Religions in War: The Example of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Ivan Cvitkovic

University of Sarajevo

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ree

Part of the Christianity Commons, and the Eastern European Studies Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ree/vol21/iss6/5

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University.
RELIGIONS IN WAR: THE EXAMPLE OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

By Ivan Cvitkovic

Ivan Cvitkovic is professor of sociology of religion, Department of Political Science at the University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Those who come after us and who stand over our grave, no one among them will know what all was in us. - Miroslav Krleza

1. Prior to the Outbreak of the War

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to the 1991 census the population numbered 4,770,033 belonging to twenty-four nationalities. The national composition of the population was as follows: Muslims 1,898,963 (43.387%); Serbs 1,365,093 (31.1876%); Croats 759,906 (17.3612%). The religious composition was as follows: Islam 1,871,882 (42.7660%), Orthodox 1,286,828 (29.3995%), and Roman Catholics 593,908 (13.5687%). Serbs were the majority population only on 39 per cent of the territory.

On the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina three cultural groups encountered one another and intermingled: Western European (Catholic), Eastern European (Orthodox) and Near Eastern (Islamic). Along with different religions and confessions there were also differences in language, customs, and traditions. In the majority of European countries language had the decisive role in national differentiation, but many authors hold that on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina religions and confessions 3 played that role. The consciousness of identity of religious or confessional and national affiliation determined on that basis, although in the wider Yugoslav context the relationship between religious affiliation and nationality was different. Slovenes and Croats are Catholics but they are of different nationality. Macedonians, Montenegrins, and Serbs are Orthodox but belong

---

1 Fragments from a larger manuscript Religions in War: The Example of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
2 At the time of the census until 1993 the term “Muslim” connoted also nationality. Since 1993 it was formally replaced by the term “Boshnjak.”
3 The word “religion” connotes in this essay a large religion such as Christianity. The term “confession” connotes a specific religious denomination such as the Roman Catholic or Serbian Orthodox Church.
to three different nationalities, Boshnjaks, Albanians (most of them), and Turks are Muslims but they are also of a different nationality.

Tensions increase in multinational societies when “divinization” takes place in nationalism and when a national community becomes the highest value. This was particularly noticeable in Bosnia and Herzegovina where, because of the specific overlap of the national and religious element, the tensions were carried over into religious differences. Even though one deals here with universal religions (Islam and Christianity) they are being experienced among the masses of Bosnia and Herzegovina as national religions, (Islam=Boshniak, Catholic=Croat, and Orthodox=Serb). Naturally the core of these tensions was not in the religions or confessions, but in the disturbances in secular (national) values.

Nation and religion in the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was something specific. Here nation and religion exist in border regions, namely in areas where one touches “another” or even “third” nation and religion. It is exactly in these areas of contact where awareness of identity, religious as well as national, receives a powerful substance; here they function as a sign of “defense” from the “other.” In the research carried out by the Institute for the Study of National Relationships in Bosnia and Herzegovina that was carried out toward the end of 1987, every third person questioned belonged to those with strong religious and national fervor. Among them most represented was the group 18-28 years old. It is not surprising that the greatest conflicts, the worst tragedies happened exactly at these border areas between nationalities (Croats, Serbs, and Boshnjaks) and religions (Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Islam). These are the areas of the valleys of the rivers Bosna, Lashva, Drina, and Neretva. Among the ones who committed war crimes most often were those from the above-mentioned age group.

It is in human nature that religious lessons and symbolic language are always interpreted in a new, relevant way. Such examples one can find in Christianity, when Protestants in the 16th Century urged the return to the Gospel, not because of social relations from the period of early Christianity, but because of the situation in the 16th. So it is with Islam. Return to Islamic origins was not urged in order to restore conditions
from Muhammad’s time, but because of contemporary needs. For those who urge such return Islam is an ideology stronger than ethnic, linguistic, and other differences between people. Islam was being accepted as a “connecting tissue” within Muslim nations. National identity had strengthened within religion. So Islam did not become only a tradition but also the status of national law, the departure from which was being interpreted as departure from one’s national community (“national alienation”).

