

I. TEOLOGIA W PERSPEKTYWIE EKUMENII

Studia Oecumenica 10
Opole 2010

DOMINIK KUBICKI
Poznań – Koszalin

INSPIRATIONS AND CHALLENGES IN PRACTISING THEOLOGY IN POLAND AS A POST-COMMUNIST AND EU MEMBER COUNTRY

It seems that after more than twenty years since the fall of the Communist regime and proclamation of political, ideological and socio-economical transformation in the Soviet Union there has come the time for theologians in Central Europe to reflect upon the problem of interaction between Church community and lay societies. The reality of human collectivities of the beginning of the 21st century does not resemble any other situation in history, even despite the apparent similar or identical intellectual or social issues to those occurring in the past in different social and national environments, among which there were consumerism, hedonism or sexual libertinism of the European West. By no means is it possible to overlook the fact that the World War II caused tremendous demographic, material and moral losses in Europe – the Holocaust in an unprecedented way agitated the hierarchy of moral values and annihilated the previous ethical order. According to the prevailing belief, within merely several years after the end of war, Europe also irretrievably lost its global economical and political hegemony, just as the dominant European countries lost their colonies. For nearly half of a century Europe was divided by the Iron Curtain¹, and after the year 1945 the

¹ Surely, there appear questions of responsibility for the condition of ideological division of European nations into hostile to one another political and military camps, aimed at the politicians and national representatives of the so-called Anti-Hitlerist Coalition, and at the same time for sen-

course of the river Elbe constituted the border between different socio-economic and political systems, leaving those pluralist and democratic ones on its western side and the totalitarian ones on the other (to put it simply).

Even though some in-depth and multi-layer analysis of the still burning issue of Communist regime and its downfall might be considered vital to conduct, it is undoubtedly too soon to even attempt at a more profound and complex reflection through which it would be possible to definitely and unequivocally determine the reasons of the collapse of Communism and its formal termination in the Soviet Union in the year 1991 as a specific consequence of the socio-political transformation within the societies of both Eastern and Central Europe². Still, it is necessary to reflect upon the social system transformation in the context of overcoming the post-ideological heritage and shaping the contemporary reality, as it is the human community with the human being as its constitutive part standing as their object. Some thought on this matter ought to be given also on the part of theology itself, since as Christians we do not believe in the Church, but rather we believe [in the Risen Lord]as the Church, the community of Christ's disciples immersed in the realm of unique moments of human fleeting existence, of their coming to life and their history, who in the shape of particular believing subjects reacting morally to the previously experienced God's love, read the *Word* appealing in the present reality of human societies. The focal point of the theological reflection would thus be not only an objective outlook on the post-communist and post-ideological reality constituting the background to the lives and actions of believing communities, in which individual human beings by realizing their vocation contribute to shaping the moral principles and conduct of social communities as well as their stance towards moral challenges of the contemporary times. It would rather be about a reflection upon the possibility of fuller participation of the Church faith communities, especially the Catholic Church in Poland, in the process of shaping the present of Poland as a member country of the European Union. Therefore, some support would necessarily be given to the national effort made on the way to European integration in the context of globalization, together with the indispensable focus on overcoming social and moral consequences of Marxist indoctrination, especially in the effort to create a moral culture of public life that would also be consistent with the nation's own traditions. All in all, on the part of single believers and whole believing societies, it would not be about passive acceptance of transformation and indifferent standing aside the contemporary social events. And since the ecclesial commu-

tencing some societies by others to sticking in civilizational backwardness and the totalitarian Communist system. They are, however, unlikely to be raised without regulating the more current affairs, that is the present political, cultural and economic integration of the EU member countries.

² It is now known that, for example, in the 1960s any hopes for civilising the Communist system were already given up.

nities of faith as local communities of believers both reside within and are a part of this social history, it is understandable that they feel, or at least ought to feel, that it is their moral obligation to overpower the existing state of events among contemporary human communities through their personal address to the Gospel message in its call to exceed moral mediocrity³.

1. Civilizational ‘youthfulness’ of Central and Eastern European societies. Transformation- and integration-related challenges of the globalized contemporaneity

It is fully understandable that after the decay of the 20th century ideologies, especially the rejection of Communism by the Central and Eastern European societies, the hopes and expectations of those post-communist nations lied in democracy, created essentially by the Western European countries⁴. Hence, even though the already started stage of mutual and communal (institutional, political, economical, scientific and cultural) integration of the 27 member countries of the European Union gives hope that some inter-European stability could be reached and some continental political and cultural (and other)⁵ structures could be formed, the project of European integration and community of national societies could still be threatened by the existing and factual diversity of particular national communities⁶. Some of them have managed to achieve strong state

³ It should be taken into consideration that the answer of faith to the Christian message from a believing human subject creates a moral tension, in result of which there appear changes in the public sphere as his or her living space.

