

Postmodernism and Mission

An Attempt at Synthesis

Fr Bart Parys, SVD

M.A. thesis in missiology, 2011. English translation of the Polish original “Postmodernizm i misje. Próba syntezy”. Quotations from the documents of the Church are given in their official English translations; quotations from Polish-language scholarship in the translator’s rendering; bibliographical references retain their original form.

Abstract

This M.A. thesis examines the relationship between postmodernism and the Catholic theology of mission. Postmodernism is a multidimensional phenomenon embracing different fields of culture, human thought and everyday life. The thesis focuses on the presentation of postmodern philosophical assumptions with particular reference to theological thinking: human dignity, ethics, and the relationship to transcendent values.

The second chapter presents the development of the contemporary theology of mission in the Catholic Church, shaped by the great schools of missionary thought — Münster, Louvain, Burgos and the French school — and culminating in the Second Vatican Council, especially the Decree on the Church’s missionary activity *Ad Gentes*, a milestone in the understanding of the Church’s mission, later developed in *Evangelii nuntiandi*, *Redemptoris missio* and the rich reflection of contemporary theologians.

The presentation of the main assumptions of postmodernity and of the contemporary Catholic understanding of mission allows the third chapter to examine the attempts to conceive the Church’s mission in postmodern categories, and the challenges faced by a missionary working in a postmodern context. As the critical analysis demonstrates, it is not possible to carry out Catholic mission on postmodern assumptions: every such combination entails the loss of the identity of the Christian message handed on for centuries by the Church’s missionary work.

Introduction

Postmodernism, as a concept describing the contemporary age, is commonly employed across the different fields of human thought and culture, stretching from movements in architecture and literary currents to circles of philosophical thinking. Naturally, in recent decades this phenomenon has also become an object of interest for theology. Among the various theological disciplines, missiology too must carry out its own reflection on postmodernism, attempting to define missionary activity — its place and its understanding — in a postmodern world. Hence it seemed fitting to take up a study presenting the question: *Postmodernism and Mission. An*

Attempt at Synthesis, whose aim is to present the attempts undertaken so far to define the missionary activity of the Church: its conception and its location within the categories of postmodern thought.

To date, no studies have appeared which address the question outlined above. Within Polish missiology this subject remains, to this day, entirely unnoticed. The situation is somewhat better as regards English-language studies by European and American theologians; yet even in that milieu there are few works dealing directly with the relationship of the Church's Catholic missions to postmodernism. The only publication available to the author which takes up a related subject is the work of the Danish Lutheran theologian Jørgen Skov Sørensen, published in English under the title *Missiological Mutilations — Prospective Paralogies. Language and Power in Contemporary Mission Theory*. For obvious reasons it considers the question in the categories of Protestant theology, without taking into account Catholic theological thought, still less the documents of the Church's Magisterium in this field. Perceiving this lack, it seemed right to the author — as a member of a missionary religious congregation — to undertake scholarly reflection on this problematic and to present it from a Catholic perspective. A deepened reflection on the phenomenon of postmodern thinking in the context of missionary activity will without doubt be of great help in understanding the challenges and difficulties which the Church faces at the beginning of the twenty-first century, especially in the societies of Western culture.

In presenting the subject, the author has drawn on the work of theologians who have taken up this thematic, as well as on the documents of the *Magisterium Ecclesiae* concerning the question of mission issued in the second half of the twentieth century. Abundant use has also been made of English-language literature dealing with the realisation of theological thought — in particular questions touching the missionary mandate of the Church — in the postmodern context. Reference has likewise been made to the most recent documents of the Vatican dicasteries, which formed responses to the questions raised in this study as they arose within the Church.

The thesis employs an analytic-synthetic method. The key concepts and assumptions of postmodern philosophy will be subjected to analysis, as will the contemporary theological vision of the mission of the Catholic Church, presented in its development over the last century. A synthesis of the two positions will then be carried out, as it takes place in certain theological approaches which show how the key elements of the Church's Catholic missions are defined in postmodern thought.

The subject is presented in three chapters. The first chapter sets out the principal assumptions of postmodern thought, together with its conception of the human person, the person's ethical points of reference, and the relation to transcendent values. The second chapter presents the development of missiological thought over the past century, both pre-conciliar and post-conciliar, taking into account also the official documents of the *Magisterium Ecclesiae* relating to this question. The third chapter shows the ways in which missionary activity has been presented in the categories which govern postmodern thought. It also points to the responses of the Church's Magisterium, examining the fidelity of these attempts to the unchanging Tradition of the Church. The third chapter further takes up the most significant challenges facing a missionary working in a postmodern context — especially the problematic of his

ecclesial identity and of the manner of conducting missionary activity within the space of the new spirituality created by postmodern culture.

While endeavouring to present the subject undertaken here with all possible reliability, the author remains aware of the enormous diversity of approaches — both within postmodern thought and among the missiological attempts to present the Christian message in its categories — which cannot possibly be contained within a single scholarly dissertation.

Chapter I. A Characterisation of Postmodernism

Introduction

The phenomenon of postmodernism is a broad one, manifesting itself in a great many dimensions of human thought and culture, and carrying consequences in the concrete attitudes of contemporary people. It therefore seems necessary, at the outset of the present analysis of postmodernism, to indicate the framework within which it will proceed. The chapter below will present the genesis and the principal ideas of this current of thought as they are reflected in philosophical reflection, setting out its main assumptions. Those postmodern ideas will also be presented which can be counted among the points of interest it shares with theological reflection.

1. A General Characterisation of Postmodernism

Postmodernism as a phenomenon entered broader social consciousness several decades ago, though its genesis reaches back to the nineteenth century. The term *postmoderne*, describing this phenomenon, was first used by John Watkins Chapman around the year 1870¹, yet for a long time it found no wider currency in culture or in the sciences until the beginning of the 1960s². Authors give the phenomenon an inconsistent nomenclature: post-modernity, postmodernity, the postmodern, and even ultra-modernity³. A more recent systematisation separates postmodernism from postmodernity, assigning the former to everything relating to human thought (e.g. art, literature, philosophy), while the latter is used with reference to the cultural and civilisational transformations which came about after the collapse of modernity⁴. To make the terminology precise: in the present reflection the author will employ the terminology drawn from the *Leksykon Teologii Fundamentalnej*⁵, adopting the designation *postmodernism* as referring to the phenomenon under discussion.

¹ Cf. Z. Sareło, *Postmodernizm w pigułce*, Poznań 1998, p. 5.

² Cf. S. Wielgus, *Postmodernizm jako współczesne wyzwanie wobec podstaw kultury euroatlantyckiej i chrystianizmu*, [in:] *Tertio millennio adveniente*, G. Witaszek (ed.), Lublin 2000, p. 340.

³ Cf. A. Bronk, *Postmodernizm*, [in:] *Leksykon teologii fundamentalnej*, M. Rusecki; K. Kaucha; I. Ledwoń (ed.), Lublin-Kraków 2002, p. 929.

⁴ Cf. H. Janaszek-Ivaničková, *Nowa twarz postmodernizmu*, Katowice 2002, p. 20.

⁵ Cf. A. Bronk, *Postmodernizm*, op. cit.

The current itself, as the authors engaged in reflection on postmodernism emphasise, was not born without a prior genesis; it is rather the result of drawing conclusions from the most radical varieties of modernist philosophy⁶.

The event which popularised the use of this concept in the philosophical sciences was the publication in 1979 of the work *La condition postmoderne* by Jean-François Lyotard, which was an answer to the question of what changes should be expected in industrial society under the influence of new technologies of information transmission⁷. He advanced the view that postmodernism has its roots in the collapse of the three principal theses of the Enlightenment: faith in progress, the loss of a sense of the meaningfulness of history, and the cognitive subject-object opposition⁸.

Alongside J.-F. Lyotard, Jacques Derrida is named among the key figures influencing the development of the postmodern current of thought⁹. Although there is a dispute as to whether Derrida himself should be counted among the postmodern philosophers, his conceptions of post-structuralism and deconstructionism undoubtedly influenced the work of the postmodernists.

The later process of the development of reflection on the phenomenon of postmodernism was not characterised by any increasing precision as to the object of analysis. On the contrary, the very multiplicity of reflection on this idea meant that the authors who took it up understood the concept of *postmodernism* in diverse ways. This is a considerable barrier which hinders a full and comprehensive vision in research work on this current of thought: “Yet anyone who wishes to come to know postmodernism faces no small task. (...) The matter is difficult, and for at least several reasons. First, because postmodernism is a sack-concept into which texts, figures and ideas are carelessly thrown, so that the concept itself loses any distinct and clear meaning. Secondly, because it is hard to find one’s bearings in the flood of texts which either themselves aspire to the name of postmodern or are perceived as postmodern. Which of them may serve as model texts for this orientation? Which authors can be counted within the ‘postmodernist camp’? Postmodernism is not a school in the traditional sense of the word; it has no leaders accepted by all, no unambiguous interpretation, no ideas assigned without hesitation to its hard core. Thirdly, finally, because from the reading of all those texts which pass for postmodern, and from the study of the views of postmodern authors, there emerges a picture of several different versions of postmodernism — versions, let us add, at least partially contradictory”¹⁰.

Jean-François Lyotard, in his article *An Answer to the Question: What is Postmodernism?*¹¹, analysing this phenomenon on the planes of art and philosophy, stresses that what decides whether a work or a thought belongs to the postmodern current is not a temporal frame but

⁶ Cf. A. Szahaj, *Co to jest postmodernizm*, „Ethos” 1996 no. 1-2, p. 78.

⁷ Cf. Z. Sareło, *Postmodernistyczny styl myślenia i życia*, [in:] *Postmodernizm, wyzwanie dla chrześcijaństwa*, Z. Sareło (ed.), Poznań 1995, p. 9.

⁸ Cf. A. Bronk, *Zrozumieć świat współczesny*, Lublin 1998, p. 24.

⁹ See M. Chmielewski, *Postmodernizm*, [in:] *Leksykon duchowości katolickiej*, M. Chmielewski (ed.), Lublin-Kraków 2002, p. 685.

¹⁰ A. Szahaj, *Co to jest...*, op. cit., p. 63.

tendencies of thought and the assumption of a break with the past, as well as the loss of a comprehensive vision of the world: *"Finally, let it be clear that it is our business not so much to supply reality as to invent allusions to the conceivable which cannot be presented. (...) We have paid enough for the nostalgia for the whole and the one, for the reconciliation of the sensible and the concept, for transparent and communicable experience. Under the general demand for relaxation and appeasement, we can hear the desire for a return of terror, for the realisation of the fantasy of seizing reality. The answer is: let us wage a war on totality; let us be witnesses to the unpresentable; let us activate the differends, and save the honour of the name"*¹².

Among the philosophers with the greatest influence on the shaping of postmodern thought are counted, alongside the already mentioned Jean-François Lyotard and Jacques Derrida, also Richard Rorty and Jean Baudrillard¹³. In the Polish milieu we may regard Zygmunt Bauman as the principal representative in the field of philosophy. It must be noted, however, that in the Polish context of philosophical thought the postmodern current does not belong to the leading or widely disseminated tendencies¹⁴.

2. The Principal Ideas of Postmodernism

A great difficulty in the general characterisation of the ideological assumptions of postmodernism is that of obtaining a coherent descriptive picture of the phenomenon, for we encounter very large divergences concerning such categories as: precursors, founders and theoreticians, the selection of authors, and the views they present. A further considerable difficulty is the fact that we find a variety of interpretations as to the directions within postmodernism depending on the country or the field in which it occurs¹⁵.

The simplified characterisation of the phenomenon given below is not arbitrary in character. It has been made on the basis of the literature analysing the phenomenon of postmodernism available to the author so far. Taking into account the elements highlighted as common by the majority of authors, the characterisation below will concentrate on two principal points of reference. The first will concern the main philosophical ideas of postmodernism; the second, those postmodern formulations which are tangent to the questions taken up by theological reflection.

2.1. The Philosophical Ideas of Postmodernism

In presenting the principal philosophical assumptions of postmodernism, our attention will concentrate on questions concerning, among other things, the value granted to rational cognition and the very attitude towards human reason. This is strictly bound up with the

¹¹ See J. Lyotard, *Odpowiedź na pytanie: co to jest postmodernizm?*, trans. M.P. Markowski [in:]

¹² Ibid. s. 61.

¹³ Cf. Z. Sareło, *Postmodernizm...*, op. cit., p. 12-23.

¹⁴ R. Legutko, *Postmodernizm*, Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej [online], dostęp: 2009-12-04 <<http://www.omp.org.pl/index.php?module=subjects&func=viewpage&pageid=314>>.

¹⁵ Cf. A. Bronk, *Zrozumieć...*, op. cit., p. 27.

question of truth, and with the postulate — following from that understanding — which rejects the idea of unity. Textualism will also be characterised as a cognitive method, as will deconstructionism as an attitude adopted towards surrounding reality.

2.1.1. *The Negation of the Universality of Reason*

One of the principal dimensions of the postmodern style of thinking and philosophising is the turn away from the central postulate of the Enlightenment, which placed in the first position the value of reason and its cognitive powers, “*which is able to carry out a rational reconstruction of the state, society, the economy, law, religion, morality and education*”¹⁶. Faith in the cognitive powers of reason was founded upon a renewed conception of common notions.

One also observes among contemporary postmodern philosophers disapproval and aversion in their approach to rationalism, which proclaims the cognitive independence of reason, the innateness of concepts and principles, and the granting of primacy to reason over the will¹⁷. This attitude came to be seen as an expression of regression, characterised by a continual dwelling in the past¹⁸. In such an approach one may discern a borrowing from the views of F. Nietzsche, who proclaimed that the human mind does not possess the capacity to know reality as it is — on the contrary, it falsifies it.

Postmodern thinkers incline towards the position that “*Enlightenment reason failed theoretically and practically: contingent human reason was unable to fulfil the foundationalist theoretical demands placed upon it, and the practical realisation of the ‘Enlightenment project’ did not give humanity the expected happiness*”¹⁹. They do not accept the possibility of the existence of any single cognitive capacity common to all human beings. They incline towards a radical individualisation and subjectivisation of human cognition, which has value only for the individual performing it: “*In the act of knowing, the postmodernists hold, we are not dealing with ‘objective truths and realities’, but with idealising interpretations and creative language games. The language we employ is by no means a neutral instrument of cognition, for its use is culturally conditioned and evaluative in character*”²⁰. The question of the role of language in cognition signalled here will be analysed later.

2.1.2. *The Rejection of the Idea of Truth and Objectivity*

The consequence which follows from the rejection of the cognitive possibility of objective truths and realities is an inclination towards scepticism, relativism and agnosticism; and from these attitudes there arises a privileged place for the principles of tolerance and pluralism: “*The search for a truth independent of the human mind is replaced by dialogue, in which each of the*

¹⁶ H. Jakuszko, *Oświeceniowa filozofia*, [in:] *Powszechna encyklopedia filozofii*, T. VII, A. Maryniarczyk (ed.), Lublin 2006, p. 906.