The desire for the affirmation of religiously based identity was powerfully present. During the war every person who was circumcised according to the Muslim practice was considered a member of the Islamic community (in a sociological sense) regardless of the intensity (stronger or weaker) of one’s faith. Islam was becoming an indicator of national and cultural identification even among Boshnjak intellectuals. Faith was being connected to the sacralization of life (dress, greetings, food), but also spiritual life (participation in prayers, relationship toward God, etc.). Islam started to symbolize belonging not only to a separate cult. but also to a national community. It became a symbol of a different life in relation to the neighbors’ (Christian) life.

How to explain this? The insufficiently developed national consciousness, national symbols, and similar features made possible that the fighting in the war gained a religious (Islamic) character. Neither the Croats and nor even the Serbs had such needs as did the Boshniaks, because they had previously developed national symbols. Thereby the national struggle of Boshniaks acquired an apparent religious aspect. Islam became the symbol of national identification and resistance to aggression. It is a different issue as to the level to which Boshniaks should have and could have gone with this orientation without bringing into question the proclaimed principle of establishing a civil, secular, multireligious, and multinational state.

In addition, the Party of Democratic Action (Stranka Demokratske Akcije, abbreviated as SDA) did not avoid using Islam as a political ideology. The leadership of that party did not hide its desire for social relationships that are harmonious with the principles of Islam. In a situation when there was a threat to the physical survival of Boshniaks, the leadership of SDA could not avoid exploiting the political potential of the
adherence of this people to Islam. The threat of annihilation was being connected with the tendency to domination by “others” who also adhered to another (Christian) religion. Islam thus became a “national religion” of Boshniaks which “others” hate and persecute (kill and exile its adherents, destroy mosques, etc.) In such a situation it was suggested to the masses that the goal is not only the defense of national (Boshniak) but also religious (Islamic) values. Religion became the symbol of national identification. By means of the defense of Islam and Islamic values, thereby, it was attempted to defend the national (Boshniak) identity. It is possible to criticize this by saying that only totalitarian factors, ideology, and politics can attempt to use religion as a national ideology, but who cares about such things in war? It was essential to preserve the national identity and survive. This model of behavior by the leadership of the SDA party and the Islamic community was made easier by the fact that the Qur'an contains principles which deal directly with the state, army, and government.

We already mentioned that the above model was not as powerful in the other two ethnicities. European Christianity from the 18th century onward, succeeded in developing different principles that enabled the desecralization of politics. Religious and confessional values are being recognized and respected but as a matter of personal choice and life. But with Boshniaks, as we saw, the situation was quite different. In faith (Islam) they saw an additional motif for survival in a Christian encirclement.

Even in the structure of Serb-Croat differences there were and still continue many elements of confessional-nationalistic imperialism. Ecumenism and tolerance can contribute much to reduction of the tensions, but they, unfortunately, never took root. There was neither the will nor the understanding for ecumenism and tolerance to be born. This was illustrated by the statements of Orthodox bishops from Bosnia (except the Dabro-Bosnian bishop Vladislav, who because of illness was not present) issued in Tuzla (in the beginning of October 1990), in which they stressed that in Croatia ustashism was being resurrected and that it is influencing Bosnia-Herzegovina. According to the Serbian

---

A fascist organization founded before WWII that came to power during WWII in the form of a Nazi puppet regime of the Independent State of Croatia and carried out atrocities over non-Croats, particularly Serbs and Jews.
Orthodox bishops from Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Croatian government wanted to scare the Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina by means of Croato-centric politics. In addition to this, among Serbs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and the rest of Yugoslavia, a conviction was developing about the Catholic Church as a great enemy of Serbian Orthodoxy, whose basic goal was to return Orthodox Serbs to the “Mother Church.”

For Serbian extremists Muslims were “fundamentalists” who “forgot” that they “have their origin in the Serbian tradition,” that “their roots are Serbian.” They considered it important to deny the national identity of this people reducing it to a religious or at best a cultural group, because, supposedly, they are unable to incorporate themselves into the Christian “historical” nations (Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes). There was even a revival of discussions whether the Boshniaks in Bosnia and Herzegovina stem from “Orthodox” or “Catholic” Christians and thereby re-ignited the old games about Bosnia and Herzegovina and which is the autochthonous population. Boshniaks were faulted because of their alleged close alliance and cooperation with Croatia on grounds of “their common hatred toward Serbs as the evil Orthodox brothers.”

