritual Church of „small-baptizers“ [infant-baptizers], The Union of Christ's Pentecostal Churches, International United Pentecostal Church and independent charismatic communities – Full Gospel Church, Christian Prophetic church and the Union of Churches „the Word of Life“.

The fourth chapter contains the presentations of other Christian churches. It includes: Church of Jesus Christ of the Saints of the Later Days (Mormon), Church of the Disciples of Christ, Evangelical Christians, Croatian Old Catholic church, Jehovah's Witnesses, Reformed Movement of the Adventists of the Seventh Day, Independent Baptist church „the Tree of Life“, New Apostolic church, Free Catholic church and Universal life.

The fifth chapter, dealing with traditional non-Christian communities, treats the Islamic religious community and the Jewish religious communities: the coordination of Jewish communities and Beth Israel.

The sixth chapter presents other non-Christian communities: Church of Scienti-

ology, Baha'í community in Croatia, Bhudist religious community of Dharmalok, Hindu religious community and Vaishnava religious community.

The book concludes with the address book of local communities and institutions with official web sites of religious communities. The book concludes with the list of relevant literature.

On the basis of structured interviews with the representatives of religious communities, and the analysis of materials published by the communities and secondary literature, the authors of *Religious Communities in Croatia* attempted to give a systematic and objective survey of religious communities registered in the Register of religious communities in Croatia. Information for each community were gathered and analysed by eight key areas which give basic insight into its identity. A brief history of the community in the world and on the Croatian soil, and the religious or spiritual tradition from which the community stems, is followed by the exposition of basic beliefs. This sensitive issue is based on the information from written materials provided by the communities themselves and/or interviews with the communities' leaders. The section dealing with the manner of organization addresses the structure and role of the organization of the community, the issue of leadership and membership as well as mechanisms of the reproduction of membership. The authors paid great attention to rituals, customs, holidays and days of rest, and other forms of religious practice. The section about various activities of the community provides a succinct outline of miscellaneous activities of the community which serve to proclaim the teaching and foster the reproduction of membership of the community, most often highlighting publishing, media invol-

vement, cultural activities and charitable endeavours.

The book is well researched and organised. It provides basic information about religious communities and refers to sources and secondary literature which can aid future researchers with information. The synthesis of information gathered through field research, interviews with communities' representatives and the analysis of the communities' publications, fills in the gaps in the existing literature. The reader is not burdened with less relevant details (within the framework of this study) but the book points a more inquisitive reader to additional sources.

The study is informative and interdisciplinary in nature. It inspires dialogue between the society and religious communities as well as dialogue in the area of different interests of religious communities and within themselves.

With regard to the subject matter, the study will be of primary interest to those who entertain academic interest in study of religion, sociology, history and theology; also to university lecturers and their

students. The style is both scientific and popular, pregnant with useful information and easy to read, and is thus accessible to a wider readership, particularly to the readers who are interested in the area of religion.

The book is an invaluable contribution to a better knowledge about different religious communities on the Croatian scene with its Roman Catholic majority, particularly as it gives an outline of new religious communities at the end of the twentieth century, often influenced by global and European integrative social processes. The book might be of help to the European Union as the basic source of information about religious communities and religious freedoms in Croatia.

The book *Religious Communities in Croatia* is a scholarly and succinct treatment of the Croatian religious setting at the beginning of the twenty first century which contains all relevant information about religious communities registered in the Register of religious communities in Croatia.

Stanko Jambreč

Translated by Davorin Peterlin

Gene S. Whiting

Zrinski, Međimurje i reformacija [Zrinski, Međimurje and the Reformation]

Bogoslovni institut, Zagreb, 2008., 304 pages.

Gene S. Whiting, the author, an American living in Čakovec and writing in Croatian, wrestles with the demanding and still insufficiently researched topic of the relationship between the Zrinski family, Međimurje and the Reformation. In his study, he uses

numerous primary sources (145 titles) as well as older and more recent secondary literature (532 titles). Some primary sources are published in the Appendix in the original language and in Croatian translation. In the body of the study, the author refers