¹⁷ Cf. H. Kiereś i B. Paż, *Racjonalizm*, [in:] *Powszechna encyklopedia filozofii*, T. VIII, A. Maryniarczyk (ed.), Lublin 2006, p. 600.

¹⁸ Cf. Z. Sareło, *Postmodernizm...*, op. cit., p. 12-23.

¹⁹ A. Bronk, *Zrozumieć...*, op. cit., p. 54.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 56-57.

*subjects should possess the right to express his own opinion. For the world is so complex, ambiguous and multi-layered that it is not possible to grasp its fundamental structures in any system of thought. Hence the praise, and even the cult, of pluralism in all fields of human culture — from science and philosophy, through aesthetics, to ethics and politics*²¹.

This gives rise to an entirely new conception of philosophy, which is no longer occupied with the search for truth understood as the conformity of man's intellectual cognition with objective reality. According to G. Deleuze, the role of philosophical reflection in postmodernism *"consists in 'fantasising', in which the human intellect is stimulated to 'produce' concepts as fleeting as soap bubbles, since they have no unambiguous designates. In consequence, in philosophy of this kind the place of cosmos is taken by chaosmos"*²².

Truth, in this conception, has ceased to be a static reality and has taken on a dynamic character. Postmodern philosophers do not perceive the concept of truth unambiguously, and do not even ascribe a positive value to it. At times this conception is carried to peculiar radicalisms, as happens for instance in feminist philosophy, where truth is treated as a masculinist concept towards which a postulate of revision is proclaimed²³.

A further consequence of the negation of objective truth is the postulate which places science founded on rational methodology (such as physics) on a par with all other systems of thought or culturally conditioned ideas. All this is done in the name of that trans-systemic evaluation for which the majority of postmodern thinkers declare themselves. It means the absence of any common foundation upon which one could rely on the plane of interpersonal contact between individuals or societies: *"In every case new criteria must be constructed, which will correspond solely and exclusively to particular individual cases. The dialogue constructed in the course of interaction should first of all establish a common range, and on that basis build further relations"*²⁴.

Views of this kind, especially in their extreme version²⁵, cannot be confirmed even by a phenomenal observation of reality: *"Although in various cultures one may meet diverse assessments of science and technology in the version initiated by the Galileo–Newton revolution, it nevertheless remains an absolute truth that radio-technical devices or spacecraft can function only on the ground of the physics initiated by that revolution, and will not operate on the ground of the physical convictions shared in the culture of the Pygmies or in the beliefs of the Azande"*²⁶.

From the postulate demanding the recognition that no single objective truth exists there also follows an attitude of refraining from the evaluation of philosophical systems, placing every philosophy on the same level and making of each an equally legitimate system. In such a

²¹ A. Drozd, *Permisywizm moralny*, Kielce 2005, p. 275.

²² Z. Sareło, *Postmodernistyczny styl...*, op. cit., p. 11.

²³ Cf. A. Bronk, *Zrozumieć...*, op. cit., p. 54.

²⁴ R. Geisler, *Jednostka i społeczeństwo w postmodernizmie*, Częstochowa 1999, p. 49.

²⁵ Cf. A. Kołakowska, *Czy możliwa jest religia postmodernistyczna?*, „Znak” 2001 no. 1, p. 50.

²⁶ J. Życiński, *Bóg postmodernistów*, Lublin 2001, p. 97-98.

conception any critique of the scientific character of the various systems of philosophising likewise disappears — each is in a certain sense the private product of the subject (the human being) who creates it, and as such is unassailable²⁷.

2.1.3. Textualism

Postmodern thinkers, in their reflection on philosophical cognition, devote great attention to the role of language (principally: Jean-François Lyotard, Richard Rorty, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault²⁸), since it is the only means of expression that exists for the expression of thought, manifesting itself either in writing or in speech. Yet language as such imposes upon us a framework from above, for it situates us within an inherited order of words and their meanings: *“The world does not speak. Only we do. The world can, once we have programmed ourselves with a language, cause us to hold beliefs. But it cannot propose a language for us to speak. Only other human beings can do that”*²⁹.

On this basis there arose among postmodern philosophers the conception of language games, whose principal precursor is Jean-François Lyotard. Language games are subject to two principal rules: *“the rules of their conduct do not find their legitimation in themselves, but belong to the players; the rules are essential by the very fact of the game, for without rules there is no game. (...) In consequence of the language game, every utterance is perceived as a ‘move’ in a particular game. This leads to a methodology of language which comes down to the expression of speech as combat, consisting in competition (...)”*³⁰. When, however, it is a question of seeking truth by means of these games, their application yields no resolution in this case, since there is no common denominator (no rules for conducting the game) which would unite the players. Language thus becomes the creator of the world rather than a neutral medium of cognition, and culture appears as the result of operations upon already existing texts, meanings and metaphors³¹. All of these, however, are of equal rank: *“From a given phrase one may pass to others depending on the choice of discourse (...). The application of regimes depends on the discourse; but since there exists no criterion for the choice of discourse (no metadiscourse), every choice is an act of violence against the other possibilities. One must suppose that if a metadiscourse existed, that violence would be legalised by its necessity. The passage from phrase to phrase is in any case never necessary. In particular, the [modernist] superdiscourses of the ‘grand narratives’, as well as the discourse of [modernist] science, would be acts of violence and ‘injustice’”*³².

²⁷ Cf. Z. Sareło, *Postmodernizm...*, op. cit., p. 8.

²⁸ Cf. H. Kiereś, *Postmodernizm*, op. cit., p. 387-390.

²⁹ R. Rorty, *Przygodność, ironia, solidarność*, trans. W. Popowski, Warszawa 1996, p. 117.

³⁰ Cf. D. Kulesza, *Dyskurs filozofii postmodernistycznej*, Katowice 2006, p. 153.

³¹ Cf. A. Bronk, *Zrozumieć...*, op. cit., p. 60.

³² B. Baran, *Postmodernizm*, Kraków 1992, p. 172.

2.1.4. The Rejection of the Idea of Unity

A postulate for which postmodern thinkers declare themselves is the cancellation of the possibility of finding unity: *“The postmodern vision which questions the unity and universality of the norms of transcendent rationality is aimed above all at the foundationalist status of the transcendental, general dimension of the I. The attempt is made to replace this dimension with an unsynthesised multiplicity of egological orders coexisting in the human individual, each governed by its own rules, establishing its own semantics and its own symptomatics, and excluding the superiority of any personal centre that would preserve its identity”*³³.

This view is founded on a thesis negating the modern position which recognised universal norms of rationality and ascribed to reason the power of unifying and correlating, and of translating into one another, the various ontic-epistemic orders. This operation of reason meant that out of dispersed senses, meanings and values it constituted a rational system of knowledge bound together by a unified logic. This logic was capable of an understanding and meaningful embrace and ordering of everything that exists³⁴.

The postmodernists likewise take a negative attitude towards all attempts undertaken to recover the lost cognitive unity that would order reality: *“The postmodern aversion to every kind of foundationalism (centrism) finds its expression in the critique of the great systems of thought and their modes of justification. In philosophy it is directed against metaphysics, which accepts the concept of transcendent and universal truth, and of reality as a certain basis of philosophising (...) today the postmodernists proclaim the end of all systematic and foundational philosophy, seeing neither the possibility nor the sense of solving the traditional philosophical problems (...) seeing no need for a metaphysical perspective on the world, postmodern philosophers prophesy the imminent death of foundational philosophy”*³⁵. In consequence of this sceptical attitude towards the efforts to seek unity, one may — following one of its leading representatives, J.-F. Lyotard — count three principal dimensions among the aims of postmodern philosophy.

The first of these is to show that this unity can be achieved only by way of repression within a totalitarian structure. *“Every attempt to absolutise truth — the religious included — is generally considered by the postmodernists an attack on the autonomy of the individual. The praise of multiplicity constitutes a new challenge. If modernity, through its accentuation of ‘totality’, entailed compulsion and even terror, then — in the view of the postmodernists — the flight from the temptation of ‘totality’ leads to autonomy and to the liberation of diversity”*³⁶.

To the second dimension belongs the promotion of pluralism in every sphere of life (not excluding the system of ethical values and worldviews) as the road to building a harmonious society liberated from any forms of domination and compulsion. This promotion belongs to the fundamental values of postmodernism. It is joined with the pressing of the postulate

³³ H. Perkowska, *Postmodernizm a metafizyka*, Warszawa 2003, p. 81.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 81.

³⁵ Cf. A. Bronk, *Zrozumieć...*, op. cit., p. 78.

³⁶ J. Mariański, *Religia i Kościół między tradycją i ponowoczesnością. Studium socjologiczne*, Kraków 1997, p. 40.

concerning the recognition of the multiculturalism of societies, bound up with the acceptance of their differentiation in confessional, ethnic and worldview terms. Whatever difficulties might stand in the way of realising this postulate, it must never be abandoned. For it is the sole condition of the survival of humanity, which as a result of migration processes is becoming ever more differentiated and ethnically intermixed. The significance of doctrines and dogmas should therefore be diminished, which will bear fruit in a growth of benevolence towards the other, and thereby in the survival of society, protecting it from violence, ethnic cleansing and murder³⁷.

The third dimension is the explanation of the difficulties bound up with the acceptance and functioning of the principles of extreme pluralism, which will inevitably give rise to conflicts³⁸. The realisation of the principles of extreme pluralism, and the guarantee of its functioning in society, finds its means of expression in the attitude of tolerance. The two attitudes are internally coupled: *“Pluralism is perceived as ‘realised tolerance’, and tolerance as ‘pluralism in practice’.* *Pluralism in a sense compels tolerant attitudes and behaviour; tolerance in turn supports diversity in culture, favouring the development of social life”*³⁹.

2.1.5. Deconstructionism

The postmodern cognitive method stands in opposition to the modernist method of construction (joining), which was defined by the idea of substantial-worldly reason. That reason conceptualised and ordered the chaos of immediate life experiences. This permitted the gradual rationalisation of the pre-scientific level of existence, and thereby effected the process of humanising various aspects of individual and social life⁴⁰.

This method bore fruit in the creation of the so-called *metanarratives* — a way of grasping reality characterised by centrism and by the attempt at a comprehensive view in reflection on the world and on the human being and the meaning of his existence. Such a conception, in the view of the postmodernists, was a consequence of the birth of social totalitarianisms such as communism, Nazism or fascism, and also favoured the support of monoculturalism⁴¹.

As a counterweight to such a methodology, the postmodern conception advances the postulate of deconstruction. In this approach the prevailing attitudes are critical, questioning, demythologising, unmasking, destructive. The values which reveal themselves as precious in such an attitude oscillate around extreme individualism, pluralism, unrepeatability and originality:⁴² *“According to deconstructive postmodernism, the recognition of any values that would go beyond the context of a particular hic et nunc situation (context transcending) is to*

³⁷ Cf. H. Janaszek-Ivaničková, *Nowa twarz...*, op. cit., p. 310.

³⁸ Cf. Z. Sareło, *Postmodernistyczny styl...*, op. cit., p. 13.

³⁹ W. Zieliński, *Status etyki w kulturze ponowoczesnej*, Toruń 2001, p. 75-76.

⁴⁰ Cf. H. Perkowska, *Postmodernizm a metafizyka*, Warszawa 2003, p. 22.

⁴¹ Cf. H. Kiereś, *Dekonstrukcjonizm, Powszechna encyklopedia filozofii*, T. II, Lublin 2006, A. Maryniarczyk (ed.), p. 464-465.

⁴² Cf. A. Bronk, *Krajobraz postmodernistyczny*, „Ethos” 1996 no. 1-2, p. 89.

*constitute a manifestation of an authoritarian approach, in which the totalitarianism of language and reason leads to an apologetics of objectivism in axiology as well as in ethics*⁴³.

The postulate of the rejection of all *metanarratives* in postmodern reflection is bound up with the adoption of a model of philosophising which will admit only so-called small narratives. These small narratives are “visions of reality arising, as it were, from below, in small human groups. They express the experiences of individuals pushed to the margin, yet offering resistance to the homogenised utopia and operating with a discourse of distance. They do not wish to let themselves be reduced to an instrumental role in the system”⁴⁴.

In contrast to the *metanarratives*, the approaches of the small narratives are not to occupy themselves with the consideration of such great theses as the existence of God, the meaning of history, the dignity of the human being. Investigating reality and human existence in a fragmentary manner, they undertake no answers to the fundamental questions.

2.2. The Theological Ideas of Postmodernism

Among the postmodern ideas which find a common point of interest with theological reflection — alongside the direct references concerning the existence of God and the place and role of religion — one may count the conception of the human person, as well as the ethical dimension inseparably bound up with human action. The manner in which these questions are understood in postmodern approaches will be presented below.

2.2.1. The Crisis of the Conception of the Human Being

As a result of the assumptions adopted by the postmodernists in connection with philosophical reflection, there emerges from them a picture of the human being who has lost his subjectivity, is deprived of the transcendental dimension, possesses no privileged place in the cosmos, and is merely the resultant of biological evolution or of uncontrolled processes taking place in the subconscious⁴⁵.

The human being in the postmodern conception is oriented exclusively horizontally: guided in his choices by the categories of pragmatism and hedonistic pleasure, he appears at the same time as a being torn between the two extremes by which he is defined in postmodern philosophy. The first of these is determinism, which defines the human being as some resultant of the biological and cultural-social context, in which he practically loses his subjectivity and is stripped of his personal value⁴⁶.

The second, opposite view sees the human being as subject to indeterminism, which manifests itself in ascribing to the human being an unfettered freedom and the capacity to create truth⁴⁷. This great tearing between the two currents gives rise to a peculiar tragedy of humanity: “What

⁴³ J. Życiński, *Bóg...*, op. cit., p. 88.

⁴⁴ H. Janaszek-Ivaničková, *Od modernizmu do postmodernizmu*, Katowice 1996, p. 101.

⁴⁵ Cf. A. Bronk, *Krajobraz...*, op. cit., p. 89.

⁴⁶ Cf. J. Życiński, *Bóg...*, op. cit., p. 74.

⁴⁷ Cf. H. Kiereś, *U podstaw życia społecznego, personalizm czy socjalizm*, Radom 2001, p. 32.

*remains is the ironic man. (...) the awareness that any thing can be made true or false depending on interpretation causes people not to take themselves seriously. In this perspective contemporary man is incapable of the seriousness of being, for he knows that everything is fragile and condemned to changeability. Only irony remains*⁴⁸.

The postmodern view of the human being characterised as *culturalism* is an extremely reductionist conception. It sees the human person merely as a cultural product. In such a conception the appeal to the concept of human nature disappears — the nature which constitutes the subjectivity of the human person, and the dignity flowing from it which that person possesses⁴⁹.

A question following from the picture of the human being in the postmodern conception is that of the social system in which such an understanding of the human being would be realised in the most unfettered manner. The values by which society must in that case be characterised are an extremely advanced role for pluralism and tolerance: *“There exists nothing that would permit the assessment of anyone’s conduct. For this reason no values may be imposed on anyone, nor may anyone be forbidden the performance of the acts he desires. Towards the choices made by other people one must adopt an attitude of respect and esteem. Tolerance, in the conception of the postmodern philosophers, should go so far that no one need justify the decisions he takes either before others or even before himself”*⁵⁰. The realisation of such an idea is most feasible in a system of social anarchy, for it presents a vision of freedom unfettered by anything. The second most feasible system is the liberal democratic order, in which the framework of the limits of individual freedom is established by a parliamentary majority, leaving a space of freedom in the sphere of private life so far as it does not violate the freedom of another individual⁵¹.

