

## *Preface*

Religiosity and spirituality – the key issues of the present Journal for Perspectives of Economic, Political and Social Integration – are important factors of social and personal integration. Such a viewpoint has long been present in research on religiosity within both sociology and psychology.

In consideration of the history of social development we notice that religion proved to be a long-lasting, pervasive and essential feature of human life. And continues to be so to this day. News related to religion – in its various aspects – are present in media on a daily basis. Even in countries of western liberal democracies, referred to as secularized societies, religion-driven opinions contribute significantly to public debate.

According to the researchers of social phenomena there has been a noticeable increase in importance of religion in social life since the last decade of the 20th century. This trend has been present in many societies worldwide, both traditionally religious (e.g. the Arabic world) and those which have gone through the secularization process (Western European countries and North American states). The results of opinion polls demonstrate the same. There are more than 70% people on average both in United States and in Europe who believe in God and declare that religion plays an important role in their life. The results for countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Oceania are even higher.

Having said that, the relative absence of religious topics in psychological research throughout virtually all the 20th century seems surprising and, according to some authors, detrimental. More extensive psychological studies were conducted in the last years of the previous century. Its results have shown a considerable diversity of the role religion plays in the functioning of individuals and social groups. Psychology of religion and spirituality has nowadays aroused interest of many psychologists, also those embarking on their academic career. The function of religion is a particularly important issue in this respect – both positive and negative – in the integration of individuals and social groups.

The present volume of the *Journal for Perspectives of Economic, Political and Social Integration* is a compilation of papers by Polish researchers dealing with psychology of religion. It was inspired by the Second International Conference on Psychology of Religion and Spirituality which was held at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin in June 2014. The event gathered representatives of various academic fields from numerous research and scholarly centres in Poland and abroad (Belgium, Latvia, Turkey, Ukraine). The speakers were psychologists, educationalists, philosophers, theologians, sociologists, and religion and culture experts. The conference held in Lublin was aimed at presenting new approaches, measurement tools and results of the research on psychology of religion and spirituality. Although in the communist times the research on religion in Poland was scarce and this scientific field was somewhat peripheral, nowadays it enjoys an increasing interest from researchers. The number of participants and fields represented at the conference attest to this shift. In view of the above, the Congresses of the Polish Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, expected to be held every 2 years, will likely contribute to even more extensive preoccupation with this psychological dis-

cipline and, along with that, to the improvement in its subject-matter and methodological quality.

The first four papers of this volume are focused on religiosity as an asset which supports personal integration at various stages of human life. The first paper by Małgorzata Tatala and Maria Mańkowska touches upon religious emotions experienced by pre-school children. The catalogue of categories of positive and negative emotions in children in the Polish context is an unquestionable strength of this work. Its method-related value consists in the integration of data collected from two different sources: children and their mothers. The two authors show fields in which these evaluations are consistent and those which demonstrate specific differences. Next, Maria Oleś and Mariusz Woźny undertake an important topic of the strategies of emotion regulation in youth and its relationship with the religious meaning system. Encouraging study results of these authors may be an impulse for extended research on youth and continuation of the research on relations between religiosity and cognitive strategies of coping in difficult situations. The paper by Iwona Niewiadomska and her team also refers to the role religiosity plays in the functioning of youth. The results indicate that religiosity plays an important role in protecting young individuals against deviation and socially unacceptable behaviours. In their comparison of the protective role of internal religiosity and religiosity connected with getting involved in organized forms, the authors point to a greater importance of the latter. Whereas Beata Zarzycka, Rafał Pietruszka and Jacek Śliwak researched the characteristics of religious experiences in individuals who belong to various religious groups. The comparative analysis of the members of the Charismatic Renewal and the Neocatechumenal Way revealed that although religion was a significant source of support for both groups, it is affiliation to the group that differentiated study participants with reference to the religious strains experienced. The authors discuss condition-

ing of the differences observed and opportunities for their application, in particular in the field of formation-related influences within the studied groups.

The second part of this volume focuses on papers related to methodology and theory of the research on spirituality and religiosity. Piotr Krakowiak and Małgorzata Fopka-Kowalczyk presented their proposal for cultural adaptation of the FICA test (Faith and Belief, Importance, Community, Address in Care), not yet known in the Polish context, by Christina Puchalski. The FICA is a qualitative method aimed at studying spiritual experiences in ill individuals. Based on literature findings and own experience in the palliative and hospice field, the authors indicate the importance of spiritual experiences in individuals who benefit from medical and social care, and also show practical applications of the FICA test as a diagnostic tool. Next, Romuald Jaworski undertook a problem of psychological and theological interpretations of spirituality. He claims that the traditional psychological approach to the spiritual sphere is characterised by reductionism. Jaworski distinguished between two types of spirituality: theocentric spirituality, where human being places God in the centre of their interest and life in general, and anthropocentric spirituality, focused on human being, their own aspirations, preferences and needs. He also proposed the scale to measure both types of spirituality. Whereas in Amadeusz Citlak's article refers to an attempt of applying the original theory of cratism, formulated by Władysław Witwicki, to the interpretation of the activities and personality of Jesus Christ. Citlak suggests that the theory of cratism provides substantial explanation to interpret many aspects of human activity such as art, social relations, as well as the life of ancient figures, among others, Socrates and Jesus Christ. According to Citlak, the proposal to decipher the activity of Jesus of Nazareth through Witwicki is well established. However, it raises large concerns, which

discouraged many psychologists, and religious environments in particular.

We hope to present this will inspire further research in psychology of religion and spirituality

*Jacek Śliwak*  
*Rafał P. Bartczuk*  
*Michał Wiechetek*  
*Beata Zarzycka*