

The Clash and the Cure

There is a tragic clash between Truth and the world. Pure undistorted truth burns up the world.

Nikolai BERDYAEV

The relation between Church and State has puzzled Christian thinkers since Christianity came into being. The New Testament provides a number of examples showing various forms of tension between the altar and the throne. Jesus himself was repeatedly faced with his followers' hopes that, in addition to his spiritual programme, he would confront the oppressing state apparatus and fight for justice with political means. The Messianic concept of the State, however, was deeply rooted not only in the minds of Jesus' contemporaries—it had been there before Christ and it has "successfully" survived him.

The notion of the kingdom of God, preached by Christ, has been interpreted in many different ways. Some have claimed that the Christian practice of basilea is genuinely apolitical; others maintained that it is, by nature, in permanent conflict with the State. Yet another opinion viewed the concerted action of the Church and the State to be the most beneficial option for the survival and expansion of Christendom. Furthermore, it quickly became obvious that this debate is not solely the concern of Christians—the same issue needed to be tackled by other religions too.

In what way should religion be a corrective to society? How can religion retain its original agenda

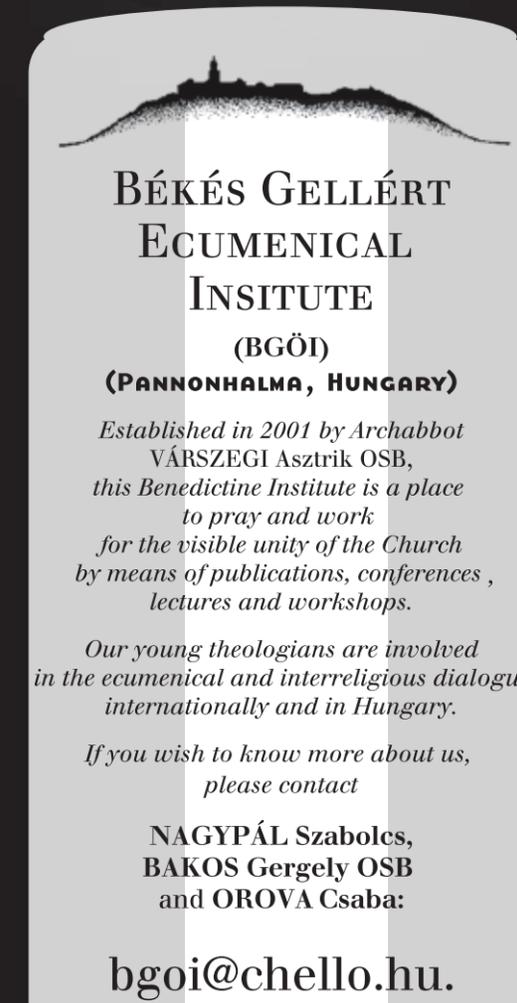
while co-operating with the State? Is the State selfless enough to further the cause of the religion at its own expense? Is the mode of governance proclaimed by religion in conflict with the doctrine of the State? Questions like these necessarily arise when one thinks of the relation between religion and society...

The articles appearing in the present issue of Mozaik try to provide answers to some of the aspects of this debate. They are reflections on this theme from diverse perspectives, including case studies, analyses, poems or first-hand experiences of the authors. Several of the contributions published in this issue are connected to the Theological Conference of WSCF Europe, Religion and Society – Partners or Competitors?, which took place in October 2006 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

This time we present to the reader articles written by authors from Belarus, Cameroon, Croatia, Denmark, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, the U.K. and the U.S. The readers are cordially invited to send comments, feedback, questions and further ideas to our e-mail address wscfmozaik@yahoo.co.uk or to contact directly the authors, whose e-mail addresses are included in their mini-bios.

We have the pleasure to introduce to our readers the art of HOLLÓ Katalin, whose works accompany the contributions appearing in this issue and co-shape the atmosphere of the journal. Last, but not least, I would also like to thank my co-editors Rachael WEBER and Bogdan POPESCU for their excellent work and diligent editorship.

Ut omnes unum sint.

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