2.2.2. The Understanding of Ethics

Ethical reflection occupies an important place in the considerations of the postmodernists. This is conditioned by the assumptions concerning the pluralism of values and the adopted conception of unfettered freedom. Both these paradigms must carry inevitable consequences also in the domain of the understanding of ethics, leading to the postulate of creating a morality without ethics⁵². Postmodern ethical reflection can be divided into two different currents of critique of classical normative ethics⁵³.

The first is characterised by the negation of that vision of society which was guided by universal values recognised as binding upon every human person within that society. This universality of norms is irreconcilable with the postulate of the freedom of the person, who has

⁴⁸ A. Kobyliński, *Światopogląd w kontekście postmodernizmu*, „Ateneum Kapłańskie” 2004 no. 3(371),

⁴⁹ Cf. T. Egaleton, *Iluzje postmodernizmu*, Warszawa 1998, p. 103-105.

⁵⁰ Z. Sareło, *Postmodernizm...*, op. cit., p. 11.

⁵¹ Cf. H. Kiereś, *U podstaw...*, dz. cyt, p. 35.

⁵² Cf. Z. Sareło, *Postmodernistyczny styl...*, op. cit., p. 23.

⁵³ Cf. F. De Watcher, *Post-Modern Challenges to Ethics*, „Ethical Perspectives” 1994 no. 1, p. 79-81.

within himself the capacity to go beyond the accepted codes and the particular forms determining him, such as: nationality, sex, social position, group or racial belonging⁵⁴. Such a way of understanding ethical norms leads to the reflection: *"In this context one may say that postmodernism is also post-ethical. It is worth noting that the absence of foundations (fundamental principles) in ethics is perceived as a gain for ethics. In their place are inserted basic motives and stimuli, such as: the rehabilitation of sensuality in the moral sphere, the rehabilitation of attachment to place, and the departure from anthropocentrism"*⁵⁵.

The second current of critique of the classical conception of ethics is characterised by a much more positive attitude towards rational social frameworks. It perceives the ethos contained in them, as well as the rational character of morality discovered in the principles of behaviour, prescriptions and models in which every human life is immersed⁵⁶. It assumes, however, no cognitive effort to be undertaken by the human being at the level of morality: *"For man already exists in that which he seeks; he already has an ethos (understood originally as a dwelling-place — a home of habitation). In such an arrangement, man cannot be bound (framed) by an abstract 'human kind' or by 'reasons/principles', nor by the contingency of desires. In fact he is bound by the practices, codes and representations which organise the historical life in which he is anchored"*⁵⁷.

2.2.3. The Situation of Religion — Desacralisation

In attempting to characterise postmodernism in its relation to the phenomenon of religion, a certain complexity of approach to this problematic among the postmodernists comes to light.

According to the conception of one of the principal representatives of this current, Jean-François Lyotard — which speaks of the admissibility only of simplified and fragmentary interpretations of the world — every religious system is treated as a *metanarrative* attempting to give a comprehensive description of the world, finding answers also to such questions as the meaning of human life, human dignity or the meaning of history, and above all formulating certain theses about the existence of God⁵⁸. For these reasons religions — chiefly Christianity, though also Islam — appear in the postmodern conception as the mainstay of fundamentalism and conservatism. This fundamentalism is understood as the rejection of tendencies which would wish to present faith as something mild, deprived of all tendencies excluding other views and beliefs, and as the lack of acceptance of an attitude which negates or calls into question the meaningfulness of that religion⁵⁹.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 80.

⁵⁵ P. Bortkiewicz, *Postmodernistyczna destrukcja kultury moralnej*, [in:] *Postmodernizm, wyzwanie dla chrześcijaństwa*, Poznań 1995, p. 32.

⁵⁶ Cf. F. De Wachter, *Post-Modern Challenges...*, op. cit., p. 79.

⁵⁷ P. Bortkiewicz, *Postmodernistyczna destrukcja...* op. cit., p. 33.

⁵⁸ Cf. J. Życiński, *Bóg...*, op. cit., p. 36.

⁵⁹ Cf. E. Gellner, *Postmodernizm, rozum i religia*, Warszawa 1997, p. 11-12.

Religion, threatening unfettered human freedom, meets with negation and rejection. The postmodernists are unable to accept any established religious system, because every religion *“is to be professed decisively, in its full and literal form, without compromises, without softenings, reinterpretations or simplifications. (...) the soul of religion is doctrine rather than ritual, and it can be defined precisely and definitively — which in turn implies its being written down”*⁶⁰.

Despite the advancing forms of desacralisation, which are in line with the anti-foundationalist ideological postulate characteristic of postmodernism, one may observe the continual development of the phenomenon of interest in religion and religiosity — especially in its non-institutionalised manifestations, which do not ascribe to themselves an absolutising role in the domain of the knowledge of truth or the determination of ethical norms — sometimes described by the name of the *wild sacred*. This term, employed by certain historians of religion and sociologists, designates an attitude in which the individual is not characterised by an areligious stance, yet the forms of worship, belief and so on no longer belong to any established religious forms and traditions. Such a religious attitude is closest to gnostic tendencies, though in a much more simplified and commercialised form: *“The sacred returns as a renewal of the tradition of esoteric spirituality, but this time in an ‘exoteric’ form — that is, an esotericism which is the object of mass publications in the mass media. Here appears a paradoxical contradiction: what was the secret of the great initiates is now the object of knowledge sold in cheap brochures and popularised in certain therapeutic circles”*⁶¹.

The phenomenon of religiosity is not negated or combated by the postmodernists, but accepted only under certain conditions: postmodernism — speaking of it with a certain simplification on account of its *“not fully determined character — admits religious rituals and ceremonies, yet works consistently towards the elimination of religion from the public sphere. It denies religion the right to a voice and to functioning in public life”*⁶².

In writing of the situation of religion in postmodernism, it is worth signalling the influence this current of thought has on the change in the understanding of the idea of God and of the relationship to Him. Researchers of this phenomenon state that *“the changes in the conception of God among contemporary people, especially the young, move in the direction of an impersonal God. God becomes nature, energy, some indeterminate metaphysical instance (...) The personal God gives way to the feeling and experiencing of the ‘sacred’ as an emotional state”*⁶³.

It should also be added that in postmodern references to religion the conception of the death of God, formulated in the nineteenth century by Friedrich Nietzsche, remains continually alive⁶⁴. It goes hand in hand with the acceptance by some postmodern thinkers of the attitude of nihilism, which gives birth to the negation of the existence of God: *“The watchword of nihilism has been cast: the words ‘Gott ist tot’, God is dead — say at once that one can no longer believe in*

⁶⁰ Ibid. s. 11.

⁶¹ J. Kłoczowski, *Chrześcijanin XXI wieku*, „Znak” 1995, no. 3, p. 57.

⁶² S. Wielgus, *Postmodernizm jako...*, op. cit., p. 346.

⁶³ B. Kostrubiec, *Badania empiryczne obrazu siebie i obrazu Boga u zwolenników postmodernizmu*, Lublin 2004, p. 146-147.

⁶⁴ Cf. J. Życiński, *Bóg...*, op. cit., p. 37.

God and that one can believe in nothing. Nothing has meaning any more; that is, one can adhere to none of the values, because all the values substituted in the place of God lose their value, and human life is without significance”⁶⁵.

Summary

The postmodern conception does not embrace with its influence the whole of contemporary philosophy, nor of culture, though some authors try to suggest as much⁶⁶. Yet neither the presence of this current nor its influence should be underestimated, for it penetrates into various fields: into scientific cognition, and into contemporary culture as a whole: *“Postmodern art or postmodern philosophy may often seem to us bizarre, contrived, excessively abstract — but, say its researchers, let us not be deceived by appearances. Their ultimate source is a world without metaphysics, without absolute meaning and without ultimate mystery; and precisely such a world is the lot of the lives of millions of people who do not read Derrida, who have never heard of Greenaway, and who perhaps would never come to like postmodern art or philosophy”⁶⁷.*

The above presentation of the principal assumptions of the postmodern current — on philosophical ground as well as with reference to the realities taken up by theological thought — has permitted us to sketch the intellectual and cultural situation in which the contemporary Church exists as it carries out its missionary work. This presentation of the postmodern context will permit the formulation of a conclusion concerning the possibility (or its absence) of conducting the Church’s missionary work in accordance with postmodern assumptions.

Chapter II. The Contemporary Missiological Thought of the Church

Introduction

The second chapter will show the path of development which the concept of *mission* has undergone since the beginning of the twentieth century. The principal theological currents shaping reflection on the missionary idea which arose in this period will be presented. Particular emphasis will be given to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council on mission and to the post-conciliar documents of the *Magisterium Ecclesiae* concerning this question. The principal contemporary approaches expressing the missionary mandate of the Church will also be characterised.

1. The Concept of Mission in Pre-Conciliar Theological Reflection

Although the missionary activity of the Church has existed from its very beginnings, many centuries had to pass before reflection on this reality became a distinct theological discipline. The very object of study bore various designations. Up to the seventeenth century one may find

⁶⁵ W. Szydlowska, *Nihilizm i dekonstrukcja*, Warszawa 2003, p. 96.

⁶⁶ Cf. A. Bronk, *Krajobraz...*, op. cit., p. 98.

⁶⁷ R. Legutko, *Postmodernizm...*, op. cit.

a great many terms for the reality of *mission*. The diversity of these definitions conditioned the understanding and defining of the Church's missionary character⁶⁸.

The turn of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth bore fruit in a flowering of the missionary movement in many Churches and ecclesial communities⁶⁹. This phenomenon arose also in the Catholic Church, and it contributed to the development of theological reflection on the question of mission. In the Catholic milieu of this period one may distinguish four significant schools which elaborated this question extensively: the Münster school, whose principal representative is Joseph Schmidlin; the Louvain school, in which the leading role was played by Pierre Charles; the Spanish school, gathered around the person of Cardinal Juan Benlloch; and the French school, whose principal representatives are André Glorieux, Henri de Lubac and Alexandre Durand⁷⁰. All these centres presented differing distributions of emphasis concerning the understanding of *mission*, which will be briefly presented below.

1.1. The Münster School

The conception represented by the school in Münster, whose leading representative was Joseph Schmidlin (1876–1944), stood under the significant influence of Protestant approaches (represented chiefly by Gustav Warneck). It is characterised by the exposition of a personalist accent in missionary activity, emphasising as its principal aim the salvation of souls (*salus animarum*)⁷¹.

Joseph Schmidlin, in speaking of the justification of missionary activity, based it on the fact of the superiority of the Christian religion over other religions. He maintained that the proclamation of the Gospel brings to the pagan peoples spiritual goods not yet possessed by them, among which the most important are the knowledge of the true God and the gift of redemption⁷². He also took into account, however, other goods which missionary activity brings to the pagan peoples, counting among them civilisational values such as culture, morality, and intellectual, social and economic development⁷³.

Not following fully the line of understanding of *mission* presented by the Code of Canon Law of the time, or by the pronouncements of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith and the eminent Catholic theologians of the period, who defined missions broadly, he himself inclined towards a narrower conception: "*Missions called foreign or external concern those who do not belong to the Christian faith and the Christian religion*"⁷⁴. In this conception he saw the

⁶⁸ Cf. K. Müller, *Teologia Misji. Wprowadzenie*, Warszawa 1989, p. 35.

⁶⁹ Cf. F. Fernández, *Historia misji w Afryce*, [in:] *Kościół Misyjny. Podstawowe studium misjologii*, R. Dziura i A. Halemba (ed.), Warszawa 1997, p. 215.

⁷⁰ Cf. L. Nemer, *From Missions to Mission*, Australia 2006, p. 1.

⁷¹ Cf. W. Kowalak, *Misje*, [in:] *Stałem się sługą Ewangelii*, E. Śliwka (ed.), Pieniężno 2001, p. 127.

⁷² Cf. K. Müller, *Teologia Misji...*, op. cit., p. 72.

⁷³ Cf. F. Oborji, *Concepts Of Mission*, Rome - Lagos 2005, p. 95.

⁷⁴ J. Schmidlin, *Katholische Missionslehre im Grundriss*, Münster 1923, p. 34.

mission of the Church as apostolic activity directed towards particular groups: naming in the first place the nations holding polytheistic and pantheistic beliefs, but also indicating, in a further place, mission among the followers of Islam and among the Jews. He noted, however, that the addressees of missionary activity may also be *heretics* and *lukewarm Catholics*. These activities may be called *internal missions*, since in origin and aim they are joined to missionary activity⁷⁵.

In justifying the missionary mandate of the Church, Joseph Schmidlin pointed to its biblical foundations, appealing to the words of the Johannine Gospel: “*As the Father has sent me, so I send you*”⁷⁶. Referring to the words of Jesus sending His disciples out into the whole world⁷⁷, he held the position that missionary activity is rooted in the conviction that God Himself is its principal source⁷⁸.

Joseph Schmidlin distinguishes three stages which take place in the missionary activity of the Church. The first embraces the proclamation of the Gospel among those who do not believe in Christ. The second stage concerns the interior conversion of the person to whom the Good News is proclaimed, which leads to exterior conversion, manifested in incorporation into the Church through the reception of holy baptism. In the third stage there follows the organisation of the structures of the Church through the creation of a community of believers. The end of the last stage is reached when the Church already possesses its own hierarchy and is self-sufficient in personnel as well as materially, and the people as a whole has accepted faith in Christ⁷⁹.

An important conception of the missionary activity of the Church, inscribed in the continuation of the reflection undertaken by the Münster school, is the theological reflection proposed by Thomas Ohm (1892–1962). He undertook the attempt to develop and complete the theological conception initiated by Joseph Schmidlin.

Thomas Ohm carried out a further clarification of the concept of *missions*. Noting the significant spread of the use of this term among Christians, he undertook an attempt to systematise its meanings. The concept of *missions*, according to him, had in the 1950s the following meanings: the sending of missionaries to particular territories; the activities undertaken by those missionaries; the geographical territory in which those activities were conducted; the institutions sending the missionaries; the non-Christian world; the centre from which the missionaries acted upon the mission territories⁸⁰. He pointed out at the same time that the contemporary meaning of the term *missions* departs far from its original sense. Ancient

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 34-35.

⁷⁶ J 20,21.

⁷⁷ “*Then Jesus approached and said to them: “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”*” (Mt 28:18–20).

⁷⁸ Cf. F. Oborji, *Concepts...*, op. cit., p. 93.

⁷⁹ Cf. K. Müller, *Teologia Misji...*, op. cit., p. 42.

⁸⁰ Cf. D. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, New York 1993, p. 1.

and medieval times know no such application of the concept of *missions*: up to the sixteenth century the word *mission* was used with reference to the doctrine of the Most Holy Trinity, when speaking of the sending of the Son by the Father and of the sending of the Holy Spirit by the Father and the Son. He demonstrated that the first to use the term *missions* in the sense of the expansion of the Christian faith were the Jesuits⁸¹.