2. The Departure of Confessions from the War

Post-socialist society was confronted with a crisis of identity. In the midst of the crisis there was a return to nationalism and confessionalism. It opened the question whether the nationalization of religion (or confession) and the sacralization of nation (in all three of its variants) in Bosnia and Herzegovina necessarily generates and produces national and religious conflicts that end up in a war. It turned out that in a developed (extreme) nationalism confessions easily identify themselves with the nation politically by means of nationalism (stories about threats and suffering) and defense of religious community. Likewise, the war showed that the masses can be most easily mobilized toward those interests. Holidays such as “Slava” [Orthodox family feast day], Christmas Eve, Christmas, Bayram [Muslim holy days], and similar ones, regardless of their religious meaning, became symbols of national belonging. Belonging to a religion itself
became a symbol of belonging to a nation and national idea.

The growth and strengthening of nationalism was accompanied by national homogenization. Homogenization was based on belonging to a confession, its tradition, nationalism, exclusivity toward “others.” The process was two-fold. On the one hand internal cohesion was being achieved (but also closing up) of ethnicity and religion, but it also developed an aggressive attitude, intolerance, and bigotry toward the adherents of “another” ethnicity and “another” religion.

The war showed that in a multi confessional society, religious relationships also influence the thinking about interpersonal relationships, about processes of social communication and (dis)integration. Social and religious distance were preceded by attaching negative characteristics to the “other” (they are stupid, lazy, dishonorable, uncultured, warlike, etc.) The acceptance of these and similar negative attitudes, which were promoted by war propaganda, depended on the cultural-educational level of the population and the intensity of the conflict with the military of the “other.” Thereby the prerequisite for the social and religious distance toward “others” was created ranging from the unwillingness to live in the same locality to avoidance of shopping in a store whose owner belonged to “another” religion. Similar to racial discrimination where businesses segregated for whites and blacks, during the time of religious segregation there were businesses that were being patronized only by those belonging to the same religion as the owner. It was thus shown that the territorial proximity of adherents of two or more religions (life in the same territory and in the same town) is insufficient for the creation of communication and the reduction of social distance. The war showed that for communication and social interaction confessional, national, linguistic, and cultural identification were far more important. It is a real question whether trading, communication, and similar means are able to create peace and a sense of social belonging.

“Ethnic cleansing,” migration and exodus led to a significant change in the religious map of Bosnia and Herzegovina which came out of the war without cohesive strength. And not only that. It brought about changes in manners and life-style in the
new environment, the “ruralization” of cities. Exiles from rural environments moved into the cities, along with those who became upwardly mobile because of their military promotion. They became a part of the political elite as well as economically empowered.

The war that took place in multiethnic surroundings brought social promotion also to a part of the “national” intelligentsia (writers, ethnographers, and even more so to clergy, historians, linguists, and those who had “discovered” and developed separateness of their own in relation to the other two ethnicities). Simultaneously this led to an extraordinary politicization of language, literature, faith, and history. The activists of ‘national sciences’ started to develop ‘scientific,’ historical, or where there was no such data, pre-historical foundations of the national being, providing ‘scientific’ arguments to solve territorial conflicts (Bibo-Huszar-Szucs, 1995).

The segment of the population between twenty and forty years old decreased significantly after the war in every religious community (this age group also was disproportionately killed in the war). This process affected all three religious communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the war of 1991-1995. Thousands of young, able, and talented people left Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially those from universities, research centers, media, and culture.

Still, did the war destroy the myth of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a multicultural and multiethnic community whose population was characterized by spirituality, nobility, respect, understanding, and coexistence?

The future of Bosnia and Herzegovina depends on how all three of its people will relate to national, confessional and cultural differences. The theory of “embrace” which is being offered assumes the acceptance (“embrace”) of “others” who live in the same territory with their difference. Of course, one should not forget that “embrace” can be a bear-hug (of which the less numerous groups are afraid). But we reject a Bosnia and Herzegovina without a perspective (future). In addition it will be necessary to nurture a consciousness of belonging to Bosnia and Herzegovina as a common state.

