

CORRECTION:

For an updated and corrected English language version of the article abstracts in the collection *Christianity and Politics: Cooperation or Conflict* (2015), pp. 237-242, read, print or save this document.

ABSTRACTS

CHAPTER ONE

CHURCH AND POLITICS: UNHOLY ALLIANCE OR A MISSIONARY FIELD?

Viktor Kostov

Summary

Christian involvement in politics today faces a dramatically prevailing atheistic and humanistic worldview; public displays of faith, and especially the participation of people with religious beliefs in the secular government, seem to not belong in the modern state. This article discusses how the categories of Church, politics, and law relate to one another in the Bulgarian context. The conclusion is that Christian non-participation in both public and political discourse, in regards to faith, is contrary to Christ's Great Missionary Commission to reach all nations with the gospel as recorded in Matthew 28: 16-18.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PLACE OF THE CHURCH IN THE SECULAR STATE

Tsanko Mitev

Summary

Where is the Church in an age of secularism? How able is the Church to promote Christian values and to enhance the role of faith? Can Christian denominations find common causes to unite their efforts in order to protect human dignity from attacks due to moral relativism and genetic engineering? The paper "The place of the Church in the secular state" raises and addresses these issues, by means of comparing the resonance and the lessons of the events of the distant past, illuminated by Scripture and archeology, and the events that mark the beginning and development of the present day.

CHAPTER THREE
TWO PARADIGMS OF THE PLACE OF THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD

Velislav Altanov

Summary

Christians widely accept the monastic-ascetic world view, which considers it “pious” and “spiritual” to ignore earthly life in anticipation of happiness and fulfillment in God’s Paradise. This attitude may be seen in the papers of 16 respondents: theology students and church members from different backgrounds, ethnicity, education and marital status. The author subjects this view to ethical, theological and semantic critique, revealing the opposite view which can be defined as “organically Christian.” According to the latter view, every person is born with a mission which suggests that one has to live in the here and now, and also that one can look for satisfaction and the pursuit of personal happiness on Earth, which is preparation for the future life in Paradise.

CHAPTER FOUR
POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF INTER-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE
IN EUROPE

Valentin Kozhuharov

Summary

The article considers the political-social dimensions of inter-Christian dialogue in Europe by focusing on issues of the role of secularism and post-secularism and their effect on different European societies; the political and social dimensions of inter-Christian dialogue in the secular state; and the role that different Christian communities can play in establishing a sustainable and efficient dialogue between Christians and the secular state where decisions about political, economic and social developments will equally satisfy every single person in the contemporary state and in Europe in general.

CHAPTER FIVE
ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF POLICY IN THE
CHRISTIAN TRADITION OF RUSSIAN RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY

Kostadin Nushev

Summary

What are the grounds for Christian politics and the ethical dimensions of political cohabitation according to the Orthodox tradition and how are these ideas reflected in modern Russian religious philosophy? What is the function and mission of the state according to the gospel teaching about the earthly "Caesar" kingdom and how are these Christian political and spiritual ideas reflected in the Eastern Orthodox political and cultural tradition? By reviewing the philosophical and political concepts found in the works of the Slavophiles, Feodor Dostoevskiy, Vladimir Solovyov and Nikolai Berdyaev this article examines the relationship between the fundamental values of freedom and human dignity and the foundations of social life.

CHAPTER SIX
CHRISTIANITY AND PUBLICITY IN BULGARIA: HISTORICAL CONTEXT
AND CURRENT SOCIAL ATTITUDES

Momchil Metodiev

Summary

Why are Christian values not represented in the public debate in Bulgaria? Is it possible for the Church and Christians to become a moral point of reference, therefore affecting politics and legislation? The article tries to answer these questions in the context of the recent traumatic relations between the Church and the state with a view toward current social attitudes. It argues that the Christian point of view could make its way back into the public debate, not through grand ideological attempts or direct interference of the Church in politics, but mainly through small and authentic grassroots projects.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE HUMAN BEING AS A CHRISTIAN BELIEVER AND AS A CITIZEN: PROBLEMS OF THE MODERN STATEHOOD WITH THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Hristo P. Berov

Summary

Human life has been monopolized by statehood for a long time. People depend too much on the state. Christians view a human being as a creation of God. A Christian is the follower of Our Lord Jesus Christ, while a citizen is an entity of public (state) law. The system of public law is the intersection between the worldview of politicians in power and their vision of governing. The inability of the rights and obligations of citizens, on the one hand, to converge with being a Christian, on the other hand, often leads to conflict between these two ways of life. The modern state is a citizen-state, while the human person, besides being a citizen, should be characterized as a believer or non-believer.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE BILL FOR CHANGES OF THE LAW ON RELIGIONS – THE STATE'S CONCERN FOR DEMOCRATIC REGULATION OF INNERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE IN OUR COUNTRY OR A LEGAL TOOL FOR ACHIEVING POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC GOALS

Dilian Nikoltchev

Summary

In 2014 the majority in parliament attempted to pass a bill amending the Law on Religious Affairs – a political "experiment," during the months of the most powerful, within the last decade, anti-government protests against the government of Plamen Oresharski. The article seeks to pose and answer the following questions: Was this accidental? What lay behind these legislative initiatives? What was the extent to which the proposed draft texts met the European values and legal standards in the field of religious rights and freedoms? And just how legally justified were these initiatives?

CHAPTER NINE
REINHOLD NIEBUHR'S CONCEPT OF TOTALITARIANISM AND
DEMOCRACY

Veniamin Peev

Summary

The Biblical doctrines of “redemption” and “salvation” have found their social, extra-ecclesiastical dimensions in the theological works of many Christian fathers and writers. Augustine and Luther delineate the philosophical-historical parameters of this kind of social reading. Reinhold Niebuhr presents in his whole theological work a modernistic perception of “redemption,” building up a complete system of “social theology” which has greatly influenced the Protestant theology in the USA. Niebuhr suggests a theological interpretation of his own of the ruling systems of democracy and totalitarianism which deserves exploration even today.

CHAPTER TEN
SOCIAL LIFE - A CONDITION FOR INTER-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE

Anatolyi Elenkov

Summary

In Europe, one can observe a sharp decline in the number of those who profess Christianity and feel connected to the Church. There is an uneasy feeling that de-Christianization and secularization of European society is the policy of the European institutions. What is the role of the Church in this environment which is increasingly hostile to its primordial religious beliefs and morals? Should the Church humbly and silently accept its marginalization? The article attempts to launch the idea that, due to its nature, function, and mission the Church must take decisive action to penetrate society and generate transformation of the post-modern and post-Christian culture of Europe. To succeed in this task the Church must be united and through interchurch dialogue and cooperation between the different branches of Christianity seek to achieve its mission in the world.

CHAPTER ELEVEN
MORAL AND PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF CHRISTIAN PARTICIPATION IN
EUROPEAN POLITICS

Luca Volonte

Summary

The involvement of Christians in public debate and consequently in the political process is motivated by the moral and ethical principles of the Gospel. Protection of natural human rights and our God-given dignity is a natural extension of our faith, including when it is implemented in the public domain and by political initiatives.