Ohm also undertook an attempt to grasp the question of mission by appealing to the tradition contained in the Old Testament, for it was in that context that Jesus of Nazareth was born and grew. He showed that the Old Testament tradition contained references to, and an orientation towards, a salvific universalism which was to reach the whole human race. This orientation was to attain its fullness in the teaching of Jesus, and especially at its centre, which is the teaching on the Kingdom of God⁸²: *"This Kingdom is not a political or national kingdom (...), but a purely religious, supranational one (...). It has an interior and spiritual character; it exists in this world, but it is not of this world"*⁸³.

1.2. The Louvain School

The most characteristic feature in the understanding of *mission* by the school of Louvain is the formulation of the thesis of the planting of the Church (*plantatio Ecclesiae*). Among its leading representatives declaring for such an understanding is the founder of the school, the Belgian Jesuit Pierre Charles (1883–1954). He was a propagator of the position that the aim and the formal object of missionary activity is *"the planting of the visible Church in countries where such does not yet exist"*⁸⁴.

This view rests on the theological assumption which holds that God wishes to save the human being not singly but in the community of the Church. What is more, the mission of the Church is not directed solely and exclusively towards the pagans, but towards every group where its visible structures do not exist. Missionary work is the development of the Church, which is to grow towards complete maturity in a particular territory and in a particular group. The activity undertaken for the missionary work is not founded on obedience to Christ's missionary command, nor does it flow from concern for the salvation of souls, but grows out of the very nature of the Church, which will attain its full identity only when it is present in every corner of the earth⁸⁵.

Missionary activity which rests solely and exclusively on the desire to save souls is therefore imperfectly motivated, since the sole *raison d'être* of *missions* is the establishment of the visible Church throughout the whole world. Where it is already established, there the missionary work has come to its end: *"the planting of the visible Church where it is not yet planted is the bringing*

⁸¹ Cf. T. Ohm, *Machet zu Jüngern alle Völker*, Freiburg 1962, p. 37-39.

⁸² Cf. F. Oborji, *Concepts Of Mission*, Rome – Lagos 2005, p. 98.

⁸³ T. Ohm, *Machet zu Jüngern alle Völker*, Freiburg 1962, p. 247.

⁸⁴ P. Charles, *Missiologie*, Paryż 1939, p. 59.

⁸⁵ Cf. F. Oborji, *Concepts...*, op. cit., p. 116.

of the means of salvation (faith and the sacraments) within the reach of all people of good will. In many countries this task is already completed. There, missions no longer exist”⁸⁶.

In this theological conception the planting of the Church is strictly bound up with the theory concerning processes of adaptation. For the conversion of particular persons within a given culture is insufficient; what is necessary is the penetration of that culture by the evangelical message from within, which will lead the given culture to transformation. In the authentic planting of the Church, which is to become a mature community, adaptation to the culture of the concrete people is indispensable and required⁸⁷.

1.3. The French School

Modern theological thought on mission was born in France on the ground of a movement initiated at the end of the nineteenth century, which took as its aim the re-Christianisation of those who, as a result of the French Revolution and of the cultural-social changes brought about by industrialisation, had lost the gift of the Christian faith. Such an aim — to *make our brothers Christians anew* — guided Cardinal Emmanuel Suhard, Archbishop of Paris. He initiated the existence of the movement *Mission de France*, which was to form clergy destined for a special task: work in those areas of France which were the most de-Christianised⁸⁸. In time this movement came to be popularly called the movement of the *worker priests*. A great inspiration for the Cardinal’s activity in this field was the publication by two French clergymen, *France, pays de mission?*⁸⁹ This book, describing the situation of the France of that time, advanced the postulate of creating a missionary movement in the French Church. It was to be directed towards the missionising of the pagan groups of the French proletariat, since, as the authors maintained, the French parishes in their traditional structure were not capable of undertaking this task⁹⁰.

At a later time an important contribution to the development of theological thought on mission was made by such French theologians as Henri de Lubac, Yves Congar, Jean Daniélou, André Glorieux and Alexandre Durand. What particularly distinguishes the French missiological school is the attempt to redefine the conception of *missions* according to sociological conceptions, where the then widespread understanding had a chiefly geographical dimension. It also emphasised the necessity of the missionary character of every local Church, and not only of the young Churches planted in non-Christian cultures. An important aspect of this school was likewise the emphasis on the incarnational significance of missionary activity, which should lead to the permeation of every culture with the Gospel⁹¹.

⁸⁶ P. Charles, *Missiologie*, op. cit., p. 65.

⁸⁷ Cf. F. Oborji, *Concepts...*, op. cit., p. 117-119.

⁸⁸ Cf. G. Bedouelle, *History of the Church*, London - New York 2003, p. 182.

⁸⁹ See H. Godin i Y. Daniel, *La France: pays de mission?*, Paris 1943.

⁹⁰ Cf. G. Horn, *Western European Liberation Theology: The First Wave (1924-1959)*,

⁹¹ Cf. L. Nemer, *From Missions...*, op. cit., p. 1-2.

1.4. The Spanish School

To the development of the Spanish missiological school Cardinal Juan Benlloch contributed considerably; encouraged by Benedict XV, he founded a seminary educating clergy for work in the mission countries: Latin America, Asia and Africa. He collaborated closely with the Jesuit José Zameza, who undertook the development of the theological thought on *mission* presented by the Cardinal in his pastoral letters, written in the years 1919–1920. Through these letters Cardinal Benlloch sought to awaken missionary zeal, both in his diocese of Burgos and throughout Spain⁹².

The representatives of this school developed their theological reflection on *mission* on the basis of the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ. They were convinced that the missions of the Church are contained within the process of the growth of this Body. This takes place through the assimilation of elements which do not yet belong to it. This unceasing development of the Body takes place on the basis of pagan elements, which through missionary activity are assimilated and transformed into ecclesial reality. Emphasising in particular the truth of the Mystical Body of Christ and of the communion of saints, the Spanish school brought out two essential ecclesiological elements in missionary activity. The first concerns the aforementioned truth of the development of the Mystical Body, which through missionary activity constantly acquires and orders its vital forces for further growth. The second points to the social dimension, which manifests itself in this, that the members of the Church, moved by the love of God, desire to share in spiritual goods with all people, in the present life as well as in the future one⁹³.

2. The Missionary Idea in the Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Teaching of the *Magisterium Ecclesiae*

The period of the Second Vatican Council and the following decades abounded in several significant pronouncements of the *Magisterium Ecclesiae* devoted to the understanding of the missionary mandate of the Church. Below, the following documents will be characterised: the Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church *Ad gentes divinitus*, the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Paul VI *Evangelii nuntiandi*, and the Encyclical of John Paul II *Redemptoris missio*.

2.1. The Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church *Ad gentes divinitus*

The Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church is sometimes called a milestone in the contemporary understanding of *mission*⁹⁴. It belongs to those conciliar documents whose fortunes during the conciliar deliberations were very turbulent and marked by intense discussions over the direction to be taken in formulating the most important theses concerning the understanding of *mission* and its realisation by the Church. In its conception of the missionary idea, the commission engaged in the redaction of the text of the documents drew

⁹² Cf. J. López-Gay, *Benlloch y Vivó, Juan*, [in:] *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*,

⁹³ Cf. L. Fąs, *Misyjność Kościoła w przedpoborowych dyskusjach misjologicznych*, „Nurt” 2005 no. 2, s. 122-123.

⁹⁴ Cf. H. Bettscheider, *Przyszłość misjologii z perspektywy Instytutu Misjologicznego Werbiściów w Svol. Augustin*, [in:] *W trosce o głoszenie Ewangelii*, J. Pawlik (ed.), Warszawa 2002, p. 37.

upon the existing reflection on this subject, coming chiefly from the centres in Münster and Louvain. In undertaking to define mission, the attempt was made to grasp both positions harmoniously in one coherent formula. Much was also drawn from the papal documents issued from the beginning of the twentieth century. In the elaboration of the decree use was also made of the abundant conciliar achievement already worked out, and in particular of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, which brought a new self-understanding of the Church⁹⁵.

The document begins by showing the source of the missionary sending of the Church, which has its beginning in the Holy Trinity itself: *"The most essential thing in the decree is its concentration on the Trinitarian sources of the Church's mission. It is the prolongation and historical realisation of the 'missiones' within the divine Communion of Persons. (...) Particularly precious is the emphasis in this field on the role of the Holy Spirit. Hitherto the mission of the Church had been contemplated almost exclusively in the context of the sending of the Son"*⁹⁶.

Passing in its further part to more concrete considerations of the missionary activity of the Church, the decree formulates a definition of that activity. It joins the idea of the planting of the Church and the idea of the proclamation of the Gospel of salvation as one and the same task of the missionary work. It reads as follows: *"Generally speaking, 'missions' is the term usually given to those particular undertakings by which the heralds of the Gospel, sent out by the Church and going forth into the whole world, carry out the task of preaching the Gospel and planting the Church among peoples or groups who do not yet believe in Christ. These undertakings are brought to completion by missionary activity and are mostly exercised in certain territories recognized by the Holy See. The proper purpose of this missionary activity is evangelization, and the planting of the Church among those peoples and groups where it has not yet taken root"*⁹⁷.

The decree also shows the various contexts in which the missionary activity of the Church takes place, and presents the particular stages of its development up to the attainment of its proper maturity. It likewise sees missionary activity itself as a dynamic process, which may pass through periods of arrest or regression, and even of complete collapse and of being undertaken anew. It also clearly separates missionary activity from the ordinary pastoral care of the faithful and from ecumenical efforts⁹⁸.

According to the document, the missionary work realises God's plan of salvation and itself possesses at once a Christocentric and an ecclesial dimension: *"Missionary activity is nothing else and nothing less than an epiphany, or a manifesting of God's decree, and its fulfillment in the world and in world history, in the course of which God, by means of mission, manifestly works out the history of salvation. Missionary activity makes Christ present, the author of salvation, through the word of the Gospel and the celebration of the sacraments, whose centre and summit is the Most Holy Eucharist"*⁹⁹.

⁹⁵ Cf. J. Maria i G. Lopetegui, *Duch misyjny. Vademecum*, Warszawa 1991, p. 40-44.

⁹⁶ R. Skrzypczak, *Kościół misyjny według Jana Pawła II*, Lublin 2005, p. 39.

⁹⁷ DM 6.

⁹⁸ Ibid. 6.

⁹⁹ Ibid. 9.

2.2. The Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*

The next document of the *Magisterium Ecclesiae* in which the theme of the missionary idea was taken up was the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* of Pope Paul VI, issued in 1975 as the fruit of the Synod of Bishops devoted to the theme of *the evangelisation of the modern world*. This document concentrated above all on the concretisation of the official conciliar teaching. It also undertook the attempt at those clarifications which were indispensable in the face of excessive reinterpretations of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council¹⁰⁰.

The document is a rich and profound reflection on the reality of *evangelisation*. The very concept of *evangelisation* was at that time fresh and not yet fully made precise; it was only then penetrating into Catholic theology. Among Protestant theologians the reflection on evangelisation was far richer — there, too, it found its genesis¹⁰¹. The exhortation defines it in the following manner: “*evangelization can be defined as showing Christ the Lord to those who do not know Him, as preaching, catechesis, conferring Baptism and the other sacraments*”¹⁰².

Writing of the aim of evangelising activity, it is stated that this aim is the interior renewal of the world through the carrying of the Good News to the whole human race. This proclamation should bear fruit globally in the birth of a new humanity — which, however, must first come into being in renewed individual persons, through baptism and a life according to the Gospel¹⁰³.

It must be clearly stated that the concepts of *missions* and *evangelisation* presented in the exhortation are not identical concepts. Evangelisation appears as a considerably broader concept, concerning the whole of the activity and existence of the Church: “*Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize*”¹⁰⁴. The role of missionary activity is brought out when the exhortation names the recipients of evangelising activity. Among the many circles to which it is directed, the document names those to whom the first proclamation of the Gospel refers. It sees in them above all the followers of non-Christian religions, towards whom missionary activity is directed. One of the sources which causes the continual direction of missionary activity towards people belonging to other religions is the awareness that the Christian religion is the highest and most perfect form of relationship with God that exists in His plan of salvation¹⁰⁵: “*For this reason the Church keeps her missionary spirit alive, and even wishes to intensify it in the moment of history in which we are living. She feels responsible before entire peoples. She has no rest so long as she has not done her best to proclaim the Good News of Jesus the Savior. She is always preparing new generations of apostles. Let us state this fact with joy at a time when there are not lacking those who think and even say that ardor and the apostolic spirit are exhausted, and that the time of the missions*

¹⁰⁰ Cf. L. Luzbetak, *Kościół a kultury*, Warszawa 1998, p. 125-126.

¹⁰¹ Cf. H. Rzepkowski, *Komentarz do adhortacji Evangelii Nuntiandi*, [in:] *Misje po Soborze Watykańskim II*, W. Kowalak et al. (ed.), Płock 1981, p. 306-309.

¹⁰² EN 17.

¹⁰³ Ibid. 18.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 14.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 53.

is now past. The Synod has replied that the missionary proclamation never ceases and that the Church will always be striving for the fulfillment of this proclamation"¹⁰⁶.

The document, in speaking of the missionary work, contains two important statements. First, it emphasises that no one may conduct this activity as an individual initiative, but that it is always the work of the Church, flowing from her mandate; it should therefore always be carried out in unity with her pastors¹⁰⁷. The second important emphasis made by the exhortation is the reflection on the result which the proclamation of the Gospel brings — namely, the Church coming to birth, which, remaining in communion with the universal Church, should be rooted in the given human community together with its culture, its past, its manner of feeling. Only such a Church will be properly alive, and the evangelisation it conducts will be far more fruitful¹⁰⁸.

2.3. *The Encyclical Redemptoris missio*

On account of the substantive richness of its theological reflection on the missionary idea, this document occupies a very particular place in the contemporary *Magisterium Ecclesiae*¹⁰⁹. From among the broad problematic taken up in *Redemptoris missio*, an attempt will be made below to show how the papal document conceives missionary activity with reference to its addressees.

To the questions connected with missionary terminology the Pope devoted the fourth chapter of the document, signalling the difficulties which exist in the Church as to the understanding of mission: "*Some people wonder: Is it still appropriate to speak of specific missionary activity or of specifically 'missionary' areas, or should we speak instead of a single missionary situation, with one single mission, the same everywhere? The difficulty of relating this complex and changing reality to the mandate of evangelization is apparent in the 'language of mission.'* For example, *there is a certain hesitation to use the terms 'mission' and 'missionaries,' which are considered obsolete and as having negative historical connotations. People prefer to use instead the noun 'mission' in the singular and the adjective 'missionary' to describe all the Church's activities*"¹¹⁰. As can be seen, the document does not share that understanding of the realisation of the Church's mandate as a state of *mission on six continents* — an understanding which became quite popular after the Second Vatican Council and which penetrated into the Catholic Church from Protestant circles¹¹¹. The Pope clearly emphasised the continuing validity of the *mission ad gentes*, as well as of the specific *lifelong* missionary vocation with which God endows certain members of the Church¹¹².