⁴ Of course, there appear a question: what should parliamentary democracy be? Cf. G. SARTORI, *Teoria demokracji*, translated by P. Amsterdamski and D. Grinberg, Warszawa 1998. [G. SARTORI, *The Theory of Democracy Revisited*, Chatham 1987]. For it is also known that the liberal democratic system of the Western Europe does not and actually cannot constitute (an independent of the cultural development of human communities) pattern of conduct for both the whole societies and single human subjects.

⁵ It is in a way understandable that Eastern European democracies are being corrected by the Western ones. There appears a danger, however, that democracy could become a tool for realising the business of strong Western lobbies in relation to (structurally or politically etc.) weaker Eastern European societies and their government or parliamentary representatives. According to the basic stipulations of democracy, the opinions and affairs of the Central and Eastern European countries should be treated as equally important to those of the Western European ones. Cf. T. BUKSIŃSKI, *Wyzwania globalizacji wobec Europy środkowowschodniej*, [in:] *Kraje Europy Środkowowschodniej a globalizacja*, J. JAKUBOWSKI, A. WAWRZYNOWICZ (eds.), Poznań 2005, 48.

⁶ Civilizational backwardness of the Central and Eastern European societies does not constitute a mere Communist heritage or socio-economic and cultural post-communist consequences. From the 18th century, when Western Europe underwent an intensive industrialization, the Central European countries remained socio-economically and politically behind with respect to

apparatus and organization based on parliamentary democracy, others such as (amongst others) post-communist and post-totalitarian countries seem to be undergoing a prolonged process of democracy- and civic awareness shaping due to the necessity to overpower post-communist structures in their own national communities regarding their state organization first, as well as to at least neutralize the forbore dominant ideology, still present in the mindset of those societies and reflecting the Communist socio-economic, political and cultural order⁷.

A challenge to all societies of the still integrating Europe is undoubtedly the re-shaping of human communities into information societies by means of technical and technological revolution in the advent of the information era. Surely, in this respect the opportunities appear to be lesser in the case of both the post-communist and post-totalitarian societies. And although it would seem that when it comes to the post-communist societies the fundamental problem should prove the economic transformation and privatization of the national property⁸ aiming at the development of a mature market economy⁹, and only then the economical

their western counterparts. The fundamental moral issue is then the question of responsibility of the dominant, historically and socio-economically well-developed countries for the above state of events.

⁷ Civilizational backwardness of Central and Eastern Europe in comparison to Western Europe is an indisputable fact, which manifests itself in many domains of the public life and economic activity. It stems from the historical events which more often than not did not even depend on the nations or ethnic groups they concerned. Cf. T. BUKSIŃSKI, *Między jednością polityczną a wielością etniczną w Europie Środkowej i Wschodniej, Sprawy Wschodnie* 1-2(2006), 135-156. So, with respect to the unquestionable fact of experiencing similar to Western Europe stages of historical development, should the Central and Eastern European states not be recognized rather as civilizationally younger than backward? Cf. T. BUKSIŃSKI, *Wyzwania globalizacji wobec Europy środkowowschodniej*, 44-45. Still, it seems that in some ways it is possible to follow the footsteps of the more civilized, dominating countries. Is it not so that the societies of the post-communist countries would not have to go through all the arduous stages of information revolution but still reach for its civilizational blessings? Is it not so that they can make use of the rich enough political and economic experience of the so-called economically well-developed Western European and American countries? Should they not try to positively make use of their mental backwardness towards the ideologies popularised in the West? Could we, in turn, consider this mental backwardness to be in fact salutary, as the societies of Central and Eastern Europe are not yet experiencing such havoc as is present in the Western European countries due to the existence of extreme liberalism or other ideologies (e.g. anti religious or religious fanaticisms)? Still, are the societies of the post-communist countries in a strong enough moral condition to face all the problems of civilizational backwardness if it was strained so much by an almost half-century-long struggle with the totalitarian ideology and is therefore undoubtedly marked with the ideological chaos?

⁸ Managed by a centralised party system. It has to be born in mind that Stalin's "philosophy" of power was based on the superiority of general aims over individual ones and reduction of a "private" human being to an infamous *wintik* (lit. a small screw) in the state apparatus.

