
FOREWORD

We are proud to present the Scientific Proceedings of Latvian Christian academy, Volume 5. In 2018 the Academy looks back at its 25 years, which is quarter of the century. Is it a long history or just a minimum for conceptual development of a university? Not that much when compared with the eldest European or even Latvian universities, whereas sufficient if we keep in mind that Latvian Christian academy is conceptual university occupying its own niche in academic spectrum of Latvian and even European universities. Its study programs and research is oriented on interaction between theological research on the one hand, and humanitarian and social sciences, on the other, in practical and academic aspects. Not so many universities of that type are found across Europe, however, the Academy has strong gravity towards its academic interest on an international scale. The present Volume is another evidence of that.

One of the strategic dimensions of the Academy is development of Social dialogue, often referred to as “social engine” of the EU. The time for social Europe has come, and to grasp the concept of man for further development of the EU social dimension is of key importance. This concept lays the foundation for interdisciplinary thinking at the Academy. The first section of the Volume contains materials from the international seminar “Inclusive labour market and youth employment: Cross-European analysis” at Latvian Christian academy in May 31 – June 2, 2018, and supported by EZA (*“European Center for Workers’ Questions, Germany*). International conferences on topical issues of European Social dialogue and Social work are held regularly at the Academy and their content has been presented in previous volumes of the Proceedings. The selection of articles and their content takes the reader to the conceptual cognition that social problems in any society – also on the level of the state and labor market – should be tied to the condition of man, his personality, his inner potential and its activation in supportive environment. This is the axis around which the professional Baltic and European situation analysis rotate.

Invitation to academic dialogue at the Academy is testified by both Bachelor and Master thesis in Caritative social work, Social work, Theology, Supervision, Social entrepreneurship and Bible arts defended at the Academy. This is a treasury of practical feedback for theoretical analysis. Also, it is testified by international cooperation and involvement of the academic staff in various conferences in Latvia and abroad, participation of students in the ERASMUS mobility, active role of the staff in academic forums and cooperation networks in Lithuania, Estonia, Germany, Sweden, Romania, Italy, France, Russia, etc. In June 2016 Rector of Latvian Christian academy prof. Skaidrīte Gūtmane had a privilege to present the concept of the Academy to Pope Francis in His Apostolic Palace, Vatican City. We are very thankful to prof. K.Kiessling for helping the Academy in this regard (see p. 108).

What are key directions of the concept of Latvian Christian academy? Following the challenging thesis of the age of the Academy, we should say that Latvian Christian academy is purposefully working on acknowledgement and application of the best

concepts borrowed from the rich heritage of the Christian Church in social ministry. The heritage was accumulated since the first centuries of the Christian era and further elaborated during the so-called Church fathers' times (ca. 7th century), in the Social teaching of the Roman Catholic Church and in the practice of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Referring to its importance the well-known Social work historian prof. W. Wolterstorff of the Yale University, USA, we agree that "it is unpardonable academic misconduct to think that social work originated in the 19th century Europe. It is expressively proved by its ancient roots and its content, and its value must be put in good use." The thesis is reflected in this Volume.

The concept of the Academy is reflected in the programme of Caritative social work (both on Bachelor and Master levels), by taking key notions from other fields of the interdisciplinary research related to the dialogue between theology and social sciences. The first among them – social worker should be informed not only in social case solution, but also in sociology and anthropology (i.e., knowledge of man). The present Volume offers several articles in this regard (prof. S.Gūtmane, Latvia, and Dr. N.Hark, Germany).

Caritative social work as both practice and research is reflected also by prof. K.Urponen (Finland) and Dr. N.Hark (Germany), it is reflected also by other contributors – Dr. P.Krīgers (Latvia), prof. M.Medar with colleagues (Estonia), prof. E.Aciene and I.Tandzsegolskiene (Lithuania), in the supervision field by prof. I.Dirgeliene and D.Kavaliauskiene (Lithuania). Along with the analysis of social problems comes the need for precise academic methodology. We have an ambition to prove that the thesis of prof. W. Wolterstorff fits the picture also today, at the beginning of the 21st century against the general tendency to move away from the rich resources of the Christian Church.

Readers of the present Volume will find articles on existential issues in supervision (prof. I.Dirgeliene and D.Kavaliauskiene, Lithuania) and ways to apply narrative therapy in the caritative social work practice (G.Dišlers, Latvia). Surely, many aspects require deeper elaboration. However, the authors testify penetrating interest in the concept of personality with whom caritative social worker and supervisor is in touch. They agree that social problems can't be solved without more precise identification of a personality who makes essential decisions rooted in existential and ontological foundations.

Consequently, Caritative social worker is invited to analyze the social case on the micro, macro and mezzo levels, encompassing all three levels of the classical social work. All are internally related, they permeate each other, reflecting the phenomena from the lower level into the higher one, and vice versa. Every person follows well-accepted narratives of the society in his decisions and subsequently participates in their creation. Contributors to the present Volume assure that this interaction deserves interdisciplinary approach for further enrichment of the Social work practice.

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