¹⁰⁶ EN 53.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. R. Skrzypczak, *Kościół misyjny...*, op. cit., p. 41.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. EN 62-63.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. K. Müller, *Die Enzyklika Redemptoris Missio Presentation und Kommentar,

¹¹⁰ RMis 32.

¹¹¹ Cf. W. Kluj, *Teologiczne podstawy misji według Jana Pawła II*, Warszawa 2008, p. 41.

¹¹² Cf. RMis 32.

Meeting the existing difficulties and misunderstandings concerning the understanding of the Church's missionary activity, the encyclical proposes a clarification of the concept of *missions*, to which attention is devoted in the fourth chapter of the document. In it the Pope makes a distinction between missionary work and the ordinary pastoral activity of the Church, as well as activity within the framework of the new evangelisation. Although all these dimensions of the Church's activity flow from her one mandate, the distinction is made on account of the circumstances in which it is realised¹¹³.

Attempting to define the addressees of the Church's missionary activity, the document does so in the following words: "*Missionary activity proper, namely the mission ad gentes, is directed to 'peoples or groups who do not yet believe in Christ,' 'who are far from Christ,' in whom the Church 'has not yet taken root,' and whose culture has not yet been influenced by the Gospel. It is distinct from other ecclesial activities inasmuch as it is addressed to groups and settings which are non-Christian because the preaching of the Gospel and the presence of the Church are either absent or insufficient. It can thus be characterized as the work of proclaiming Christ and his Gospel, building up the local Church, and promoting the values of the Kingdom. The specific nature of this mission ad gentes consists in its being addressed to 'non-Christians'*"¹¹⁴.

As can be seen, the document clearly states that the addressees of the Church's missionary activity are the non-Christian peoples. In defining the addressees, the encyclical attempts to determine the criteria permitting one to define the context and space in which the *mission ad gentes* comes about. The Pope makes a distinction between criteria: geographical, sociological, and cultural — the last of which he called *areopagi*¹¹⁵.

Taking up the theme of the aim towards which the proclamation of the Gospel is directed, the encyclical treats the problematic of *Christian conversion*, which means adherence to Christ through faith. This conversion is a gift which the Holy Spirit offers to the human being. It is bound up directly with the reception of baptism, which is not merely a practice established by the Church, but comes from the will of Christ Himself and belongs to the apostolic Tradition¹¹⁶.

The encyclical upholds and recalls the existing teaching of the *Magisterium Ecclesiae* on the direct aim of missionary activity: "*The specific purpose of missionary activity is establishing Christian communities and developing churches to their full maturity. This is a central and determining goal of missionary activity, so much so that the mission is not completed until it succeeds in building a new particular church which functions normally in its local setting*"¹¹⁷.

The Pope also takes a position towards the trend in contemporary mission theology which omits this supernatural aim of missionary activity, narrowing it only to the horizontal, temporal dimension: "*Nowadays the call to conversion which missionaries address to non-Christians is put into question or passed over in silence. It is seen as an act of 'proselytizing'; it is*

¹¹³ Cf. RMis 33.

¹¹⁴ RMis 34.

¹¹⁵ Cf. RMis 38c.

¹¹⁶ Cf. RMis 47.

¹¹⁷ RMis 48.

claimed that it is enough to help people to become more human or more faithful to their own religion, that it is enough to build communities capable of working for justice, freedom, peace and solidarity. What is overlooked is that every person has the right to hear the 'Good News' of the God who reveals and gives himself in Christ, so that each one can live out in its fullness his or her proper calling"¹¹⁸.

3. Contemporary Theological Tendencies in the Understanding of Mission

The continually deepened theological reflection, and the attempts undertaken to actualise the understanding of missionary activity in the contemporary, dynamically changing world, bear fruit in the development of the understanding of missionary activity and in the broadening of the conceptions which have already appeared over the course of time. The present point will be devoted to a short characterisation of the tendencies and theological conceptions which are being developed today within reflection on *missions*.

From among the many directions in which reflection on the missionary activity of the Church is conducted, those have been selected which *Redemptoris missio* showed — alongside the already existing forms — as the *missionary paths* of the contemporary Church¹¹⁹. They are the following: dialogue with the religions, activity for human development, and the inculturation of the Gospel together with the associated question of the creation of local contextual theologies.

3.1. Interreligious Dialogue

The path of dialogue with other religions was initiated by the pronouncements contained in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, though it should be mentioned that in parallel, during the conciliar deliberations, this question was also taken up by Pope Paul VI in his encyclical *Ecclesiam suam*¹²⁰. Among the conciliar documents one must name chiefly the declaration *Nostra aetate*, which states: "*The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims, and ever must proclaim Christ 'the way, the truth, and the life' (Jn 14:6), in whom men may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself. The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men*"¹²¹. An important contribution to the understanding of the reality of other religions was made also by the statements contained in

¹¹⁸ RMis 46.

¹¹⁹ Cf. RMis 52-59

¹²⁰ See Paweł VI, encyklika *Ecclesiam suam*, 6 VIII 1964.

¹²¹ DRN 2.

the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium*¹²², in the Decree *Ad gentes*¹²³, and in the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*¹²⁴.

Dialogue with the followers of other religions in the teaching of the *Magisterium Ecclesiae* preserves the unchanging Tradition, which affirms the irreplaceable role possessed by Christ, the sole Saviour of the world and Mediator between God and humanity, and the function performed by the Church, and belonging to her, in the experiencing of this salvation¹²⁵. The Church does not understand the path of dialogue as a replacement of missionary activity in the proper sense of the word. Both these paths should preserve a close bond with each other, but also their distinctness: *“these two elements must maintain both their intimate connection and their distinctness; therefore they should not be confused, manipulated or regarded as identical, as though they were interchangeable”*¹²⁶.

Entering upon the path of rightly understood dialogue requires consistency towards one's own religious tradition and one's own religious convictions, while preserving openness and understanding towards the followers of other religions: *“Dialogue does not exclude witness, but presupposes it. He who knows how to listen will find a hearing among others. He who is ready to let himself be enriched by others will find a hearing, provided only that he communicates himself on the basis of his own experience and his own fullness. Only when the heart is prepared by dialogue is proclamation in the specifically Christian sense possible. We should not fear that we shall give ourselves away in dialogue with others. Dialogue will be a danger only for the one who is himself weak in faith. Dialogue should not, however, be merely a rational exchange; it should be accompanied by prayer and by trust in the Holy Spirit who works in us and in our partner”*¹²⁷.

3.2. The Inculturation of the Gospel

The question of the inculturation of the Gospel and of the Church in local cultures is not something entirely new and hitherto unknown in the theory and practice of the Church's missionary activity. It was expressed under various concepts, which however contained within themselves different aspects of the same reality: the integration of cultures and of the Christian understanding of the faith, so that the Christian message — which encountered already formed

¹²² *“Those also can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and, moved by grace, strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience.”* (LG 16).

¹²³ (...) wiadomymi tylko sobie drogami może Bóg doprowadzić ludzi, nie znających Ewangelii bez własnej winy, do wiary, bez której niepodobna podobać się Bogu (...) (DM 7).

¹²⁴ *“The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on lighvol. For Adam, the first man, was a figure of Him who was to come, namely Christ the Lord. Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear.”* (GS 22).

¹²⁵ Cf. F. Oborji, *Concepts...*, op. cit., p. 48.

¹²⁶ RMis 55.

¹²⁷ K. Müller, *Nowe tendencje w misjologii*, trans. R. Malek [in:] *W trosce o głoszenie Ewangelii*, J. Pawlik (ed.), Warszawa 2002, p. 195.

religious and moral representations — might be articulated in a manner comprehensible to its addressees¹²⁸.

The process of inculturation rests its deepest theological foundations on the event of the Incarnation of the Word of God, which took place in concrete historical-cultural conditions. Relying on this fact, the process of inculturation conditions the mutual interpenetration of culture and the evangelical message, so that the Gospel, permeating a concrete cultural milieu, makes it possible for the people rooted in it to accept Christ¹²⁹.

Inculturation is not a process concerning external forms and means of expression, but “*means the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures*”¹³⁰. Its indispensability is felt especially when the first proclamation of the Gospel takes place in a concrete cultural milieu, and also when the process of the formation of concrete local Churches begins. Thanks to inculturation the Church becomes, in a given context, an ever more legible sign, becoming an ever more effective instrument of *mission*. It must be remembered, however, that this is a very laborious and long-lasting process. For it may not violate the specificity and integrity of the Christian faith. It should be conducted under the guidance of the pastors, to whom belongs the task of discerning the proper directions of its realisation¹³¹.

3.3. *Promotio humana*

A particular role in which the missionary activity of the Church is realised takes place at the level concerning the development of the human being and his liberation from various forms of oppression and enslavement. It does not concern solely and exclusively external factors (though it does not exclude activity for the liberation and valorisation of the human person in that dimension), but touches chiefly the interior planes of his being, which, transforming the human being from within, lead to the transformation of the external factors¹³².

The weight of this dimension of the Church’s missionary activity gradually gained significance from the time of the Second Vatican Council. The continually growing and scandalous gulf between the rich north and the poor south of the globe contributed to this. The problem was also vividly considered by the Church in Latin America, especially at the conferences of Medellín (1968) and Puebla (1979), and it likewise found a place in the post-conciliar *Magisterium Ecclesiae*. Despite the important connection which the socio-economic and political problematic has with the transmission of the evangelical message, the mandate of the Church and its realisation cannot be reduced to a purely sociological dimension. The realisation of the Church’s activity for the promotion of the human person and for liberation must bring

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 190.

¹²⁹ Cf. F. Oborji, *Concepts...*, op. cit., p. 46.

¹³⁰ Nadzwyczajny Synod Biskupów 1985, *Relacja końcowa*, II.D.4., Catholic Svol. Michael's Cyberspace Scriptorium and Library [online], dostęp: 2010-16-06 <http://www.saint-mike.org/library/synod_bishops/final_report1985.html>.

¹³¹ Cf. RMis 52.

¹³² Cf. SRS 41.

out the particularly religious dimension, and this carries with it the eschatological perspective¹³³: *“Through the Gospel message, the Church offers a force for liberation which promotes development precisely because it leads to conversion of heart and of ways of thinking, fosters the recognition of each person’s dignity, encourages solidarity, commitment and service of one’s neighbor, and gives everyone a place in God’s plan, which is the building of his kingdom of peace and justice, beginning already in this life. This is the biblical perspective of the ‘new heavens and a new earth’ (cf. Is 65:17; 2 Pt 3:13; Rev 21:1), which has been the stimulus and goal for mankind’s advancement in history. Man’s development derives from God, from the model of Jesus, God and man, and must lead back to God. That is why there is a close connection between the proclamation of the Gospel and human promotion”*¹³⁴.

3.4. Contextual Theologies

The development of contextual theologies followed with the post-conciliar reflection on the question of mission and is strictly bound up with the question of inculturation. The novelty of this conception distinguishes it from the hitherto prevailing manner of conducting theological reflection, which was founded on the deductive method: it set out from principles in order to arrive at concretised conclusions. *“The point of departure of this method was the data of revelation; then their meaning was analysed, and the manner of their understanding in the various periods of history — through the tradition of the Fathers of the Church and the councils, the theological schools and later authors”*¹³⁵.

The method employed in contextual theological reflection, by contrast, is inductive. It takes as its point of departure the currently lived situation of the given community in which theological reflection is undertaken: its concrete facts and existing problems. Setting out from this position, it seeks a Christian answer, in the light of Revelation, to the questions existing in the given context¹³⁶. *“A theology which is contextual takes into account the concrete culture, history and contemporary forms of thought as things necessary to be considered together with Sacred Scripture and Tradition as essential sources of theological expression. We speak today, therefore, of a theology having three sources (loci theologici): Sacred Scripture, Tradition, and concrete human experience — the context”*¹³⁷.

The process of shaping contextual theology (also called local theology) is a necessary condition for the transmission of the Christian message to be received in local cultures in the forms and concepts proper to them. Yet in this process appropriate conditions must be preserved, which will permit the avoidance of the danger of creating a theology which becomes contradictory to Christian doctrine in the name of an unconditional reference to the local culture and the values

¹³³ Cf. F. Oborji, *Concepts...*, op. cit., p. 51.

¹³⁴ RMis 59.

¹³⁵ H. Szymiczek, *Kontekstualny wymiar misji – od teologii powszechnej do teologii lokalnych*, [in:] *Misjologia XXI wieku. W 20 rocznicę śmierci ojca Feliksa Zapłaty SVD - twórcy misjologii w Polsce*, A. Miotk (ed.) Warszawa 2004, p. 92.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 93.

¹³⁷ S. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, Manila 2003, p. 3-4.

it carries. Among these conditions are, inter alia: internal coherence; the capacity to express the given theology in worship (the constant reference to the principle *lex orandi, lex credendi*); openness to a critical view on the part of other theological conceptions, as well as to corrections on the part of the *Magisterium Ecclesiae*. This will permit the given theological thought expressed in a given context to show the living and transforming power of the Gospel¹³⁸.

Summary

The chapter presented the contemporary understandings of the question of the missionary activity of the Church as developed over the last century. In this period one may observe a very lively development and deepening of the understanding of *mission*. This is bound up also with the violent transformations to which the contemporary world is subjected — a world ever more changing its face with respect to cultural and religious diversity as well as with respect to the development of peoples.

In this development of the understanding of the missionary idea, and of the various ways in which missionary activity is realised, it is worth emphasising that the content of the evangelical message remains unchanging: its centre is Jesus Christ and His salvific message offered to every human being through the Church — *“whose presence in the world can only be missionary, for so indeed does the Spirit act and spread. From its beginnings the Christian people has well understood the importance of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus to those who did not yet know it. In recent years the anthropological, cultural, social and religious face of humanity has changed; today the Church must take up new challenges and is ready for dialogue with other cultures and confessions, seeking to shape, together with every person of good will, the peaceful coexistence of peoples. The scope of the mission ‘ad gentes’ is today considerably broadened, and cannot be defined by geographical criteria alone. In reality it is not only the non-Christian peoples and distant lands that await us, but also socio-cultural milieux, and above all human hearts — to which the missionary activity of the People of God is truly directed”*¹³⁹.

Chapter III. Mission and Postmodernism — An Attempt at Synthesis

Introduction

The present chapter will carry out an analysis of the key elements of the missionary mandate of the Church, as defined in the contemporary documents of the *Magisterium Ecclesiae*, in relation to the principal postulates of postmodern thought presented in the first chapter — postulates which have found their points of reference in certain elements of contemporary Western culture, assimilated by it on the wave of the cultural-social changes of the second half of the twentieth century. This analysis wishes to give an answer to the question concerning the perception of the missionary activity of the Church (its sources and content, its aims, and its modes of realisation) in the postmodern world and in an emerging theological thought marked by the spirit of this epoch, which *“declares itself quite openly for relativism, since relativism has*

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 23-25.

