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CHRISTIAN PERSONALISM AS A FOUNDATION FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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In contemporary pedagogy, there are many directions, trends, ideologies and orientations. For inclusive education, the best foundations are laid by the philosophy of, mainly Christian, personalism. This is because it specifically deals with man's upbringing, self-formation and development throughout the entire life. It is, moreover, extremely useful for practically oriented pedagogy.

While presenting Christian personalism as a foundation for philosophical inclusive education, it is necessary to present a few comments on personalism itself. It is a trend in contemporary philosophy expressed in a full affirmation of a person and their good. It is defined as "the basis or doctrine which places the basic value of a human being over all reason of state, economic interest or any other impersonal institution. (...) Personalism is a social doctrine, whose foundation (...) is the respect for the human being. (J. Didier, 1992, p. 250). While defining personalism, J. Galarowicz (1992) examines it in the wider or narrower sense. In the wider sense, it is "every philosophical direction promoting autonomy of a human being against social and material conditions, towards the system and objects as well as its primacy (priority) over them. In the narrower sense, it is one of the contemporary directions in Christian philosophy, initiated before WWII by Mounier in France, and developed in Poland, among others, by Karol Wojtyła." (J. Galarowicz 1992, p. 684). However, J. Homplewicz believes that personalism is a direction of philosophical thinking "which so fully and consistently exposed the value of man, his person and personality, and development that made personality the basic, autonomic value and the purpose of all activities" (J. Homplewicz, 1996, p. 106).

The term of personalism has been referred to many directions, to transcendental, existential and atomistic philosophy as well as to phenomenology, which in various ways developed and interpreted the problems of a human being, favoured personal autonomy, dignity, and the ability to go beyond nature and history. Personalism emerged in the 19th century, and

developed as a separate direction in the late 19th and early 20th century. However, certain elements of that type of philosophy go as far back as the ancient times. One may find them in the works of the sophists and Socrates, in medieval Christian philosophy, *e.g.* St. Thomas Acquinus, in the modern philosophy of R. Descartes or G. Berkeley, and later in German philosophy, as well as in the 19th-century French and American philosophies.

W. Granat (1985) points out that when we meet with various descriptions of personalism, we come across various labels, which are ascribed to it, *e.g.* personalism may be idealistic, panpsychical, dualistic, critical, monadistic, phenomenological, pantheistic, relativistic, absolutistic. Other accepted divisions include personalism that is metaphysical (W. Stern), ethical (N. Hartman, I. Kant), socio-moral (E. Mounier), religious (M. Scheller, D. Bonhoffer), philosophical (W. Stern, M. Buber,) and theological (E. Schillenbeeckca). (after: W. Granat, 1985, p. 76). Such diverse descriptions of personalism prove how hard it is to determine its common, strict perspective. One generally recognised distinction is between personalism as an attitude towards oneself and other people and personalism involved in a specific philosophy or religion.

In Poland, personalism rather refers to the traditionally Christian philosophy of a person, emphasising the exceptionality of a person among beings. The Polish Christian personalists include: K. Wojtyła, M. A. Krąpiec, T. Styczeń, M. Gogacz, J. Tischner, S. Grygiel, Cz. Bartnik, W. Granat.

S. Palka (1999) analysing the trends that have the word "personalism" in them indicates that on the basis of practically oriented pedagogy, one may perceive personalism:

- Very widely:
- placing pedagogic personalism according to L. Chmaj (1963) in the trend of naturalistic and liberal pedagogy, connected with the movement of "the new upbringing" and "the work schools" as well as associating it with the concepts of practical solutions of such foreign educationalists as: O. Decroly, M. Montessori, H. Parkhurst, C. Frienet, and Polish educationalists: J. Korczak, M. Grzegorzewska, H. Rowid,
- connecting personalism with the acceptance of the premises of independence of phenomena from the humane world and cognition in relation to the natural world and natural cognition. This trend was presented abroad by: W. Dilthey, W. Windelband, and H. Rickert, and in Poland by: S. Hessen and B. Nawroczyński, Z. Mysłakowski, B. Suchodolski
- connecting personalism with contemporary alternative humane pedagogy *e.g.* antipedagogy (E.v. Braunmuhl, H.v. Schonebeck) as well as trends referring to contemporary humane psychology (C. Rogers), to

critical philosophy (H. Gadamer), to the philosophy of dialogue (M. Bubera)

- o Specifically, in the manner narrowed to one doctrine, exemplified by attempts to apply the premises of Christian philosophy of personalism to pedagogical practice.

