PART TWO

CASE STUDIES

The case studies in this part show that freedom of religion in the concrete situation of society and politics is not as easy as the concept seems to proclaim. The article of Huub Lems deals with the role of Islam. Lems displays the struggle of the Indonesian government to guarantee freedom of religion for the relatively small religious minorities in this country with its vast majority of Muslims. The government resists claims for an Islamic state. Is this, however, not limitation of religious freedom in the opposite manner? Is the consequence not oppression by the state in order to keep things under control?

Silviu Rogobete and Nico Vorster live in contexts where freedom was regained after a time of oppression. They show that regaining freedom is not an easy road. That is not only the case where political leaders of the present often have connections with the past—as in East Europe, as Rogobete displays. Also in the new rainbow society of South Africa, society and politics have to solve problems—especially if it is about conflicting interests in the field of freedom.
SOME REFLECTIONS ON RELIGION AND MULTICULTURALISM IN ROMANIA: TOWARDS A REAPPRAISAL OF THE GRAMMAR OF TRADITIONS

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Preliminary Clarifications

The thesis I would like to discuss in this article is that, as one of the strongest identity markers in Romania, the Christian tradition has great potential to offer a constructive answer to the contemporary dilemmas of multiculturalism. However, for this to happen there is a significant need for a fresh re-reading of this tradition. The starting point of my work will be an overview of the data on the question of religion and ethnicity in post-communist Romania. This will be followed by an assessment of the predominant trends involved in the building of the societal texture of Romanian contemporary society, with special emphasis on attitudes towards authority, otherness, and dialogue. The ambiguous potential of traditions, both for destruction and for the healing of societal relations, will be singled out as an important characteristic of traditions. Following a Foucauldian critique of the knowledge-power relationship predominant in the current state of affairs regarding traditions in Romania, the present work will argue for a reappraisal of the Christian tradition and its potential role. The plea will be for a fresh re-reading of its complex and pluriform grammar. Thus emphasis will be placed on seeing Christianity—and its implicit traditions—as a religion of neighborliness and a religion of love that is oriented towards the future rather than the past, towards the other rather than the self, and inspired by eschatological hope rather than blind allegiance to fixed dogma. Seeing traditions in this way would be a safe warrant for the building and acceptance of a multicultural, diverse democracy.