¹³⁹ Benedykt XVI, *Kościół nie narzuca, lecz ukazuje światu Chrystusa*, „L'Osservatore Romano” wyd. polskie 2010 no. 7, p. 27.

a certain explanatory capacity, while at the same time it is the enemy of the idea of a unique, exclusive, objective, external and transcendent truth"¹⁴⁰.

The last part of the present chapter will undertake an attempt to characterise the person of the missionary in postmodern society. This reflection will be an analysis of the effects which the postmodern postulates have borne in the social reception of religion, as well as in the system of values, the perception of the world, and the shaping of attitudes.

1. The Dogmatic Foundations of Mission Concerning the Role of Christ and the Church

The several decades since the close of the Second Vatican Council have shown that theological reflection in the Church has in certain cases proceeded not without the influence of postmodern currents of thought¹⁴¹. This has led to significant abuses and unwarranted conclusions in theological reflection, in the understanding both of the nature of the Church and of her task in the contemporary world. These abuses have concerned also the understanding of the person of Jesus Christ: the salvation which is accomplished in Him, the understanding of revealed truth in the context of other religious systems, and so on. The situation became serious and disquieting enough¹⁴² to bear fruit in documents of the *Magisterium Ecclesiae* which were the Church's answer to the currents developing in theology. They concern the question of the exclusivity of Jesus Christ as Saviour against the background of the soteriological conceptions of other religions, as well as the universality of the Church's missionary mandate in the face of the phenomenon of religious pluralism.

¹⁴⁰ E. Gellner, *Postmodernizm...*, op. cit., p. 37.

¹⁴¹ Cf. J. Holland, *The Postmodern Paradigm and Contemporary Catholicism*, [in:] *Varieties of Postmodern Theology*, D. Griffin et al. (ed.), New York 1989, p. 9-28.

¹⁴² It is worth recalling here the important words describing the contemporary situation in the Church spoken by the then Cardinal J. Ratzinger during the Conclave, on 18 April 2005: *"How many winds of doctrine have we known in recent decades, how many ideological currents, how many ways of thinking. The small boat of the thought of many Christians has often been tossed about by these waves — flung from one extreme to another: from Marxism to liberalism, even to libertinism; from collectivism to radical individualism; from atheism to a vague religious mysticism; from agnosticism to syncretism and so forth. (...) Today, having a clear faith based on the Creed of the Church is often labeled as fundamentalism. Whereas relativism, that is, letting oneself be 'tossed here and there, carried about by every wind of doctrine,' seems the only attitude that can cope with modern times. We are building a dictatorship of relativism that does not recognize anything as definitive and whose ultimate goal consists solely of one's own ego and desires. We, however, have a different goal: the Son of God, the true man. He is the measure of true humanism. An 'adult' faith is not a faith that follows the trends of fashion and the latest novelty; a mature adult faith is deeply rooted in friendship with Christ. It is this friendship that opens us up to all that is good and gives us a criterion by which to distinguish the true from the false, and deceit from truth."* J. Ratzinger, *Ku «dojrzałości» wiary w Chrystusa*, "L'Osservatore Romano" Polish ed. 2005 no. 6, p. 30.

1.1. The Universality of Salvation in Jesus Christ

In the light of the Tradition of the Church, the fundamental content which dynamises her activity is the person of Jesus Christ and His work of the Redemption of the human being: *“The Church’s mission is born of faith in Jesus Christ, which every believer proclaims in the Trinitarian profession of faith: ‘I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, eternally begotten of the Father (...). For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.’ (...) It is only in faith that the Church’s mission can be understood and sustained”*¹⁴³. Yet such transmission and understanding of this unchanging content of the faith is shaken and blurred in postmodern theological conceptions. Here one must name in particular the views presented by such theologians as Roger Haight, Paul Knitter and Peter Phan¹⁴⁴.

The post-conciliar discussions which developed on the basis of the statements contained in the documents of the Second Vatican Council concerned the problematic of the salvation of people not belonging to the visible Church¹⁴⁵. Since it touches the fundamental Christian truths, this problematic has direct consequences for the understanding of the missionary mandate of the Church. Attempts at reflection appeared which relativised the salvation made present by Christ¹⁴⁶. This was attempted also in the context of religious pluralism and of postmodern trends¹⁴⁷. The following stages may be distinguished: *“First the traditional ecclesiocentrism was rejected, and Christ — and Christ alone, excluding the Church — was made the foundation and aim of mission. In order to meet the non-Christian religions, ‘Christocentrism’ was then bidden farewell, and one spoke of ‘theocentrism’, which in the end still makes some sense. Taking into account Buddhism and the non-monotheistic religions, one thus arrived at ‘soteriocentrism’ — and here no possibility of a theological ordering of the same can really be seen”*¹⁴⁸.

¹⁴³ RMis 4.

¹⁴⁴ See np. P. Knitter, *Without Buddha I Could Not Be A Christian*, Oxford 2009; R. Haight, *Jesus Symbol of God*, New York 1999; P.C. Phan, *Being Religious Interreligiously*, New York 2004.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. np. KK 16, DM 7, KDK 22.

¹⁴⁶ See np. P.F. Knitter, *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes toward World Religions*, New York 1985.

¹⁴⁷ As an example of the change in the understanding of the person of Jesus Christ in the postmodern context, it is worth naming the work of the American Jesuit Roger Haight, who in his publication *Jesus Symbol of God* undertook an attempt to redefine the Christological dogmas in the light of postmodern concepts — negating, among other things, the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth and the necessity of salvation being accomplished through Christ, and making the non-Christian religions ways offering salvation with equal rights to Christianity. These claims were judged negatively by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which in a special pronouncement addressed the assertions contained in Haight’s publication, ruling that he had committed *serious doctrinal errors against the divine and Catholic faith of the Church*. See Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Notification on the book “Jesus Symbol of God” by Father Roger Haight S.J.* [online], accessed: 2010-11-19.

¹⁴⁸ K. Müller, *Nowe tendencje ...*, op. cit., p. 195-196.

In answer to the growing danger of the blurring of the Church's teaching on this question, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in the Declaration *Dominus Iesus*, addressed these tendencies, classifying them and recalling the unchanging dogmatic teaching of the Catholic Church: *"The thesis is also put forward which denies the unicity and salvific universality of the mystery of Jesus Christ. Such a position has no biblical foundation. In fact, the truth of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Lord and only Saviour, who through the event of his incarnation, death and resurrection has brought the history of salvation to fulfilment, and which has in him its fullness and centre, must be firmly believed as a constant element of the Church's faith. (...) It must therefore be firmly believed as a truth of Catholic faith that the universal salvific will of the One and Triune God is offered and accomplished once for all in the mystery of the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Son of God"*¹⁴⁹. In addressing in this document the question of other religious experiences, the Congregation neither cancels nor forbids the further investigations undertaken by contemporary theology concerning the role which the positive elements of other religions may be discovered to play in God's salvific plan¹⁵⁰. It clearly states, however, that every attempt to solve this question on the ground of a theology which admits the possibility of a salvific action of God excluding the mediation of Christ is contrary to the Catholic faith¹⁵¹.

1.2. The Distortion of the Truth of the Universality of the Church's Mandate

The Catechism of the Catholic Church presents the concept of catholicity in the following manner: *"The word 'catholic' means 'universal,' in the sense of 'according to the totality' or 'in keeping with the whole.' The Church is catholic in a double sense: First, the Church is catholic because Christ is present in her. 'Where there is Christ Jesus, there is the Catholic Church.' In her subsists the fullness of Christ's body united with its head; this implies that she receives from him 'the fullness of the means of salvation' which he has willed: correct and complete confession of faith, full sacramental life, and ordained ministry in apostolic succession. The Church was, in this fundamental sense, catholic on the day of Pentecost and will always be so until the day of the Parousia. Secondly, the Church is catholic because she has been sent out by Christ on a mission to the whole of the human race"*¹⁵². Such an understanding of the catholicity of the Church leaves its mark on her missionary mandate, which is not characterised by the propagation of the Gospel in various geographical areas after the manner of some human ideology, but is the

¹⁴⁹ DI 13.

¹⁵⁰ It is worth noting in this context that the Declaration met with very loud opposition among many Catholic theologians (including also representatives of the hierarchy), who expressed disapproval both of the tone of the Declaration and of its contents. See R. McBrien, *Dominus Iesus: An Ecclesiological Critique*, SEDOS Rome [online], accessed: 2010-11-23. One theologian described the declaration in the following words: *"An ahistorical, exclusivist position attempting to defend orthodoxy without a shadow of love or a mention of the poor. The Creed is reduced to doctrinal statements leading to tendentious conclusions. (...) Hearing these arrogant, abstract propositions devoid of any historicity, I say: the louder Rome beats its tin drum, the emptier the sound that comes from ivol. This is the monologue of the deaf."* J. Prior, *Mission for the Twenty-First Century in Asia*, [in:] *Mission for the 21st Century*, S. Bevans (ed.), Chicago 2001, p. 88.

¹⁵¹ Cf. DI 14.

¹⁵² KKK 830.

expression of her interior dynamism and vitality, coming at its source from the Triune God Himself¹⁵³, who “*desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*”¹⁵⁴. This has not only an individual but also a communal dimension, as the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium* grasps it when it speaks of the Church’s mission to the whole human race, pointing to the task of the growth and development of the Church amid humanity as the expression of the salvific will of God: “*This People, while remaining one and only one, is to be spread throughout the whole world and to all ages, so that the design of God’s will may be fulfilled: he made human nature one in the beginning and has decreed that all his children who were scattered should be finally gathered together as one. (...) This character of universality which adorns the People of God is a gift from the Lord himself. By reason of it, the Catholic Church strives constantly and effectively to bring all humanity and all its possessions back to its source in Christ, with him as its head and united in his Spirit*”¹⁵⁵. The essence of this mandate is the reconciliation with God, and among themselves, of human beings torn by sin. The realisation of the universal mission of the Church thus contributes to the fulfilment of the salvific intention of God, who desires that humanity be a unity after the pattern of the unity of the Holy Trinity¹⁵⁶.

Often, however¹⁵⁷, contemporary theological thought, viewing the Church in the perspective of other religions, has gone very far beyond the framework traced by the *Magisterium Ecclesiae* in the understanding of the role of the Church’s mandate and of its universality. Theologians guided by the unconditional principle of religious pluralism see in other religions alternative ways of salvation, equally entitled to exist alongside the Church of Christ; what is more, they maintain that these are the intended work of Divine Providence¹⁵⁸: “*Religious pluralism (...) is not merely an observable fact but also a principle. This means that the non-Christian religions may be seen as part of the plan of divine providence and as possessing a particular role in the history of salvation. They are not merely a ‘preparation for’, ‘steps towards’ or ‘seeds’ of Christianity destined to find their fulfilment in it. Rather, they possess their own autonomy and their own proper ways of salvation, at least for their own adherents*”¹⁵⁹.

The Magisterium did not remain indifferent to the formulations presented above as they arose. In his missionary encyclical *Redemptoris missio*, Pope John Paul II referred to the one-sided

¹⁵³ Cf. DM 2.

¹⁵⁴ 1 Tm 2, 4.

¹⁵⁵ KK 13.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Y. Congar, *Zasady doktrynalne*, [in:] *Misje po Soborze Watykańskim II*, W. Kowalak i in. (ed.), Płock 1981, p. 108-110.

¹⁵⁷ See np. P. Phan, *Being Religious Interreligiously*, New York 2004.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Committee on Doctrine United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Clarifications Required by the Book Being Religious Interreligiously: Asian Perspectives on Interfaith Dialogue by Reverend Peter C. Phan*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [online], accessed: 2010-11-21 <www.usccb.org/doctrine/StatementonBeingReligiousInterreligiously.pdf>.

¹⁵⁹ P. Phan, *Being Religious Interreligiously*, New York 2004, p. 144.

conceptions arising in theological thought and to the depreciation of the significance of the Church in God's plan of salvation. He pointed to the marginalisation and trivialisation of the Church, born of an over-accentuated fear of ecclesiocentrism. This leads to a concentration on the mystery of creation, common to various cultures and beliefs, while depreciating the mystery of redemption which the Church proclaims¹⁶⁰.

To the theological attempts which exaggerate the salvific significance of other religions while omitting the mediation of the Church in access to Christ's salvation, the declaration *Dominus Iesus* answers very precisely and firmly: "Above all else, it must be firmly believed that 'the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation: the one Christ is the mediator and the way of salvation; he is present to us in his body which is the Church. He himself explicitly asserted the necessity of faith and baptism, and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through baptism as through a door.' This doctrine must not be set against the universal salvific will of God; 'it is necessary to keep these two truths together, namely, the real possibility of salvation in Christ for all mankind and the necessity of the Church for this salvation.' The Church (...) has, in God's plan, an indispensable relationship with the salvation of every human being"¹⁶¹.

From the above presentation it follows that in the postmodern perspective there is no place for such a missionary activity of the Church as the *Magisterium Ecclesiae* understands and presents. For to the essence of the missionary activity of the Church belongs the proclamation of the person of Jesus Christ and of the work of salvation accomplished in Him. Likewise the Church, in the understanding of Catholic doctrine, possesses a particular and irreplaceable role in making Christ present on earth. What is more, the missionary activity of the Church itself is to lead to her development throughout the whole world, into which new members are incorporated by baptism. In the postmodern perspective neither Christ nor the Church possesses an exceptional role in the panorama of various religious beliefs, each having its own ways to salvation. Both the person of Jesus Christ and the existence of the Church are reduced merely to a level equal to that of every other religious belief.

2. The Paths of Realisation of the Church's Missionary Task

As indicated above, the contemporary understanding of the realisation of the Church's missionary mandate is marked out by three principal paths, connected with the following realities: the inculturation of the Gospel in the process of building the local Church, activity for the development and promotion of the human being, and dialogue with other religions. The context of the postmodern paradigms of thought, marked by pluralism and relativism, has touched also certain theological conceptions, which have not remained without the reaction of the *Magisterium Ecclesiae*. They concern the understanding of, and over-interpretations connected with, the reality of the Kingdom of God and its relation to the Church; the question of the role of the evangelisation of cultures in a pluralistic and relativistic perspective; and the aim and manner of conducting interreligious dialogue.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. RMis 17.

¹⁶¹ DI 20.

2.1. Abuses Concerning the Understanding of the Kingdom of God

The development of the theology of mission in the twentieth century was characterised by a deepening of reflection on the reality of the Kingdom of God as the principal message which Jesus Christ brought to the world and proclaimed in His teaching¹⁶². Gradually this led to the building of an ecclesiology which placed the Kingdom of God at the centre of Christian life, thereby marginalising the significance of the Church. In the development of this conception a great opportunity was perceived for building a theology of the Kingdom which would not exclude others standing outside the visible Church¹⁶³. The boundary began gradually to blur between the *Missio Dei* — understood as the action of God in the world, without any necessary connection with the visible Church — and missions as special undertakings carried out in the name of the Church. Such a presentation of the theology of mission led to a secularisation of the Church's missionary activity, flattening it merely to the horizontal dimension concerning earthly realities, while omitting the vertical dimension referring to their religious significance¹⁶⁴: *"It is asserted that the universal plan of God's salvation consists in the spreading of the Kingdom, to which more attention is given than to the Church. The Kingdom thus becomes 'a new focal point' of evangelization. But what is this 'Kingdom,' often lacking even the adjective 'of God'? It is held to embrace all religions, which are called to build it in mutual dialogue; it is identified with a 'new humanity' which is to unite all people in a community of love, justice and peace; it means 'the well-being of humanity' and 'the liberation of man.' There is thus a tendency to conceive the Kingdom as a certain 'utopia,' as a 'thing.' In this way a 'kingdom-centrism' arises, set against the 'ecclesiocentric' vision of the plantatio Ecclesiae, commonly rejected as outdated and false. Some write, for example, that 'the most important mission of the Church is the building of the Kingdom, and dialogue with other religions is a means leading to this aim. The Church is not called to build herself up, but to serve (...) and even to die, so that the world may live'"*¹⁶⁵.

