Religion has a special place inside the culture, and by its meaning and signification, it very often took, in smaller or greater degree, a dominant position. If the culture is defined as the way of life of one community or society, and if religion in that community or society has the main position, one can conclude that religion significantly defines the way of life for the people who live in that society. During Serbian history, religion has always colored everyday life, although the intensity of that relation was different through time. The relationship of faith and the nation is dedicated to its inheritance, so their division is a complete utopia. That which is religious and that which is national can easily take the place of one another, especially if nationality is not determined enough or confirmed, so that it leans on the religious identity or arises from it.

National culture can’t be separated from the nation, and it doesn’t have an equal meaning in each period of the national history, neither on the whole territory on which the nation lives. Serbs have always been living in numerous territories, more or less connected or separated. Therefore it is difficult to talk about a unique national culture of Serbs,
because they accepted the elements of the cultures of the territories in which they lived, more or less, and kept their national ones too.

The culture of the Serbs in Vojvodina, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Croatia has numerous different and sometimes opposite models. From all the facts that determine nationality, particularly for the Balkans, religion is one of the most crucial. It means affiliation to certain cultural circles: the Western (Central-European or Mediterranean-Latin), the Eastern (Byzantine and Slavic-Orthodox), Islamic.

In the circles where there is a developed tradition of laicization, which is not the case for those territories in which the Serbs live, the question of religious affiliation loses national character in its narrow sense, and enters into the district of human rights. The relations between faith and nation differ from those between religion and state or state and nation. Since the national and religious picture of Balkans is a very complex one, it is not easy to generalize or reduce it to the models familiar to Europe, which are derived from its own experience.

While Serbia was under the Turkish government, one could not speak about the national culture, but only about some forms of the folk culture that sometimes met with the humanistic one, either domestic or foreign, through the clergymen or rare educated people of that time. In the part that has been under Austria-Hungary, culture and politics have mutually supported one another as well as opposed to each other. Determination for some cultural project often expressed the impossibility for political action in the true meaning of that word.

In the 19th century, nation-states were created and confirmed, so separate national cultures were formed. Their development depended, besides other things, on the unity of a nation and the fact of whether or not the nation had its own country. Religion had an integrative role.

Institutions based on national or state grounds help different cultural creations to unite. They directed the national culture towards the needs of the nation or the nation-state and harmonized with them. National history, together with national religion and literature, explored and described the past of the state-nation, glorified patriotism and encouraged members of the nation for their new acts.

Cultural acts could be politicized in a special way, so national cultures became marked by those politics. Culture became only a means in the hands