⁹ It seems that the attention of the post-communist governments focused on the economic issues due to their fundamental meaning to all of the citizens. Still, the processes and phenomena involved in that particular domain are not yet fully described. Industrial production, trade, con-

and socio-political issues, the most crucial matter still seems to be the problem of shaping (ideologically, axiologically and ethically) mature society members – responsible for the society and together supporting its transformation into a society of the information era¹⁰. Not only would it then be about their free operating in the structures of civil society and law-observing state, but most importantly about their creative activity stemming from moral independence. However, this aspect brings to light the issue of reciprocal dependence between material goods and the possibility for a single human being, who is a part of a particular society and has enough of a moral strength, to every time break away from the imagery and opinions fed to them by that very society through the mass media, to function and creatively act independent of any social or local arrangements or pressures¹¹.

It is easily observable that the grounds of the two challenges that the post-communist countries are facing in their liberation from the Communist ideology and the totalitarian execution thereof as well as in the transition from the industrial to the information era overlap in the transformation of the mass media market¹². In addition, one cannot overlook the role played in the process by the free

sumption, management structures, character of the market and its institutions are but a few of the factors influencing the market economy. Cf. T. BUKSIŃSKI, *Wyzwania globalizacji wobec Europy środkowowschodniej*, 33-41.

¹⁰ Current stage of the European integration does not signify a mere indefinite socio-political ideal which would be to remain beyond its actual socio-political mapping. According to this ideal it means a transition from the industrial era to the information era, which would have to be undergone by particular EU countries and the whole European Union as a single integral entity as well. It is known that the economy and society of the information era are bound to concentrate around high technology. Biotechnology, advanced telecommunication, genetic engineering or nanotechnology are thought to become substitutes for industry and traditional agriculture. At the same time it is anticipated that informatization will influence the economy, the society and the daily life of an average human being. Its primary meaning, however, is said to lie in education, not in its general sense but as a means to transform information into knowledge. At the same time it shall be recognised that this new information era will mark a ruthless transition from physical labour towards mental work and as regards the market economy – it will begin the process of moving away from manufacturing industry and towards the development of the newly formed culture industry.

¹¹ It is known that material goods determine the behaviours and moral attitudes, and most of all they enable a creative development of a particular human subject, in a way being a guarantor or a stimulator of this personal development. Still, it sometimes happens that financial independence becomes a basis for bold moral attitudes, different from those shared by the community at large.

¹² To complete, after merely two decades after the fall of Communism and the collapse of the Soviet Union it is noticeable that the introduction of the market economy in the parallelly globalised world has not brought the anticipated effects either in Russia or in any other country which is undergoing a system transformation. Cf. J.E. STIGLITZ, *Globalizacja*, translated by H. Simbierowicz, Warszawa 2007, 21-36. [J.E. STIGLITZ, *Globalization and its Discontents*, New York 2002.]

market factor either¹³. Now, it does not seem that privatization of particular economic sectors could influence the society in such an overwhelming way or that it could polarize the public opinion the way the monopolization and government dependence of the mass media¹⁴ on the one hand and financing it by humongous western capital on the other once did. It is those very sectors with regard to which the fundamental question ought to be raised: namely, to what degree could the influence of information be considered a ruthless battle over the minds of human subjects forming whole societies, and to what extent is it an honest factor shaping members of civil societies?

One should bear in mind that on the one hand there is a struggle over economic and political influences through shaping the mindset of the entire communal morality by reaching out to its single human individuals¹⁵, and on the other, if the aim has been outlined and one wants to make it a mature society of the information era, it proves necessary to transform a particular community by transforming its member subjects¹⁶. That, in turn, constitutes a basic system challenge, for both Western Europe and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which also lets that community avoid the bleak prospect of becoming half periphery of the global world, where due to cheap workforce and mere logic of economy, an industry of simple products is sure to find its place and settle in¹⁷.

¹³ It is stated that irrespective of whether the privatised monopoly is more effective in the area of production, it definitely stays more effective in using its monopolistic position which is also reflected in the consumers' situation (cf. *Ibidem*, p. 64). For sure, the issue which requires a deeper and a more complex analysis is the ideology of privatization "at any price". Another problem is the way of using the only possibility to gain incommensurate income in the post-communist process of building a new economic structure by making state enterprises go bankrupt in order to enforce fast privatization. Cf. T. BUKSIŃSKI, *Wyzwania globalizacji wobec Europy Środkowoschodniej*, 40-41.

¹⁴ It pertains to the fact of using the gained power by particular groups for particular interests and disinformation of society and media manipulation of the audience.

¹⁵ It is about shaping consumerist mentality (to put it simply), in which a particular society becomes the subject of business and a means to achieving a satisfactory financial outcome for the companies producing consumer goods.

¹⁶ In relation to the post-communist (post-totalitarian) societies there also appears a task to overcome the remains of the totalitarian ideology.