To the relation which the Church bears towards the reality of the Kingdom of God, John Paul II devoted considerable space in the encyclical *Redemptoris missio*¹⁶⁶. He explains and makes precise the misunderstandings which arose on this theme, indicating that the fundamental service to the Kingdom of God is the calling of all people to conversion — individuals as well as whole communities — which contributes to the inauguration of eschatological salvation as newness of life in Christ. The transcendent and spiritual realities always have primacy, which in no way excludes engagement in earthly matters through the spreading of evangelical values and service to every human being, especially the most needy. Such service on behalf of the Kingdom of God likewise in no way excludes the task of building the local Churches; on the

¹⁶² Cf. Łk 4,18.

¹⁶³ Cf. T. Rausch, *The Vatican's Quarrel with Roger Haight*, Religion Online [online], accessed:

¹⁶⁴ Cf. L. Fąs, *Tendencje sekularystyczne w misjologii*, [in:] *«Kontrchrześcijaństwo» jako kontekst działalności misyjnej w XXI wieku*, P. Sokołowski (ed.), Pieniężno 2009, p. 196-198.

¹⁶⁵ J. Tomko, *Głoszenie Chrystusa jako jedynego Zbawiciela wobec wyzwania sekt*, „L'Osservatore Romano” wyd. polskie 1991 nr 7, p. 11.

¹⁶⁶ See RMis 12-20.

contrary, leading them to maturity of faith bears fruit in their giving witness of engagement in the service of the human being, crossing also the boundaries of visible ecclesial belonging¹⁶⁷.

To the aforementioned over-interpretations and exaggerations in the understanding of the relation between the reality of the Kingdom of God and the visible Church, the Declaration *Dominus Iesus* also refers; without negating the development of the theology of the Kingdom of God, it clearly brings out the simplifications employed in its formulation: “*In considering the relationship between the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Christ, and the Church, however, it is necessary to avoid one-sided accentuations, as is the case with those conceptions ‘which deliberately emphasize the kingdom and which present themselves as kingdom-centred. They stress the image of a Church which is not concerned about herself, but which is totally concerned with bearing witness to and serving the kingdom. It is a Church for others, just as Christ is the man for others’*”¹⁶⁸.

The understanding of the reality of the Kingdom of God presented above, in which unwarranted interpretations are made, brings as its result a flattening of the motives of missionary activity. They are limited to a merely temporal significance. The effect of such a *kingdom-centric* understanding of missionary activity is the conception of the Church merely as an organisation of human society serving temporal assistance, without reference to her supernatural vocation and mandate.

2.2. The Evangelisation of Cultures in the Perspective of Pluralism and Relativism

As shown earlier, contemporary reflection on the missionary mandate of the Church conducts a reflection on the question of the evangelisation of culture, which, though not identical with the *mission ad gentes*, is nevertheless deeply bound up with it. It is one of the marks of the process of inculturation, which John Paul II in the encyclical *Redemptoris missio* attempts to define in the following manner: “*inculturation means the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures. The process is thus a profound and all-embracing one, which involves the Christian message and also the Church’s reflection and practice. But at the same time it is a difficult process, for it must in no way compromise the distinctiveness and integrity of the Christian faith*”¹⁶⁹. With the question of the evangelisation of culture is inseparably bound the manner in which the *Magisterium Ecclesiae* understands culture, and its right to a critical evaluation of it. This stands in contradiction to cultural relativism, which is deeply bound up with postmodernism¹⁷⁰.

Postmodern cultural relativism follows from the dominant pluralistic socio-cultural conception. It emphasises the diversity of worldviews in this area, which demands a flexible and tolerant attitude in intercultural interaction. The postmodern conception inclines towards the micro-analysis of culture, not occupying itself with macro-analysis. In such an attitude the

¹⁶⁷ Cf. RMis 20.

¹⁶⁸ DI 19.

¹⁶⁹ RMis 52.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. A. Schmidt, *The Menace of Multiculturalism: Trojan Horse in America*, London 1997, p. 4.

wider context is therefore not important, since it might be connected with a striving towards central or supra-cultural conceptions in which some pattern of values might be found to which a particular culture ought to refer. Postmodern cultural relativism has several basic assumptions, holding that: particular societies have different moral codes; there exists no objective way of judging these cultural codes; moral codes have no special status; there are no universal truths; it is society that determines what is good and evil within a given community, and every attempt at outside interference in this determination is an arrogant interference in the culture. Instead of evaluating these attitudes and values, they should be tolerated¹⁷¹.

The approach characterising the Catholic understanding of culture — and thereby entailing the proper interaction with culture in the process of evangelisation — is far different from that presented by the postmodern conceptions. In its profound analysis of the concept of culture, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et spes* presents human culture as a dynamic phenomenon subject to unceasing changes. Favouring none among the cultures, it nevertheless emphasises that culture, as created by the human being who is tainted by original sin, is not free from errors and evil, which are the fruit of human sin¹⁷².

The contemporary teaching of the *Magisterium Ecclesiae* pronounces negatively on the question of the emerging cultural relativism which makes culture the ultimate criterion of judgement. It indicates that it is the Gospel which is the criterion of the evaluation of values in a given culture, and that it is also the force purifying culture from the errors which human sin has begotten in it: *“a particular culture can never become the criterion of judgment, much less the ultimate criterion of truth with regard to God’s revelation. The Gospel is not opposed to any culture, as if in engaging a culture the Gospel would seek to strip it of its native riches and force it to adopt forms which are alien to it. On the contrary, the message which believers bring to the world and to cultures is a genuine liberation from all the disorders caused by sin and is, at the same time, a call to the fullness of truth. Cultures are not only not diminished by this encounter; rather, they are prompted to open themselves to the newness of the Gospel’s truth and to be stirred by this truth to develop in new ways”*¹⁷³.

Such a view of culture inclines the Church to present the truth of the necessity of the evangelisation of cultures, proclaiming also to the particular persons immersed in a concrete culture the necessity of a change of mentality, behaviour and customs wherever this proves necessary. Missionaries are called to bring into the very heart of every culture the newness of life in Christ; and being aware of the limitedness of every human cultural form, they should also be watchful not to be led astray by purely horizontal visions in the perception of the world¹⁷⁴.

¹⁷¹ Cf. F. Wokabi i S. Owindo, *Ethnicity and Globalization*, [in:] *The Dialog of Cultural Traditions: A Global Perspectives*, W. Sweet (ed.), Washington 2008, p. 157-167.

¹⁷² Cf. KDK 53-59.

¹⁷³ FR 71.

¹⁷⁴ Papiéska Rada ds. Kultury, *Towards a Pastoral Approach To Culture*, 4, Pontifical Council for Culture [online], accessed: 2010-11-30 <http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/cultr/documents/rc_pc_pc-cultr_doc_03061999_pastoral_en.html >.

The diametrical difference presented above in the understanding of the phenomenon of human culture — that presented by Catholic doctrine as against the postmodern understanding of culture — has demonstrated the impossibility of reconciling these two ways of conceiving it. In the postmodern conception every particular culture and the values it presents are in a certain sense *dogmatised*: they are not subject to evaluation or valuation. The Church, by contrast, proclaims the necessity of the unceasing reference of every culture to the Gospel, which has the power to transform it, making it more human and more in accordance with the design of God.

2.3. Postmodern Dialogue and Interreligious Dialogue

An important aspect of the contemporary understanding of the realisation of the Church's mission is the question of dialogue, which manifests itself on various planes of the Church's life, touching also her missionary mandate¹⁷⁵. It converges with the concept of dialogue in the postmodern conception, commonly employed by contemporary thought. The presentation of the sources and assumptions of these two conceptions will show the impossibility of fusing them into one common idea of dialogue. The attempts to connect these entirely different ways of understanding dialogue will also be signalled — attempts which bear fruit in the blurring of the Christian message and distort the attitude of dialogue, rightly understood and presented by the *Magisterium Ecclesiae*, which should characterise the missionary activity of the Church.

In the Church, the conception of dialogue with the followers of other religions is the fruit of the last several decades of the development of theological reflection, which, as indicated above, found its expression in official documents. The attitude of dialogue flows from the nature of the Church and finds its place within her salvific mandate. Its theological sources follow from the truth about the human being created in the image and likeness of God, called to the fullness of life with God in eternity. It is likewise bound up with the process of inculturation, which, if it wishes to root the Christian faith in a given culture, cannot disregard the religion it encounters, since that religion constitutes the heart of the culture being evangelised¹⁷⁶.

Postmodern thought, by contrast, in the conception of some of its representatives, lays emphasis on the universality of the attitude of dialogue, whose conception is born of the understanding of truth as a category constantly changing and not belonging in its entirety to any opinion, way of perceiving, or system of beliefs. Through dialogue one may draw closer to it — with the reservation that this is possible only in a polyphony of agreed positions, and even then this approach to truth has a momentary character, following from the constant change of the contexts in which the dialogue is conducted¹⁷⁷. All those engaged in dialogue so understood, however, must present so-called *weak convictions*¹⁷⁸, which claim for themselves no right to general normativity or unchangeability. Such dialogue emphasises openness in the name of diversity. There is, however, no place in it for views and attitudes identified with so-called *strong convictions*, classified as fundamentalist attitudes contrary to the dialogical stance.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. RMis 56.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. Międzynarodowa Komisja Teologiczna, *Christianity and The World Religions*, [in:] *International Theological Commission: Texts and Documents: 1986-2007*, M. Sharkey (ed.),

¹⁷⁷ Cf. A. Sidorkin, *Beyond Discourse: Education, the Self, and Dialogue*, New York 1999, p. 41.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. A. Bronk, *Zrozumieć...*, op. cit., p. 158.

These should not be externalised in publicly conducted dialogue. Even if someone is convinced of the exclusivity of his truth, in publicly conducted dialogue he should behave in a manner which will show his convictions as one alternative among others¹⁷⁹.

The adoption of such an attitude as the point of departure in pluralistic theology leads, in the interreligious dialogue conducted, to a reductionist and false vision of religious beliefs, out of which — in the name of pluralism and of the unification of the followers of various religions — an alleged unity is to be created¹⁸⁰. This provokes an inevitable conflict with the fundamental truths of the Christian faith, including the negation of the missionary character of the Church, as one of the documents of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith signalled in its note on certain aspects of evangelisation: *“today the Church’s missionary proclamation ‘is endangered by relativistic theories which seek to justify religious pluralism, not only de facto but also de iure (or in principle).’ For some time now, a situation has existed in which, for many of the faithful, it is unclear what the essential reason for evangelization is. It is even stated that the claim to have received the gift of the fullness of God’s revelation masks an attitude of intolerance and a danger to peace”*¹⁸¹.

The comparisons presented above — concerning the understanding of the reality of the Kingdom of God and its relation to the Church, the question of the role of the evangelisation of cultures in a pluralistic and relativistic perspective, and the aim and manner of conducting interreligious dialogue — have demonstrated how considerable are the differences, and the lack of agreement, between the Catholic and the postmodern understanding. The postmodern conceptions, characterised by disagreement with any unassailable and objective truth, are irreconcilable with the Catholic understanding of the realities mentioned. For in the Catholic conception these have their reference to Divine Revelation, which constitutes for the Church an objective, unchanging and unassailable truth.

3. The Person of the Missionary in the Postmodern Context

The teaching of the *Magisterium Ecclesiae* in the documents concerning the missionary mandate of the Church very strongly emphasises the task standing before the missionary who wishes to carry out his ministry in a concrete socio-cultural milieu. It consists in a thorough knowledge of the culture in which he is to carry out the task of proclaiming Christ and building the Church: its principal values by which it is guided, the understanding of the world it presents, the religious references occurring within it, and so forth. This will permit him to fulfil his task more fully and more fruitfully¹⁸². The present point will carry out a characterisation of the postmodern milieu with reference to precisely these elements in relation to the person of

¹⁷⁹ Cf. W. Lamb, *Living Truth-Truthful Living: Christian Faith and the Scalpel of Suspicion*, Adelaide 2004, p. 154.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Międzynarodowa Komisja Teologiczna, *Christianity...*, dz.cyt, p. 177.

¹⁸¹ Kongregacja Nauki Wiary, *Nota doktrynalna na temat pewnych aspektów ewangelizacji*, 10, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith [online], accessed: 2010-12-02 <http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20071203_nota-evangelizzazione_pl.html >.

¹⁸² Cf. DM 26 oraz RMis 53.

the missionary. The first aspect will concern references to the person of the missionary as one sent in the name of the Church, whose ministry should lead to the incorporation of those who have accepted the gift of faith into the visible community of the Church. The second aspect will present the missionary whose life, work and witness concern the transmission of the truth of the Gospel.

3.1. *The Ecclesial Identity of the Missionary*

The conciliar Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church, *Ad gentes divinitus*, in characterising the specificity of the missionary vocation, inscribes it within the task of the Church, from whose mandate and sending it is carried out: *“For there are certain priests, religious and lay people who are prepared to undertake mission work, being endowed with the appropriate natural dispositions, qualities of heart and mind, and who are ready to take up missionary work, whether they be natives of the place or foreigners. Sent by legitimate authority, they go out, in faith and obedience, to those who are far from Christ, set aside for the work for which they have been called as ministers of the Gospel”*¹⁸³. In accordance with these words, the person engaged in the missionary work does not act within the framework of his own desires, realising his private evangelising aims and intentions; behind his ministry stands the Church, whom he also represents before the world. What is more, missionary activity leads also to the acceptance of the faith within the community, into which one is incorporated by baptism, which seals the work of conversion to faith in Christ¹⁸⁴.

Authors investigating religious references in postmodern society unanimously emphasise that what one observes is not so much a departure from the religious sphere (though that too takes place) as rather the abandonment of any forms of institutionalised religion¹⁸⁵ — sometimes defined as the phenomenon of *de-churching*. In the spirit of individualism and of pluralism of views, those forms of religion are depreciated which express themselves in established forms, with clearly determined and unchanging truths of faith and morality. The human being recognises himself as the ultimate authority, evaluating and selecting in a selective manner moral values, contents of faith, and the concrete practices connected with religion¹⁸⁶. Paradoxically, however, this individualism goes hand in hand with the desire to experience a human community which shares the same convictions and values, spiritual ones included. Hence arises the phenomenon of so-called alternative groups, in which individualism goes hand in hand with the experience of community¹⁸⁷.