The latter approach narrowed to the premises of Christian personalistic philosophy and its applications in the practice of inclusive education is examined in this part of the work.

Christian personalism is a trend in Christian philosophy, which was developed in the 20th and the early 21st century. It stresses the personality of God and preaches superiority of a human being over historical and socio-economic circumstances. Christian personalism is described as "a set of philosophical and religious directions that accept the good and development of a human being as the main principle, they recognise its special value and role as a being that goes beyond nature and history, preach the primacy of personal values over other values as well as treat development of a human being as source and purpose of individual and social life" (Z. Drozdowicz, 1992, p. 248).

In the 20th century, a special role was played by two varieties of Christian personalism: neotomistic personalism according to J. Maritain and personalism of social commitment according to E. Mounier. "Both trends emerged in a perspective of Christianity as attempts to formulate answers to questions regarding human condition in contemporary, socially and politically diverse world, regarding the place of Christianity and the Church in it, as well as regarding the form of its activity, and also as an attempt to establish perspectives of development for Christian thinking towards the achievements of contemporary philosophy" (Z. Drozdowicz, 1992, p. 248).

The starting point for J. Maritain's personalism is the concept of the human being. Its ontological foundation is the general premises of tomistic metaphysics. For pedagogy, particularly for inclusive education, it is important how J. Maritain perceives man. Well, he perceives man as a complex being, whose key elements are the soul and the body. These create one ontological unity of *compositum humanum*. Man is a person due to the fact that he exists as spiritual beings do. As a person, man "takes a distinguished place in the universe, exceeding all its elements, which are instrumental in character and serve auxiliary functions in personal self-fulfillment. As a person, man goes above nature, but at the same time is an individual who connect with nature". (Z. Drozdowicz, 1992, p. 249).

In Mounier's personalism, one may notice considerable eclectics. The author often tries to synthesise various, often contradictory threads. Just as in other variations of personalism, for E. Mounier the most important con-

cept is the indefinable concept of "person". "The person is based on the lasting of the soul, which makes the person dependent on God (there is no personal life without God) and that makes the person autonomic towards the world, but at the same time the world is an area where personal life may be fulfilled, a divine act of creation places it in a specific reality" (Z. Drozdowicz, 1992, p. 252). According to E. Mounier, the person is a presence rather than a being, it exists as a gift and as a task, which confirms itself among the phenomena of the real world in activity and in communication with other people, in a protest against the impersonal world.

Christian personalism is involved with people's outlook on life. According to J. Mouroux (1953), "Man is destined to live in two universes; submerged in realities that the world both lives in among objects and (personal) beings, connected with other persons, develops his activity at work, in thinking and in love. Moreover, man is obligated to live among divine objects: Christ is present inside that world and his soul, in order to introduce us to the community of God's people and reward him in God. Man should breathe in eternity and in time at the same time" (after: W. Granat, 1985, p. 78).

The principle of Christian personalism emphasises dignity of a human being and constitutes a source of other principles. "Man is supposed to be the end, and never the means; the subject – never the object, a starting point – never a stop on the way to the finish – in all spheres of social and national life. Respect for man, for every man, and for his dignity should be a basic criterion for solving all kinds of problems. This is because no shared or common good may exist, whose foundation would not be the good of a human being – the good of a specific man." (A. Wuwer, 2006).

In the social teachings of the church, a particular significance for justifying the promotion and development of inclusive education can be found in the views expressed by Pope Paul VI, who emphasises in his *Octogesima adveniens* Epistle that the human being should be the principle, the subject and the end of all pursuits and social activities. And in the *Populorum progressio* encyclical, he distinguished man's right to the integrally understood intellectual, moral, religious and physical development. According to Paul VI, man, apart from his right to full development, is simply obliged to it: "the development of a human being is not left to man's free will. (...) The development of a human being epitomises in it all our obligations" (Paul VI, n. 5.). Man's right to the integral development is exercised through inclusive education, providing all students with the conditions to exercise their right to education.