¹⁷ It seems that both the economic and social bases of Communism had always been supported by heavy industry, kept on a relatively primitive level according to the Marxist idea that product's value is reflected by the amount of work its production requires. Modernization demands tactical moves, which means liquidation of traditional industry and agriculture, which as in the case of Poland are two of the main factors impeding development. It is also said that one of the reasons of the fall of Communism was its inability to cope with the challenges of the new stage of technological development, which seems to be introduction of high technology and the evolution of new fields of industry such as atomics, microelectronics, genetic engineering or computer science. They all require creative staff and institutionally and structurally suitable conditions for the creativity which is indispensable in inventing and creating new technologies. Isn't this re-

It thus seems that the fundamental issue here is the question of how to bring together and harmonize the rules of free market assuming the popularization of various media products in a society which requires some sort of a "self-transformation", thus a full revision of its previous mentality and esthetic inclinations, or even a radical break from its mental past as an ideological society, with a need or, better yet, a necessity to popularize ideas allowing for shaping a mature society of the information era in the highly globalized world, a necessity for the major part of a post-communist society to represent a certain level of self-development, initiative, entrepreneurship and organizational skills and at the same time to be self-restrained enough as to abide by various agreements or laws in order to compromise and acknowledge also the affairs of others. It is, therefore, a problem of how to reconcile the free market's attempts to propagate a wide variety of media products with the need to transform the mental heritage of the premodern era and the socialism of the post-ideological society.

Another kind of questions touch upon the consequences of lack of decom-munization processes. To what extent has forming a two- or a multi-party system become an instrument in the hands of various post-totalitarian lobbies? To what degree the formed democracy of post-communist societies, especially the newly-formed Polish democracy, has become a tool to achieving personal ideological goals by some cliquish post-totalitarian systems or groups, which shape their hybrid character by means of privatization? How big of a role do the media, owned by either newly-emergent individual transactors or European or global media concerns constitute a means to popularise fabricated information with the aim to ideologically shape the society making it dependent on the prevailing, propagated concepts and ideas, or to shape socially passive individuals so as to gain the possibility to freely construct their own ideologically inclined politics?

To sum up, as stated in the above arguments, in the advent of the 21st century the post-communist societies of the EU member countries in view of the intensifying EU integration and continental globalization have to, on the one hand,

quirement in a way contradictory to the ideological Communist contempt for the educated people considered to be reactionaries? The above seems then to indicate that the fundamental factor turns out to be the need for a mentality change so as to shape a responsible and mature information society. This, in turn, can be achieved through a transformation of the general public's mentality in accordance with a bigger appreciation for scientists and academics, artists and propagators of high culture. At the same time, in the reality of the western market economy, we should try to answer the following question: is it in the interest of the neighbour-states of the post-communist countries to care for the responsible competitiveness? It seems that it all depends on the aim that is to be achieved. Most likely, for the practical reasons, it is not, as the post-communist societies do not have sufficiently developed personnel and the economy is incapable of bearing anything else but production in the sectors of the so-called "dirty industry" (car and chemical industry). On the other hand, the answer to this question might also be a "definite yes" if the integration of the EU member states comes into play.

overcome the consequences of almost 50 years of Communist indoctrination, Sovietization and mind control practised by previous authorities, and on the other, they need to face the challenge of shaping a new reality of the integrated European Union. In this situation, however, they have to struggle to find their own place among other member countries. It can happen mainly through their parliamentary and governmental representatives and political elites, who unfortunately do not constitute or represent any new quality but seem to be immersed in both the nomenclature and distribution of power of the previous, Communist and totalitarian system as the decommunization of society or actual detotalitarianization¹⁸ of the authorities, which might influence economic and political future causing some potential social friction or development perturbation and gaining social justice as the necessary condition for the information society to emerge, are yet to be conducted.

In view of the above arguments, one of the biggest challenges for the nations currently undergoing system transformation is to develop (or form from scratch) a moral culture of public life, congruent with their own traditions¹⁹. That, in turn, is perfectly understandable since a society constitutes a sort of a human community composed of individual human subjects, immersed in and operating with in particular historical, social etc. circumstances. In this context the issues of, on the one hand, an individual's moral freedom, and on the other, moral culture of public life gain a very special meaning as there appears a possibility that the transformation processes in a particular society could cause social alienation of single individuals, which then due to social helplessness and inertia might result in the whole society being alienated from other nations.

¹⁸ This term functions here similarly to the expression "decommunization". As decommunization would mean a withdrawal of certain people involved in forming the Communist rule from the post-communist country's structures, detotalitarianization could mean a similar process as regards the state structures, thus eliminating totalitarian mechanisms which could socially, administratively, legally, etc. annihilate particular individuals – members of the national community.

