

SYLWESTER KASPRZAK

THE RIGHT OF NATIONS  
TO DEVELOPMENT AND TO RECEIVE THE GOSPEL  
BY THE CHURCH'S MISSIONARY ACTIVITY  
AS A REFLECTION OF UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS

INTRODUCTION

The Gospel is the Good News brought by the Church to the world since the beginning of time by evangelization work in its broad sense, undertaken by missionaries dispatched to many countries of all continents by the power of the canonical mission of the Church. Christ reveals God's will to save every human being regardless of their affiliation with a particular culture area. At present, we need to look at this missionary activity from another angle, a profounder and richer perspective, to see new elements emerging, mindful of the old. What is old seems like a bridge spanning all elements inherent in the terminology brought forth by the Second Vatican Council, which addressed the notions of "missions" and "Church's missionary activity." So far, missions and evangelization efforts of missionaries have been perceived in rigorous terms, but attempts have been made to adjust these to the canonical precepts and doctrine foundations. This mission of the Church should be seen from a much broader perspective; in other words, it should be viewed as the affirmation of human dignity, sadness, joy, adversities, and the feeling of meaninglessness. The Church's missionary activity makes it possible to utilise the projects that missionaries themselves have developed and implement the guidelines worked

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out by national conferences of bishops. Such initiatives can focus on the good of peoples embraced by missionary activity, which frequently evolves into protection of human rights, pursued by missionaries in the concrete life circumstances of the evangelized people. In view of different aspects of the encountered culture as well as its tradition which is rich in customs, missionaries should be braced for missionary work, by having undergone special training under the supervision of the Polish Episcopal Conference before departing for mission countries.

At this stage of our study, we shall omit other components of the theory of evangelization mission such as inculturation, that is the contextualisation<sup>1</sup> of Christian elements, which are to be absorbed by cultures through the proclamation of the Gospel as the Good News bringing salvation from the Risen Christ. The Christian community, represented by the Church, proclaims and bears testimony to the Gospel before the whole creation, and inculturates the elements of the Gospel into the encountered cultures in order to sanctify the effort and hardships of local people's daily work. Evangelizers themselves need a renewed consciousness of the real life and people set in missionary context.

A mission which is carried out with the enthusiasm of faith brings consolation and peace of heart. After all, this is what man craves. This peace rests with God. Faith is the foundation of evangelization. Without it no church community can develop. If there is faith, the Holy Spirit operates in Christ will full strength.<sup>2</sup>

## 1. THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLES AND NATIONS

Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Populorum Progressio* addresses the question of development of peoples. Paul argues that the Catholic Church has an authentic and holistic conception of the human person. The specific precepts of the encyclical pervade the whole teaching on the integral growth of the human being and mankind in all corners of the modern world. The notion "integral" embraces not only the element of comprehensiveness but also an element which "creates a whole," so it implies not only comprehensive development but also such that comprehensively

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<sup>1</sup> For comparison, see the Author's earlier study in inculturation: S. KASPRZAK, "Ewangelizacja kultur przez inkulturację," *Nurt SVD* 38, 4 (2004): 75–109; see L.J. LUZBETAK, *Kościół a kultury. Nowe perspektywy w antropologii misyjnej*, transl. S. Tokarski (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Verbinum, 1998), 173–210; IDEM, "Międzykulturowe przygotowanie misjonarzy," *Nurt SVD* 32, 3 (1998): 3–6.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. ŚLIWIŃSKI, "Kościół jest misją. Z problematyki teologii i realizacji misji w Kościele," *Studia Pelplińskie* 11 (1980): 151–62.

blends various instruments and initiatives designed to extend help in terms of development anywhere it is needed.<sup>3</sup> We read in the pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world *Gaudium et Spes*: “Thus the Church [...] goes forward together with humanity and experiences the same earthly lot which the world does.”<sup>4</sup> This intertwining of the Church and her mission and the socio-cultural circumstances in which she lives and operates is reflected in the difficulties which this communion of faith is experiencing in the modern times. The Church serves any man of any culture, evangelizing through the incarnation of the evangelical spirit in the spirit of cultures and nations.<sup>5</sup> Pope John Paul II was a formidable defender of human rights, which he would often manifest in his numerous documents, encyclicals, adhortations, and addresses. In his encyclical *Redemptoris missio*, he writes: “All forms of missionary activity are marked by an awareness that one is furthering human freedom by proclaiming Jesus Christ, [...] the Church addresses people with full respect for their freedom: Her mission does not restrict freedom but rather promotes it. The *Church proposes; she imposes nothing*. She respects individuals and cultures, and she honours the sanctuary of conscience.”<sup>6</sup> Further, the Pope argues: “Developing ecclesial communities, inspired by the Gospel, will gradually be able to express their Christian experience in original ways and forms that are consonant with their own cultural traditions, provided that those traditions are in harmony with

<sup>3</sup> PAULUS, PP. VI, Litterae encyclicae de populorum progressionem promovenda *Populorum progressio*, March 26, 1967, *AAS* 59 (1967), 257–99; Polish translation in *Encyklika “Populorum progressio” (o popieraniu rozwoju ludów) Ojca Świętego Pawła VI do biskupów, kapłanów, zakonników, do wiernych całego świata katolickiego oraz do wszystkich ludzi dobrej woli*, 3–75 (Wrocław: TUM Wydawnictwo Wrocławskiej Księgarni Archidiecezjalnej), 1999; English translation retrieved from [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_07121990\\_redemptoris-missio.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html) [hereafter cited as PP]; *Słownik wyrazów obcych. 17 000 wyrazów*, ed. Z. Rysiewicz (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1964), 297.