For those who dreamed of an Islamic, Orthodox, or Catholic Bosnia and Herzegovina the postwar concept of religious pluralism, free expression of religious
convictions, calls for tolerance of religious differences are a bitter pill which they have to swallow. They were the ones who were the greatest obstacle to the return of “others” to the territory which they had to leave. And those who remained were reduced to the status of a marginalized social group.

Without the development of essential elements of political culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina it will be impossible to nurture tolerance, coexistence, and to promote an open society. Building common values in a multireligious and multinational situation is the precondition for the creation of an open society. The essence of such a society must be and remain pluralism (political, national, religious, and cultural). Pluralism means that one cannot negate, destroy, or drive out “others” from Bosnia and Herzegovina. It would be catastrophic if its nations and religions would regard open society as an enemy that should be resisted.

In regard to the role of religion in war one must raise the question whether the universal religions in Bosnia and Herzegovina became religions of conflict. To answer this question one must observe two basic processes that took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina. On one side came the development which continues currently, which is the nationalization of religion and of God (especially during the war) while on the other hand there was the sacralization and religionization of the nation. During such processes there was the increase of religious self-identification, although it may not mean much for the evaluation of the state of general religiosity which had become socially desirable.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina Catholics and Orthodox, and to a degree Muslims are more under the influence of the ecclesiastical institution rather than the religious spirit of Christianity or Islam. This resulted in a “churchly religiosity.” Religious plurality in the war resulted in the religions and confessions creating their own institutions for the social and political life of its adherents. These institutions served for the defense not only of the religious but also national and ethnic status of the community.

Religion seemed to be during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina a stimulus of religious and ethnic conflicts, intolerance, and even the development of religious fanaticism and atrocities. The role of religion (and confession) in the national
development of Boshniaks, Croats, and Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina provided a chance for its (ab)use in the war. This contributed to the impression that the war was a religious war. Although one cannot say that it was a religious war, it is hard to negate that all three religious communities (Islamic, Orthodox and Catholic) in one way or another became participants in the war. A fairly large number of believing fighters did not only carry national but also religious symbols on their military uniforms, because they believed that they were defending not only their national but also their religious interests.

Boshniaks, Croats, and Serbs identify themselves on the basis of religion, culture, and today even by language, but their differences are not very clear (except the religious difference between Christians and Muslims). In Bosnia and Herzegovina the national borderline between Boshniaks, Croats, and Serbs are identical with the religious borderlines. Generally in these universal religions, there are Muslims, Orthodox, and Catholics who belong to entirely different national and ethnic groups. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, however, national differentiation continues the religious differentiation that preceded it.

It is well known that religion can be one of the elements of collective identity of a people. When an ethnic and religious group experiences a crisis then it leads to the strengthening of a collective identity by which it tries to control its own fate. In a war which takes place in a multireligious situation, religions become even more a means, an instrument for maintaining and strengthening of solidarity of the different religious and ethnic communities. They become completely an element of collective awareness. Thus religions in Bosnia and Herzegovina became the means of preserving national distinctiveness, political independence, and identity. Under the motto of defending the right to their religion national leaders under girded the motivation for war among their own ethnos and their own religion. National leaders of all three national parties (the Muslim “Stranka Demokratske Akcije” (SDA), the Serbian Democratic Party, “Srpska Demokratska Stranka” (SDS), and “Croatian Democratic Community,” Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica (HDZ)) did so in order to legitimize their politics and maintenance of communication with the masses.
Ideologized and politicized religion can be detected in socio-political relations whose followers are a marginal social group. For over forty years confessions (churches) were not only a community of believers but also a form of expressing opposition to the ruling elite and political system which they defined as “Godless.” In that system it was the only institution with explicit national values, language, and script. In the new system a rehabilitation of the role of religion, especially in the lives of half-urbanized people, seems to have taken place. Namely, the rural population even in the previous (Communist) system did not deny its religious identification, baptism, circumcision, religious weddings, observance of religious holy days, etc. Therefore one should not be surprised by the high degree of religious identification during the war and post-war years. Social status depended on which ethnicity and religion one belongs to or does not belong, whose national party holds or does not hold power on a given territory. If you do not belong to the “dominant” ethnos or religion you remain in the “they” group. It is a specific form of violence over people. But the status of religion can also cause negative results; part of the population may see in religion an easier path for personal social affirmation and promotion rather than a devotion to God. Thus, it is a question of 'believing' in order to adjust to contemporary conditions and not because of the “other world.”