¹⁹ The reason why stems from the immersion of the social organism (both in its mentality and functioning) in the totalitarian ideology. The post-communist remains (of the moral attitudes, mental and axiological inclinations etc.) are not neutral factors regarding the society. The paradigm of the Soviet totalitarianism, in its Marxist assumptions contradicting the importance of personal sources and aims, expressed itself in the realization of Communism by means of a number of platforms, where the protagonists were acknowledged social classes rather than individual people. In practice it meant that totalitarianism (both in its Soviet and Nazi versions) aimed at atomization of communities into fragmentary, isolated units, from which a new social entity was then created from scratch, thus absorbing the alienated, deprived of any social bonds human beings. To sum up, those societies of Central and Eastern Europe which went from the Nazi domination under the Soviet one were particularly mentally and axiologically stigmatized as fully subordinated to the totalitarian objectives.

2. Ecclesial faith communities in the face of globalization and integration challenges in shaping information society as the cultural context for scientific theology and the source of theological inspiration

In view of the outlined above challenge assuming transformation, integration and the development of information society²⁰, which all concern the Polish society, the most basic one for the Church communities to rise to is undoubtedly to assist or even to some extent stimulate this longed-for and desirable development of the Polish society, and the post-communist societies as such. Hence, the most important question is how the Church in its ecclesial faith communities of individual human subjects forming the society and the ecclesial hierarchy, especially through the work of theological reflection, scientific and academic practice of theologians associated with higher education centres, can inspire, creatively help and stimulate the necessary development of the Polish society in the context of system transformation and European integration of the EU member states. It is then about outlining a perspective of the new presence of the Catholic Church's faith communities in the reality of the European integration. At the same time it would be about a more objective look at both the post-communist and post-ideological heritage, and the mental and ideological proposal of the West with its uncompromising ideological attitudes²¹ as parts of a culture where exist communities of believers in which individual human beings by realizing their vocation contribute to shaping the moral principles and conduct of social communities as well as their stance towards moral challenges of the contemporary times. It is, thus, understandable that on the part of the believing ecclesial faith community there is a possibility of assistance to national efforts through moral attitudes of believers themselves, who by means of genuine faith (manifesting itself in different degrees depending on a particular faith community of course) would take up, realize and most of all project full understanding of God, His behaviour towards the world, the mankind and an individual human subject²². It is indeed a real, insufficiently used (as confirmed in the history of humanity and Christianity itself)

²⁰ We should also evoke and take into consideration the processes governing the globalization of human societies, which together with integration processes within the European countries undoubtedly pose new questions and form new contexts for the issues of the western Christianity and thus for the whole theology too.

²¹ One of the fundamental issues is the problem of the collapse of (Christian) faith, observable especially in the Western societies. Cf. D. KUBICKI, *Upadek masowej wiary w społecznościach Zachodu jako badawcze wyzwanie współczesności wobec filozofii religii i socjologii religii* (in print).

²² Cf. M.-D. CHENU, *Święty Tomasz z Akwinu i teologia [St. Thomas d'Aquin et la théologie]*, translated by A. Ziernicki and W. Szymona, Kraków 1997, 40. [M.-D. Chenu, *Aquinas and His Role in Theology*, translated by P. Philibert, Collegeville 2002]

power of the Christian message. Still, let us not try to deceive ourselves, as this very message constitutes an unattainable ideal in relation to which the realm of a particular contemporaneity and a particular stage of society development both cause a certain disillusionment and urge us not to count on making the society a longed-for ideal community.

There is no doubt that in order to achieve the above goals and state of events there is a need for appropriate clergymen guided by good quality²³ theology corresponding with the reality of the *Word*, revealing Itself in the history of mankind. It is a fundamental issue, complemented of course by the question of the ecclesial structures of hierarchical society as it proves necessary to simultaneously make appropriate modifications due to the close correlation and interdependence of both problems. Therefore, to what degree would it be necessary to give up the centralistic and feudalistic concept of local churches in favour of approaching the patristic pattern? To what extent could clericalization and juridization comply with the doctrines of Catholicism? And as the Church community is also a hierarchical one, an even more fundamental question ought to be posed: would it not be needed to transform the understanding of the Church faith communities' presence in those post-communist societies currently integrating with the EU member countries? Has the necessary transformation already taken place as regards the mentality of ecclesial hierarchs, bishops and parsons, and is it congruent with the system transformation and the prospect of changes which have occurred amongst human communities within the last 20 years?²⁴ Do we actual-

²³ Cf. D. KUBICKI, *Poszukiwania projektu teologii opartej na realizmie Słowa objawionego w dziejach*, Poznań 2004.