¹⁸³ DM 23.

¹⁸⁴ RMis 48.

¹⁸⁵ From among the many different definitions grasping the concept of the institutionalisation of religion, the analysis is carried out on the basis of an understanding of this phenomenon as *“the ecclesial model of religious life, embracing the values, norms and patterns of behaviour, and the roles which the members of the Church are to fulfil.”* J. Mariański, *Religia i Kościół...*, op. cit., p. 193.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. J. Mariański, *Religia w społeczeństwie ponowoczesnym*, Warszawa 2010, p. 104-112.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. D. Jaura, *Young People in Postmodern Society*, Bratislava 1997, s. 32-35.

The socio-cultural context presented above of the understanding of institution in religion — consistently depreciating also the value of the institutional presence of the Church, yet in which there exists a strong need for personal bonds realised in community — places a challenge before the missionary. On the one hand he must show the Church, whom he represents and into which his ministry is to lead, as a living community. On the other hand he may not blur the unassailable foundations of the deposit of faith which constitute the Church in her identity. The joining of both dimensions will permit the avoidance of the attempt to build yet another *alternative group* gathered around religious content understood as a subjective spiritual experience, separated from any institutional dimension. Meeting this task is not accomplished by human efforts alone, but, like the whole missionary work, is the fruit of God's intervention and of the grace He grants¹⁸⁸. Missionary activities undertaken today in postmodern society which are penetrated by precisely this dimension demonstrate their great fruitfulness¹⁸⁹.

3.2. *The Missionary in the Space of the New Spirituality*

Contemporary postmodern culture is characterised by a lively relation to the spiritual sphere of the human being¹⁹⁰. It is understood, however, as mentioned above, in its own way: in detachment from the institutional forms of religion, especially from the faith of the Church. The source of this phenomenon is, paradoxically, a reaction to de-Christianising and secularising tendencies: *"The 'death of God' proclaimed in past decades by so many intellectuals gives way to a sterile cult of the individual. In this cultural context there is a danger of spiritual atrophy and emptiness of heart, which are sometimes manifested in surrogate forms of religious belonging and vague spiritualism"*¹⁹¹. This manner of relating to supernatural reality is defined in various ways: *new spirituality, postmodern spirituality, New Age*¹⁹². Yet at bottom all these concepts describe the same phenomenon, which is the reaction to, and fruit of, the cultural

¹⁸⁸ Cf. S. Grentz, *Ecclesiology*, [in:] *Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology*, K. Vanhoozer (ed.), Cambridge 2003, p. 260.

¹⁸⁹ It is worth recalling here the experience of the missionary method worked out by the Neocatechumenal Way, which bases its evangelisation on the contents of baptismal catechesis, proclaiming the fundamental truths of the Christian faith and introducing the person who makes the decision of faith and conversion into a concrete community, in which he can advance on the way of faith and of experiencing the reality of the Church. See I. Álvarez, *Carrying Forward the New Evangelization (Part 1) — Interview With Neocatechumenate Initiator*, ZENIT [online], accessed: 2010-12-07.

¹⁹⁰ This relation, understood as *spirituality*, is nevertheless something different from religiosity. Spirituality is an experiencing of the sacred accomplished in subjective, immanent, individual cognition, which is to contribute to interior happiness in everyday life. It is not subject to, nor does it refer to, the traditional forms of religion. Religiosity, by contrast, means a relation of obedience towards the person of God, the truth about whom is shown by a given tradition of faith. It comes from beyond the human being and is transmitted by religious authority, which lays down norms and principles of conduct whose fulfilment will permit him to experience happiness in the future life — while, however, taking from him the possibility of affirming his present existence. Cf. P. Heelas, *The Spiritual Revolution: from 'religion' to 'spirituality'*, [in:] *Religions in the Modern World: Traditions and Transformations*, L. Woodhead (ed.), London 2002, p. 358.

changes of the last epoch. That epoch has led to the cult of humanity, to the emphasis on its autonomy and freedom from all traditions or authorities. Religion has not remained without influence from these transformations: it has taken on an interiorised character to such a degree that the object of its worship has become the human self, which acquires a sacralised character¹⁹³: *“The divinity of the human being is identified with the inner Self (variously understood), which is an innate feature of human nature — forgotten, deformed in modern culture, and thus requiring a ‘transformation of consciousness’ in order to return to spiritual perfection. It may better render the experience of the sacred in postmodern culture (...). Spirituality is a more capacious concept: beyond the traditional areas of religion it embraces also art and nature (or rather contact with, the experience of, art and nature), as well as popular beliefs in crop circles, extraterrestrial beings, experiences of life after life. (...) Spirituality may embrace both secular thought (e.g. science) and care for the environment”*¹⁹⁴.

Such a cultural context requires of the missionary that he show the newness of the Gospel as a reality surpassing religious needs marked out merely by the human horizons of desires, expressed in a loosely understood postmodern spirituality, which very often assumes a post-Christian form in which salvation in Christ is exchanged for a form of gnosis exalting the human mind¹⁹⁵. The newness of the Gospel resides in the truth about the person of Jesus Christ and about the salvation accomplished by Him: *“in him is accomplished the full and authentic liberation from evil, sin and death; in him God gives ‘new life,’ divine and eternal. This is the ‘Good News’ which changes man and the history of mankind”*¹⁹⁶. This transmission must be deeply penetrated by the theology of the cross, which in the most profound way points to the manner in which the Christian message surpasses merely human religious strivings: *“The theology of the cross remains the most radical challenge to the postmodern New Age atmosphere, which overrates the beauty of nature, the harmonious order of the world, of human meaning and*

¹⁹¹ Benedykt XVI, *Sekularyzacja jest trudną próbą dla Kościoła*, „L'Osservatore Romano” wyd. polskie 2008 no. 4, p. 35-36.

¹⁹² Cf. J. Mariański, *Religia w społeczeństwie...*, op. cit., p. 211.

¹⁹³ Cf. Papieska Rada ds. Kultury, *Jezus Chrystus dawcą wody żywej*, Kraków 2003, p. 13.

¹⁹⁴ A. Kubiak, *Niewidzialna religia*, [in:] *Religia. Encyklopedia PWN*, T.VII, T. Gadacz i B. Milerski (ed.), Warszawa 2003, s. 313-314.

¹⁹⁵ A very apt analysis of this phenomenon was expressed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger in one of his book-length interviews: *“Man would like to have some religion — esoteric or any other. But he does not want a personal God who speaks to me, who knows me, who has said something concrete, who places concrete demands upon me and who will also judge me. We are observing the phenomenon of the separation of religion from God. Man does not want to rid himself entirely of the sense that he is dealing with something wholly other than everything else — that specific sphere which is religion — and he desires its various forms. But all this becomes non-binding when the will of God is missing, when God is missing. In this sense we may speak not so much of a crisis of religion — religions are positively proliferating — as of a crisis of God.”* P. Seewald, *Bóg i świat. Wiara i życie w dzisiejszych czasach*, trans. G. Sowinski, Kraków 2001, p. 62.

¹⁹⁶ RMis 44.

*wisdom. Nature can be cruel. The cross, on which Jesus was abandoned by His friends and felt Himself abandoned by God, is a deeply disharmonious drama. On the cross, human capacities, wisdom, expectations and achievements are negated, obscured and denied rather than affirmed. The cross of Jesus can never be enclosed within the conceptions of grand narratives or ontologies*¹⁹⁷. The transmission of the Christian message, as in every epoch and culture, may meet with rejection or trivialisation on the part of recipients who evaluate in the manner postmodernism presents. Yet the faithful fulfilment of the missionary vocation by the missionary must rest upon the conviction of faith flowing from the fact that it is the work of the Holy Trinity itself and has a timeless character: *"The witness of the Gospel has survived the announcement of the death of God, of the death of man, and it will survive also the death of history, of reason, of morality and of reality. Believers will survive also the death of postmodernism, when it comes"*¹⁹⁸.

The situation presented above concerning the understanding of religion in postmodern society demonstrates that the missionary fulfilling his mandate in such a situation must preserve fidelity to doctrine and must not permit a selective, pragmatic reception either of his own person or of the Gospel he proclaims. He must be prepared for the marginalisation of his person and his message in postmodern society. Both the demands of the Gospel and the proclamation of salvation in Christ, as truths surpassing the various subjective ways of spirituality, may meet with rejection or even a lack of interest on the part of the hearers. A strong faith in Christ crucified and risen must be for him — as in every epoch of the realisation of the missionary work — the fundamental and unshaken foundation of his apostolic work.

Summary

In the chapter above, the key elements of the missionary mandate of the Church were analysed with reference to postmodern tendencies and assumptions. As has been demonstrated, there exists a profound incompatibility between the Catholic understanding of mission and the postmodern ideas. In the first place these concern the most essential truths on which the missionary activity of the Church rests — namely, the truth of the inalienable, unique salvific role of Jesus Christ, which cannot be replaced by the ways of salvation presented by other religions. Likewise the understanding of the necessity of the Church in mediating the transmission of salvation is marginalised and distorted. Further incompatibilities concern the paths of realisation of the Church's missionary task. They manifest themselves in a horizontal, flattened understanding of mission, which only within such a framework retains any sense of realisation — for the missionary work so fulfilled poses no threat to other religious experiences, which in postmodern conceptions possess the same value as the Christian faith. The reference to culture existing in Catholic missionary activity has a critical orientation, evaluating culture in the light of the Gospel; whereas in the postmodern understanding of culture an unconditional and uncritical value is conferred upon it. The question of interreligious dialogue is understood in postmodern reasoning as a polyphony of equally ranked truths — which is irreconcilable with the Catholic reference to the truths of Revelation, which have an unchanging and unassailable character. The presence and work of the

¹⁹⁷ G. Criveller, *The Postmodern Condition and the Enduring Good News of the Gospel*, Institute of Sino-Christian Studies [online], accessed: 2010-10-04 < <http://bit.ly/hyOnKL> >.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid..

missionary in such a cultural context requires of him, as one sent by the Church, great wisdom and prudence in discerning the erroneous theological currents which could render his ministry fruitless. Above all it requires of him a reliance upon the unchanging truths of Revelation and fidelity to doctrine. This reliance will be the firm foundation which, amid a mentality relativised towards religious experiences, will permit him to remain a faithful witness of Christ before the contemporary world.

The conduct of missionary activity in postmodern society must guard against every kind of simplification and flattening of the Christian message, which, so adapted, might indeed be accepted, but would lose its salvific power, transmitted for centuries on the basis of the teaching of Sacred Scripture and the Tradition of the Church. As the above facts demonstrate, there exists a total incompatibility in the fundamental assumptions of the missionary activity of the Church with respect to the postmodern currents of thought. From this flows the conclusion of the impossibility of accepting, within the postmodern conception, the missionary activity of the Church.

Conclusion

The present thesis takes up the question of the realisation of the Church's missionary activity within the assumptions of postmodern thought. To this end it presents both the ideas and assumptions of postmodernism and the most recent teaching of the *Magisterium Ecclesiae* and of missiological thought concerning the missionary activity of the Church. This was done in the first two chapters of the thesis. Then, in the third chapter, the mutual relation of postmodern thought to the key elements of the Church's Catholic missions was presented, taking into account also the critical responses on the part of the *Magisterium Ecclesiae*, clarifying the essential questions of the Church's missionary mandate.

The first chapter presents the basic directions in postmodern thought. Postmodern philosophical thought is characterised by the negation of the universality of reason, the rejection of the idea of truth and objectivity, the accentuation of the value of language in cognition (textualism), the negation of the possibility of finding unity in the manner in which modernism did so, and by the deconstructive cognitive method. Alongside the philosophical assumptions of postmodernism, the first chapter of the thesis characterises those references of postmodern thought which find a common point of interest with theology. They concern the question of the conception of the human person — or rather of the deep crisis of that conception which exists in the postmodern understanding of it — the manner of understanding ethics, and the relation to transcendent and religious values, which express themselves in the phenomenon of desacralisation.

The second chapter presents the development of missiological thought concerning the missionary activity of the Church which has taken place in contemporary times. It presents the theological achievement of the pre-conciliar missiological schools — of Münster, Louvain, the French and the Spanish — which constituted the preparation for the conciliar teaching on missions. It also presents the documents of the *Magisterium Ecclesiae* which since the Second Vatican Council have shaped the understanding of the Church's missionary activity. To these belong: the Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church *Ad gentes divinitus*, the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Paul VI *Evangelii nuntiandi*, and the Encyclical of Pope John Paul II

Redemptoris missio. The contemporary principal currents of missiological thought are also characterised, which take up the question of the Church's mission in the categories of interreligious dialogue, a deepened understanding of the question of the inculturation of the Gospel, the emphasis on the question of human development and of liberation from various forms of oppression and enslavement, and the granting of a greater role to contextual theologies as the fruit of the work of rooting the Gospel in culture.

The third chapter presents the contemporary ways of joining the missionary mandate of the Church with postmodern categories. It presents the conflicts of compatibility with Catholic missiology to which such a synthesis gives rise. These concern the dogmatic foundations of mission, referring to the understanding of the universal salvific role of Jesus Christ, as well as the understanding of the universality of the Church's missionary mandate, which in such conceptions is drastically distorted and perverted. It also presents certain conceptions in missiology which touch the paths of realisation of the Church's missionary activity, such as: an over-accentuated theology of the Kingdom of God, an erroneously understood conception of the evangelisation of cultures in the perspective of cultural and religious pluralism, and a falsely understood interreligious dialogue conducted on the assumptions of postmodern philosophy. It contains also a characterisation of the person of the missionary in the postmodern context — especially of his ecclesial identity and of his conduct of missionary activity in the space of the *new spirituality*.

After analysing the phenomenon of postmodernism in the light of the Catholic understanding of missionary activity, taking into account also the mutual interaction of both these realities, the conclusion must be drawn that in postmodernism there is no place for the acceptance of the missionary activity of the Church in all its fullness. Every attempt to join these two ideas leads to reductionist conceptions in the understanding and conduct of missionary activity, touching the deepest essence of its identity. In this way the Church's missions are deprived both of purposefulness and of effectiveness, through the elimination of their supernatural uniqueness — the awareness of which urged successive generations of missionaries to proclaim salvation in Jesus Christ and to plant the Church, which in this process of transmitting the truth of salvation in Christ is inseparable.

The question presented here of missionary activity in the face of postmodern thought and attitudes may continue to be subjected to more detailed research on the ground of missiology. Both the great diversity of conceptions and the substantive richness of the subject permit a more thorough analysis of the particular aspects presented in this thesis.

List of Abbreviations

DI — Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church *Dominus Iesus*, 2000.

DM / KK (LG) — Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium*, 1964.

DRN (NA) — Second Vatican Council, Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions *Nostra aetate*, 1965.

EN — Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 1975.

FR — John Paul II, Encyclical *Fides et ratio*, 1998.

KDK (GS) — Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et spes*, 1965.

KKK (CCC) — Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1992.

RMis (RM) — John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptoris missio*, 1990.

SRS — John Paul II, Encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 1988.

Abbreviations follow the Polish original; common English equivalents are given in parentheses.