Also in social teaching, John XXIII in the *Pacem in terris* encyclical of peace between all nations, based on truth, justice, love and freedom, often called a catalogue of man's rights and responsibilities, emphasises that the

foundation of man's rights is the dignity of a human being. The Pope enumerates the rights: to live as well as to enjoy dignified living standards, to use all moral and cultural values, to worship God in compliance with what their righteous conscience, to freely choose their status and to freedom of family life, the right in the sphere of economics, to associate, to emigrate and immigrate, to participate in public life and to protect their rights. (W. Piwowarski, 1993). For the inclusive education, the most important thing is to emphasise the right to live, which entails the execution of the remaining rights. It is necessary here to highlight that this right is very universal, and is more than imposing views by Catholics on those who do not believe.

Moreover, a wide justification for inclusive education can be found in the works of Pope John Paul II. According to John Paul II "Protection of the absolute sanctity of the unborn life is part of protection of human rights and human dignity" (1982, p. 299). In the *Evangelium vitae* encyclical he writes that "every man (...) from their conception until their demise (...), each human being has the right for absolute respect for that basic good. The recognition of that right constitutes the foundation of coexistence between people as well as the existence of the political community" (1995, s. 5).

In compliance with the Pope's message, "Children are not a burden for the society, not a tool for obtaining profit nor are they persons deprived of any rights; they are important members of the human community, a specific embodiment of its hopes, expectations and capabilities" (1999, s. 18). The Pope devotes a lot of attention to the fact "that each child has the right to develop in a normal healthy way on the physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual and social plates in the conditions of freedom and dignity" (1982, p. 92). These elements are provided by inclusive education, which assumes that every child is to be accepted as a student of a public school in the atmosphere of freedom and dignity.

The formation of a fairer world, as envisaged by John Paul II, is connected with making efforts to ensure there are no children that are undernourished, or deprived of education and upbringing (1982, p. 219). M. Śnieżyński (2003) points out that John Paul II strongly emphasises that „Upbringing serves the purpose of "humanising" man, in the particular sense of this word. Man, being one from the very first moment of his conception in the mother's womb, gradually learns how to be man – and this basic knowledge is identified with upbringing. The child is the future of their family and the entire mankind – yet man's future is inseparably connected with upbringing" (John Paul II, 1988, p. 28).

According to K. Wojtyła, upbringing is always focused on man and his good. "It is a creation of the most personal nature – what may be brought up

is a human, whereas animals may only be trained – and at the same time it is a creation in an absolutely human material: everything that naturally comprises man's upbringing constitutes a material for educators, a material which should reach for their love" (K. Wojtyła, 1962, p. 54).

Inclusive education points out that the pupil should be treated as a subject, not as an object. Karol Wojtyła (1962) very clearly highlights the common principle of personal subjectivity. It is being accomplished according to the inclusive approach, in which a child is not treated as a means to reach the end, but is the end in itself. "The essential value and personal dignity of each man never change, regardless of however specific the circumstances of its life. Man, even if seriously ill or unable to perform more complex actions, always remains a human, and never becomes >>a plant<< or >>an animal<< (John Paul II, 2004).

Inclusive education is practically implementing the Church's concern "to make human life more and more human, to ensure that everything that comprises life was adequate to the true dignity of man" (Redemptor hominis, 15).

"This dignity of a human being extends to include and refer to each individual, also to those disabled physically or mentally: (...) From the moment of conception, and later from birth, man is destined to fully express humanity, to make it happen. This refers to all people, including those chronically ill and underdeveloped. To be human is man's basic vocation: to be human so as to match the gift that was granted to him, to match the talent that is humanity and then to match all the talents which were granted to him." (John Paul II, 1994, p. 27).

Personalistic philosophy has its place in the contemporary ideology of Christian upbringing. What may serve as an example is the views of Kunowski, who believes that personalism "consists in emphasising man's great dignity and value as a person, i.e. a naturally free and rational being, not only an adult male, but also a female, a child, a disabled or handicapped person, for the price of the human soul, which exceeds in value all other treasures" (Z. Kunowski, 1993, s. 101).