²⁴ One should bear in mind the geopolitical situation of Poland up to the year 1989. The Church in Poland in a way could not draw from the outcomes of the *Vaticanum Secundum*, the changes within theology assuming a new vision of the Church's place in the modern world. The Church in Poland was not fully prepared for it, nor was it yet mature enough to embrace those changes, mainly due to two reasons: the first is that during the last centuries, especially during the partitions of Poland, the Polish nation was not given a chance to freely and intensively develop their own material and spiritual culture, including theology, the very chance which at the same time led the European West to thrive; the second reason is connected to the Polish nation's struggle just to survive rather than to work on creating a completely new reality in the times of socialism (which was continuously happening between the years 1944 and 1989 when Poland underwent a political and structural transformation preparing itself to become a member of the European Community). Under the circumstances of struggle with the Communism it was extremely difficult for the Church and its believing subjects to even dream about a live, pluralistic theological thought, when what was really needed was uniformity and monolithic order arrangement. An ideal response to this situation proved to be a neoscholastic concept of theology with its vision of the Church as centralised around the regulations of the Church's Magisterium. It was the *magisterium* of the Church in Poland that entered into dialogue with the political and administrative Polish authorities and it seems logical that the Polish theology could not become an apologetic propagation of not only the decisions of the Conference of the Polish Episcopate but also the papal and universal

ly have ecclesial hierarchs who could cope with the present challenges of European integration? Or maybe they are rather delaying or impeding transformation in the Church so that the *Word* could to Its fullest reverberate amongst human communities and cause their growth and maturity?

The above questions should be understood in the sense of *Vaticanum Secundum* with *aggiornamento* of the Catholic Church towards contemporary human societies together with an updated vision of Christian presence and the realization of the Gospel message by members of local faith communities of the Church of Christ²⁵. The question here would be about the functioning of local churches as hierarchical communities and whether they have actually become more of faith communities than hierarchical ones. Has the ecclesial mentality, referring to obedience in faith changed in any way? Has the laity found its place in the ecclesial community? To what extent do the laymen feel responsible for the faith communities they are members of? Generally, all the above questions comprise problems concerning progress of culture and civilization in Church mentality, as it is widely known that we now need priests who are dedicated to the ministry of the *Word* and *Eucharist* more than parish administrators or hierarchical dispensers of the sacraments.

It is easy to notice that the above issues are closely connected to the problem of personnel policy in the Catholic Church, especially in the ecclesial hierarchy. Of course, the previous personnel policy was determined by the totalitarian and Communist system. That is why the currently fundamental issue is the present model of personnel policy in the ecclesial society of the Church in Poland. Would it not be more beneficial for some faith communities of local churches, especially those without strong ecclesial traditions, to retain a uniform line of personnel policy and clear criteria concerning promotion to hierarchical church positions, awarded according to the opinion and judgement of the ecclesial community of a particular diocesan when it comes to both the laity and the local clergy?

It proves necessary to have a closer, critical look at the procedure of promotion of the "deserved" hierarchs to the episcopal sees as well as of assigning them to better-paid bishoprics or archbishoprics (metropolies). Does this very procedure of ecclesial promotions not seem to, in a ruthless way, actually do more dam-

Church's teaching. Meanwhile, from the 1990s due to the changing geopolitical situation of both Poland and the whole Europe, the concept of neo-scholasticism suddenly became useless, or not very useful to say the least. Cf. D. KUBICKI, *Poszukiwania projektu teologii katolickiej opartej na realizmie Słowa objawionego w dziejach*, 10-11.

²⁵ Surely, the opportunities of Polish theologians and philosophers after the year 1944 could not compare to those of the Christian intellectuals of Western Europe, not only as regards the war casualties or political purges conducted by both The Third Reich and the Soviet Union, but also when it came to an untrammelled creative dialogue in the theological, philosophical and humanistic societies together with the access to the scientific works of the Western universities and centres of learning.