Many authors agree with the conclusion that religions and denominations played a significant role in the disintegration of “socialism.” Such a conclusion can also be made about the role of religion and denominations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They were allies and supporters of marginal groups in their struggle to destroy the “Godless” system. This beckons us to return to the question about the relationship of politics and religion, and politics and denominations in war. According to some, religion should assist in solving political and general crises that culminate in war, especially in the struggle for human rights. For others, avoidance of such an engagement (under the justification of noninvolvement in politics) means running away from responsibility for solving social conflicts, even if they take on an ethnic or confessional characteristic. “Politics always makes astonishing partnerships, especially when it is mixed with religion.” (Cox, 1994). And religions seem to deteriorate into a political ideology, a special religiously tainted
ideology of a nationalistic party. A segment of the religious leadership contributed to this process. What contributed to such a behavior on the part of some clergy? During the period of socialism the clergy were a marginalized social and cultural group which now saw a chance for inclusion into social and political life.

Therefore, there is no doubt that in war religion and “national” politics influenced each other. The national (and a part of the religious) leadership interpreted politics as a supreme goal. Therefore “our” fate was in God’s hands, “God is with us.” Religious values in the war took on a crucial role in the development of various, especially cultural and political, institutions among all three peoples. Religion justified the death of those who were killed so the ethnicity would live. It is unlikely that religion will “withdraw” from politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina because of its ties with the national identity and national culture.

In the war it became evident how the ruling ideology moved from secular to religious values. Religion and confession became one of the pillars of society (along with the judiciary, army, and police). This is noticeable by its presence in the media, by the frequent call upon God by politicians, with the increasing practice that every tavern, shop, and police station, has to be blessed, sprinkled with “holy water” by a priest. The government established its “new” model of relationship with religion more to instrumentalize it and show them as “allies,” rather than to enable the expression of genuine religious feelings by citizens. In the process of revitalization of religion under war conditions, tolerance and interreligious dialogue weakened. If a religious institution identified itself with the state, then other religions were considered as destabilizing and distrust toward them increased. Elements of such distrust could be evidenced by two of the three religions in the territory which the three “ethnic armies” held. On that basis the motivation grew for participation in the war but often one obtained the support of “unbelievers” because of the feeling of peril by their religion. And therefore, “there is no peace among nations until there is peace among religions,” as Hans Kueng wrote. Dialogue and tolerance are indispensable in societies that are ethnically, religiously, culturally diverse. The return of tolerance is necessary for the survival of both the
ethnicity and religion on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Will this necessitate the removal (at least partial) of religious institutions from political life? Namely a question is being raised, could tolerance develop while religious institutions participated in the conflictual political life, such as it was during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

Did the war lead to increase in religiosity? Such a conclusion is suggested by an increase in the number of declared believers, upsurge in religious practices, the increased influence of religion and denominations upon everyday life. The credibility of religion and religious institutions was amplified; their political role is no longer marginal.

In a war that takes place in a multireligious area revitalization of religion takes place with an obligatory intermingling of the religious with the national and vice versa. One may expect that the process of revitalization of religion in Bosnia and Herzegovina will go on also in the future “hand in had” with the revitalization of nationalism. Instrumentalized, nationalized religions in this process may lead religiosity into conservatism, a somewhat unexpected result.

Revitalization of religion cannot be reduced only to the enlivening of traditional religion, but also upon its political influence. Return to Islam, Catholicism, and Orthodoxy in Bosnia and Herzegovina had and continues to have an impact upon the political life of the adherents of these three religions. “Are we witnessing a real rebirth of traditional religion or is the new religious wave the child of mass media . . . is this more than a cynical misuse of religion for alien goals? If it is a genuine spiritual renewal, why does it take on such an aggressive political aim?” (Cox, 1994).