Personalistic pedagogy is developed on the basis of personalism. To implement inclusive education it is important to recognise the achievements of personalistic pedagogy. These are contained in the main theses of personalistic pedagogy, presented by M. Nowak (2003, p. 246-247):

- upbringing is understood as an important factor (element) of the effort to promote "*universum personal*" or "the community of people";
- the highest purpose of upbringing is to enable to subject (the pupil) to take control of their own process of development;

- upbringing is understood as "maieutics of a person" (to inspire a person in the pupil);
- the pupil is not perceived as an object or thing to be filled with anything, neither is he or she a being to be trained, but a person who has to be "inspired" in them;
- the pupil is the first and basic factor in upbringing, the educator is only a co-operator in this process; this is the position that very clearly emphasises the realistic character of the educational relation, which definitely opposes the perception of it in idealism;
- essentially, there is support form the aspirations manifested in the movement of so-called new schools, in which mistakes are also noticed in the form of, for instance, naturalistic reductionism and (as previously indicated by E. Mounier), individualistic optimism originating from the liberal and bourgeois movement;
- as a person, the pupil neither belongs to the family not to the state, an no one holds any right to them for any reasons;
- The importance and the role of school is recognised, and its goals are indicated next to those of other educational institutions; the relation is emphasised between education and upbringing, the concept of "neutral school" is examined and rejected;
- School education should focus on "integral humanism", *i.e.* not only literary or artistic, but also scientific and technical;
- The educational function of the family is reinforced and defended, yet without overlooking the signs of crisis that the family is facing; threats are recognised connected with authoritarianism that may occur in family upbringing;
- The respect for "the mystery of the child" is emphasised (which is all the more possible when the climate of faith is accepted and when one opens themselves to transcendence). The child becomes a person under the influence of various stimulants from various educational institutions.

According to B. Śliwerski (2005), personalistic pedagogy is an important trend in contemporary pedagogic reflection. The reference point here is the concept of the world and man, which accepts the mutual dependence of indeterminism, freedom and transcendence. Epistemologically, the author treats personalistic pedagogy as a concept of upbringing based on the cognitive theory, which considers various degrees of cognition, while assuming the principle of the basic homogeneity of human cognition, able to search for the truth.

"The theoretical reflection sees its specific goal in personalistic pedagogy as being a kind of critical awareness in relation to pedagogy and upbringing.

For these reasons, personalistic pedagogy enters the discussion on pedagogy to protect the rights and dignity of a person on the one hand, and to point out to and warn against various claims that appear in pedagogy, and to assess their weight"(.B. Śliwerski, 2005, p. 246).

Moreover, what is the perfect source that justifies the implementation of inclusive education is the Christian personal and existential pedagogy based on Christian personalism. For inclusive education, it is important to be close to the other person. J. Tarnowski calls the pedagogy of being close to the other person the pedagogy of the future. J. Tarnowski's pedagogic motto (2001) justifies inclusive education, which comes down to five principles and dispels the following dilemmas:

1. As the starting point. In the first contact with the pupil or group, it is paramount to enter their world with genuine and authentic interest and a friendly attitude. The educator should adopt the point of view of the pupils met, to ensure they feel his respect and to avoid any incorrect moves towards them.
2. The pupil is not inferior to or less valuable than the educator, but on the contrary, he or she may, in many respects, be superior. We are not there to judge them. Any faults that we discover must not be associated with the specific pupil. One should always find the image of God in them, who loves and forgives.
3. The relation between the educator and the pupil. The educator should consistently aim at friendship, but must not expect gratitude or affection. The pupil should be made to feel love, but without obscuring the one who loves them far more: Jesus Christ. The factor that connects and bonds them is the prayer.
4. The process of upbringing. Listening to the pupil. Learning from and educating each other. Not imposing anything, but a subtle assistance to incite interest in and the search for the values leading us to the meeting with God in Christ thanks to the grace of the Holy Spirit. Hoping for a distant future rather than expecting immediate results. Constant patience and the atmosphere of joy.
5. The objective. To help the pupil find their place in life and their personal vocation in gradually approaching human and Christian maturity. Along with the process of upbringing of others, aim at self-improvement and living with Christ.(after:, J. Tarnowski, 2001, p. 73).

The ideas of Christian personalism are closely connected with pedagogic practice as well as man's life and development. They are very important from the point of view of inclusive education discussed here, which provides autonomy for disabled people. After all, in Christian personalism the basic category is the person. F. Adamski claims that "the value of a person is

special: we educators describe it as >>autonomy<< of a human being – it only exists because it is independent of others. Hence the relations between persons are in fact the relations between being who are equal in their dignity and freedom" (F. Adamski, 1993, p. 12).

Abstract

The ideas of Christian personalism are closely connected with pedagogical practice, man's life and development. They are very important from the point of view of inclusive education, which provides autonomy for disabled people.

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