age than good to the diocesan church communities? Does it not radically limit the number of candidates, possibly eliminating the really talented, theologically clever and ardently pious priests? Still, the fundamental question that should be posed in view of this custom is enclosed in the issue of whether it does not constitute an inevitable consequence and yet for centuries overlooked flaw of the hierarchical society of the Catholic Church, which in its hierarchical members, in the operating for centuries post-Constantine Church (to put it simply), valued obedience more than true faith or ardent commitment? Have some of the local faith communities of the Church not been done irreversible damage, caused in certain dioceses by the mentality and management methods of those nominated on merit or by means of fixed promotion from a less to a more notable episcopal see? Does the community of faith of the Catholic Church not create its own tradition of faith and is it not the role of a bishop to function as an evangelical *gardener*, who through his truly ardent faith and official charism should release and evoke in people a further and more abundant growth of fruit of faith and piety, rather than try to introduce external schemes to his diocese, disregarding the community's ardour of faith and decreeing foreign forms of devotion which shatter the local fervour of faith? Is it morally just to selectively award and irresponsibly distribute diocesan offices, ignore talented priests when it comes to suitable promotions, beneficial for a particular local church's society, and in result imprudently contribute to the growth of those intellectually mediocre or average, morally vague and indeterminate, seemingly obedient to the bishop's will but in reality, having managed to succeed to the parson's office and accumulate local power, turning out to be arrogant and unrighteous²⁶? Do all of the above statements not stand for a sign of intellectual poverty, especially when the "bishop's" way of conduct is emulated by parsons, who then treat parochial communities as lifeless objects subjected to their (spiritual) power of giving the sacraments?

The problem which seems to overlap the above, systemic or occasional wasting of valuable vocation or the phenomenon of wasting creative powers on not so well-considered or needed pastoral assignments, appears to be inherited from the previous reign of People's Republic of Poland and not to have ceased to exist in the post-communist Polish society either. Therefore, if the decommunization process has not been complete or integrally conducted, then, as is typical of the nature of totalitarian systems, whether it happens intentionally or not, it is those creative and independent individuals who become eliminated, whilst those (intellectually) average and morally insipid ones are being promoted to higher offices in a particular hierarchical community. However, is it truly only a mere remnant of the post-communist mentality and personnel selection, shaped when the totalitarian rule constituted the system of an all-embracing power? Does it not man-

²⁶ Cf. D. KUBICKI, *Uboga wdowa jako znak dla świata*, „Homo Dei” 3 (2003), 74.

ifest itself that in this indeterminate source of eliminating valuable priests from their ecclesial places of theological and pastoral or scientific service lies the actual consequence of the ruthless struggle between the Soviet regime and the Catholic Church in the societies of Central and Eastern Europe²⁷, induced by the Marxist and Leninist ideology, connected by means of a multidimensional web of dependencies to the Moscow's centre of political power?

The tragedy of cooperation of certain Church members with the secret police of the totalitarian system has not yet been fully resolved. It still has not been univocally determined whether the sometimes desolate condition of the hierarchical Church society is not caused by some previous manipulation as regards the ecclesial careers or some undefined revenge from those fiercely fighting with the Catholic Church and the Christian faith in the Risen Lord. Why in the post-ideological reality would they not use the opportunity to contribute to a certain disorder in those communities by exploiting some clergymen's appetite for ecclesial honours or skilfully reinforce their human weaknesses in order to marginalize others – those moral and intellectually creative ones, especially if they had the power to indirectly influence and manipulate the personnel policy?

These are all still up-to-date dilemmas which determine the moral attitudes of many realistically thinking individuals, in spite of more and more common opinions on the so-called "moral forgiveness". Undoubtedly, the above questions and currently unresolved issues will come back in the foreseeable future, both in the Polish society and the hierarchical community of the Catholic Church, when there appears a real demand for the development of the information society. A lack thereof will mark the degradation of the whole nation to the inferior rank of half periphery of Europe. Should that happen, it would not be possible any more to correct any of the decisions which shape and regulate the existence of the Church. It will be inevitable, however, to just face the consequences of the non-removed remains of the post-communist and post-totalitarian systems.

Even though the issue of personnel selection in the ecclesial hierarchy seems to remain an unsolved or an unsatisfactorily solved problem, the university theologians in their academic and didactic activity appear to be subject to promotion criteria which are clearer and more resembling the regulations of any EU member country. What still continues to be somewhat problematic, though, is the selection stage on the diocesan level and then the sending of candidates chosen from the local clergy to specialist studies. Quite an important issue when it comes to practising scientific theology seems to be the problem of suitable money endow-

²⁷ Of course, we need to distinguish here the unprecedented acts of genocide and elimination of intellectual elites and other ethnic and national communities (taking place mainly in the 1940s) which were carried out by the totalitarian Soviet and Nazi countries. One of the examples here could be the execution of local Polish elites in Palmiry (in April 1940).

ment (salary) for a priest-theologian²⁸. Do the insufficient financial means in view of the need to have an adequate theological workshop not constitute some sort of a discrimination against the parsons of the less well-off parishes? Is it not a parallel problem to the issue of privatization in the post-communist countries? Does this phenomenon not indicate that there has not taken place the necessary redirection of ecclesial communities to their presence in the post-totalitarian and post-communist reality and the era of European integration, all of which require a creative presence of all members of the Polish society? In consequence, does it not indirectly indicate that it is not so much the Church faith communities as its hierarchical structures that are not capable of shaping the information society or, in other words, are incapable of accepting the challenge which the Polish society is about to face and which is bound to determine its future?

