

Editorial Note

Regardless of the religious context, the domain of theology forms a discursive territory whose independence or interdependence in relation to secular institutions has been a matter of constant controversy. The contributions to this issue of *Temenos* discuss distinctions between the realms of the religious and the secular, the spiritual and the temporal, in four contexts: in 16th and 17th-century Europe, in 20th and 21st-century nation-building among the Sámi, among religious agencies in the Nordic Lutheran Churches, and in the academic sphere in the Czech Republic.

Craig Martin questions the view according to which the distinction between the private and the public sphere was a modern, European invention that served to reorder European society in new and unique ways. He argues that this distinction did not create a privatized religion, nor did it separate, segregate, or insulate the state from religion, but had the effect of masking the circulation of power from one institution to the other. Scrutinizing writings from Luther to Locke, the author challenges the origin myth of a separation, instigated by modernity, between religion and politics. According to Martin, there was in fact no separation or bifurcation between Christian institutions and state institutions; it was the 'two spheres' discourse that made it appear as if there had been one.

Siv Ellen Kraft looks at the indigenous turn that has taken place among the Norwegian Sámi, and at its religious implications. Making use of critical discourse theory, she observes expressions of indigenous spirituality – “the pre-Christian Sámi religion” – in public documents and in diverse cultural sources and analyzes the role of religious components in the construction of the Sámi national homeland. Interestingly, she argues that “much like the ‘God’ of U.S. civil religion, ‘nature spirituality’ is wrapped in positive connotations, and is in addition so indistinct that it conflicts neither with Christian orientations nor with secular ones”.

In their joint article, Anna Birgitta Pessi, Olav Helge Angell and Per Pettersen discuss the common ground between the public authorities and the Lutheran majority churches in Finland, Norway and Sweden as welfare providers. The data for their contribution are derived from the findings of the European research project WREP. Referring to the 'two kingdoms' doctrine of Lutheran theology, the authors argue that Church-based welfare organisations in the Nordic countries – despite both similarities and differences between them – have adopted various complementary and supplementary roles in providing not only services but also symbolic functions,

such as life crisis rituals and rites of passage for individuals and members of the society at large.

Tomáš Bubík provides a case analysis covering almost a century, from the 1920s to the present, concerning the perennial insider/outsider issue and its rhetoric in the academic study of religion. The 1920s in the newly independent Czechoslovakia witnessed three major research approaches to the construction of *Religionswissenschaft* as a new discipline and to defining its goals: the Positivist, the Catholic, and the Protestant. The 1950s saw the rise of a Marxist-Leninist approach, which gradually paved the way towards the formation of a secular science and a non-religious attitude toward the study of religion in today's Czech Republic.

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