Later researchers will need to establish for whom and why did it become an advantage to substitute various religious terms during the war instead of “victims” and “aggressors?” The role that politics played in the election of the Islamic leadership during war between Islam and Christianity cannot be presented in this study because of limited space. Of course, it would be erroneous, on the basis of this, to represent Islam as a religion of killing, plunder, and blood. We hope that in this work we showed that those authors who wrote and continue to write about the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, seeing only the “misuse” of Islam, while not seeing it likewise by Christianity (Catholicism
and Orthodoxy) under conditions of war have not done the right thing.

Also unacceptable is the dogmatic position which takes as its starting point the fact that a number of Christians converted to Islam, and then asserts that the process of conversion which lasted several centuries and resulted in their changed religious identity has now become a permanent obstacle to coexistence with them. They asserted that Boshniaks are fickle and caused the interconfessional strife. Obviously a part of the problem is due to misunderstanding of Islam by those who were raised in a Christian environment. Namely, Islam, in distinction from Christianity, was never a “private matter” in the European sense of religion as a “private matter,” although in Bosnia and Herzegovina among adherents of Islam such an awareness was also increasing.

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina confirmed the accuracy of the thesis by Valis/Bruse “The more a religion is socially more peripheral and culturally different the more likely it is that this religion will focus upon resistance, especially when the language no longer assures the basis of their cultural difference.”

Huntington’s concept, according to which belonging to a certain civilization and the influence of religious positions become the precondition of the development of society (they support development or cause stagnation), is applicable to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Belonging to various civilizations, “essential differences,” seem to become the dominant cause of social conflicts. And, an “essential” element in civilizations are the “great” world religions (Samuel Huntington). This process will be followed by strong conflicts in places where the state, ethnicity, and religion are coincidental. In Bosnia and Herzegovina it is necessary to develop the consciousness that on its territory linguistic, ethnic, religious, and cultural mosaic was created, a mingling, a mixture took place which is almost impossible to undo. Even if here a “collision” of cultures and civilizations took place, it, as Karl Popper would say, does not have to lead to bloody fights and wars, but can become the source of fruitful and resourceful development.

The history of Bosnia and Herzegovina teaches us that on this land there were intense struggles which took place under the mantle of religion and religious institutions. Among them were the inquisitional attacks, the persecution of the followers of the
Bosnian Church, a conflict between “the cross and crescent” (as it was described in folk poetry), the struggle for “\textit{din},” wars between adherents of different Christian churches, etc. One may say that war conflicts that were led under the religious mantle always played a noticeable role in the lands of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Divisions according to religious adherence (Catholic-Orthodox-Islamic) and the role of religion in the national affirmation of all three peoples became the characteristic of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was honorable to give even one’s life for religion.

Often the resistance to alien cultures and models of behavior that originated in these cultures took on the guise of religious struggle and fanaticism. In such cases they were expressed in aggressive or defensive social rather than religious feelings by followers of some religion. This led many authors to conclude that religion and confession here was some obstacle for the creation of one nation, and later an obstacle for a life alongside each other. The future of these relationships will depend whether religious and confessional adherence becomes a private matter or whether it will, like a totem, become a mark, a sign of ethnic differentiation.

What was the epilogue of the war? Catholicism moved toward the West, Orthodoxy toward the East. In between even more than before a third, Islamic mentality affirmed itself, which has—the war showed this—became unwanted by the other two.

Under such conditions it is hard to figure out what will be the development of religiosity in Bosnia and Herzegovina, not so much a problem that a sociologist would become a prophet, but because of the situation created by the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and among the religions in this area. One can suppose that the institutional participation of religion in political life will be increased, which will lead to favorization of certain religions by the state, which will be lethal for the restoration of a multireligious society and lead to the repetition of conflict between religions and ethnicities. Instead, it is indispensable to develop equality and tolerance and to nurture and maintain differences.

Translated from Croatian by Paul Mojzes