We would not like to end the above reflection on a bad note with a negative conclusion. It is, however, understandable that it is the maturity and number of priestly vocations that the demand for theology depends on. Will the situation of decreasing number of vocations in the post-communist Polish society not influence the demand for theology? Will theologians find themselves on the verge of unemployment? Who are they going to teach and guide in times when we are facing such a dramatic drop in the number of priestly vocations? And if the attitudes of the hierarchy towards theologians do not change then who is going to want to commit to making a deep scientific reflection, which on top of that is lowly paid, and still remain an ardent mystic? On the other hand, the potential lack of theologians and their influence will undoubtedly change the moral and intellectual quality of the clergy and as a consequence also of the faith communities of local churches. Who is then going to help the post-communist society in surmounting the destructive, post-ideological heritage and shaping the moral culture of public life and interpersonal relations? The question is, therefore, whether we are to be a live and dynamic EU society or one of the societies of civilizational half peripheries²⁹.

²⁸ Finding solution to the above issues seems to be a necessity as there appears a dramatic decrease of priestly vocations, more noticeable when it comes to dioceses than the monastic vocations. Another problem is also homosexuality among the clergy, with the hierarchical institutional framework of the ecclesial community causing especially negative consequences as regards this depravation and moral dysfunction.

²⁹ Yet another dilemma is creating a live theology. In view of the irreversible changes to the Church in the western part of Europe (the phenomenon of mass decay of religious faith) and in the presence of forming the biggest Christian communities outside the continental Europe, the Church in Poland has to face a serious challenge of shaping a new theology which could meet the requirements of the modern times and continue the work of *Vaticanum Secundum*. D. KUBICKI, *Współczesność globalizujących się ludzkich społeczności wyzwaniem dla teologii katolickiej, a zwłaszcza teologii uprawianej w Polsce*, „Roczniki Teologii Dogmatycznej” 1(56) (2009), 171-194.

Inspiracje i wyzwania w uprawianiu teologii w środowisku polskim jako społeczności postkomunistycznej oraz państwa członkowskiego UE

Streszczenie

W odniesieniu do faktu odejścia społeczeństw Europy Środkowej i Wschodniej od komunizmu autor artykułu podejmuje refleksję nad wyzwaniami Kościoła i katolicyzmu oraz moralnymi zobowiązaniami eklezjalnych wspólnot wiary, wynikającymi z nowej sytuacji wszystkich społeczeństw integrującej się Europy po decyzji kierownictwa Związku Sowieckiego o likwidacji komunizmu w 1991 roku. Podstawowym wyzwaniem, przed jakim stają wspólnoty kościelne, okazuje się bowiem wspomoczenie i w pewnym zakresie stymulowanie oczekiwanego pożądanego rozwoju społeczeństwa polskiego – i w ogóle społeczeństw postkomunistycznych – wobec dokonującej się pogłębionej integracji państw członkowskich Unii Europejskiej w kontekście globalizującego się świata społeczności kontynentalnych. Społeczeństwa postkomunistyczne UE we współczesności początków XXI stulecia z jednej strony zmuszone są przezwyciężyć skutki podlegania jako społeczność prawie półwiecznej indoktrynacji ideologią komunistyczną, a także przełamania wpływów wykształconych dawnych struktur władzy i partyjnej nomenklatury, zaś z drugiej strony stają przed wyzwaniem kształtowania nowej rzeczywistości zintegrowanej UE. W takiej perspektywie autor podejmuje próbę nakreślenia odpowiedzi na postawione zapytanie – w czym Kościół w jego eklezjalnych wspólnotach wiary poszczególnych człowieczych podmiotów tkwiących w społeczności państwa oraz eklezjalnej hierarchii, a zwłaszcza poprzez dzieło refleksji teologicznej i praktykę naukowo-dydaktyczną ze strony środowiska teologicznego, związanego z ośrodkami uniwersyteckimi i uczelnianymi, może inspirować i twórczo wspomagać konieczny rozwój społeczeństwa polskiego – w warunkach transformacji ustrojowej oraz europejskiej integracji państw członkowskich UE. Powyższa kwestia stanowi bowiem historyczny przełom rozstrzygający o uzyskaniu praktycznego statusu żywego i dynamicznego społeczeństwa UE bądź społeczności cywilizacyjnej półprowincji.