<sup>4</sup> SACROSANCTUM CONCILIUM OECUMENICUM VATICANUM II, Constitutio pastoralis de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis *Gaudium et spes*, December 7, 1965, *AAS* 58 (1966), 1025–115; Polish translation in SOBÓR WATYKAŃSKI II, *Konstytucje, dekryty, deklaracje: tekst polski, nowe tłumaczenie* (Poznań: Pallottinum, 2002), 526–606 (no. 40); English translation retrieved from [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html).

<sup>5</sup> See B. SORGE, “Ewangelizacja i rozwój człowieka. Synteza prac rzymskiego zgromadzenia Kościoła włoskiego 30 X–4 XI (1976),” *Chrześcijanin w świecie* 9 (1977): 129–49; cf. J. KRUCINA, “Sprawiedliwość społeczna jako korelat ewangelizacji,” *Chrześcijanin w świecie* 10 (1977): 20–36; IOANNES PAULUS PP. II, Litterae encyclicae *Redemptor hominis*, March 4, 1979, *AAS* 71 (1979), 257–324; Polish translation in *Encykliki Ojca Świętego Jana Pawła II* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Św. Stanisława B.M. Archidiecezji Krakowskiej, Wydawnictwo M, 1996), 1:5–76, nos. 16 and 21.

<sup>6</sup> IOANNES PAULUS PP. II, Litterae encyclicae de perenni vi mandati missionalis *Redemptoris missio*, December 7, 1990, *AAS* 83 (1991), 249–340; Polish translation in: *Encykliki Ojca Świętego Jana Pawła II*, 1:377–460, no. 39 [henceforth cited as RMis].

the objective requirements of the faith itself. To this end, especially in the more delicate areas of inculturation, particular churches of the same region should work in communion with each other and with the whole Church, in the conviction that only by being attentive both to the universal Church and the particular churches will they be capable of translating the treasure of the faith into a legitimate variety of expressions. [...] The safeguarding of traditional values is the work of a mature faith” (*RMis* 53, 54).<sup>7</sup> The Pope lays emphasis on the testimony of life, dialogue, authentic proclaiming, sanctification of cultures and nations, being less concerned about a civilisational or cultural aid. The “mission” of the Church, according to Pope John Paul II, is not to “work directly on the economic, technical or political levels, or to contribute materially to development. Rather, her mission consists essentially in offering people an opportunity not to «have more» but to «be more», by awakening their consciences through the Gospel. «Authentic human development must be rooted in an ever deeper evangelization»” (*RMis* 58).

The development of mankind does not have a timeless nature because it is limited by the temporary dimensions of the material world. It is naturally subject to abuse and gross neglect. Only the Gospel is timeless, and when received in the spirit of faith, it makes those who listen genuine disciples of Christ. Pope Paul VI supplements his natural vision of Man’s vocation with elements of supernatural vocation. He says that the Christian faithful attain the state of integral development through integration in the love of Christ: “*Integratio personae humanae in caritate Christi.*”<sup>8</sup>

## 2. NATIONS’ RIGHT TO THE BASIC DEVELOPMENT

Using a legal perspective, the first attempt at defining the human right to development was indicated by Kéba M’Baye in a paper which he delivered personally at the Institute of Human Rights in Strasbourg. The encyclical *Populorum progressio* addresses social issues and defines the right to development. The pope underscored that the integral development of Man “may be said to sum up our obligations” (PP 16). In the document *De iustitia in Mundo*, the 1971 Synod of Bishops, held in Rome, argued that “this aspiring to justice asserts itself in advancing beyond the threshold at which begins

<sup>7</sup> Cf. S. KASPRZAK, “Wiara motywem podejmowania działalności misyjnej Kościoła *Ad gentes*,” in *Porta Fidei. Przekaz wiary w prawie Kościoła*, ed. A. Kaczor (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Polihymnia, 2012), 113–28.

<sup>8</sup> See Cz. STRZESZEWSKI, “Integralny rozwój człowieka według wskazań encykliki Pawła VI «*Populorum Progressio*»,” *Zeszyty Naukowe KUL* 12, no. 2 (1969): 17–22.

a consciousness of enhancement of personal worth [...]. The right to development must be seen as a dynamic interpenetration of all those fundamental human rights upon which the aspirations of individuals and nations are based.” It is in this spirit that this right was captured in a working paper issued by the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace “Iustitia et Pax”: “all men and nations enjoy the right to development, regarded as a dynamic interpretation of all those fundamental rights on which the aspirations of individuals and nations are based” (no. 38).<sup>9</sup> According to F. Mazurek: “The right to development is not merely an addition to the list of recognised and proclaimed rights, it is not inferred from their content but its formulation is based on a global vision of man and his integral development. Our reality provides a great deal of evidence that a unilateral or fragmentary interpretation and fulfilment of human rights, for example social rights or freedom-related rights, do not ensure integral development of Man. The use of a synthetic approach means that the national and international dimensions of human rights and their protection become equal.”<sup>10</sup> With regard to Europe, Orzeszyna highlights the fact that everyone is allowed to manifest their right to manifest convictions “either individually or with others.” The European Commission on Human Rights concluded that this right should be conceived as freedom to practice religion in a community of the faithful, as well as the autonomy of religious institutions, the freedom of worship and religious instruction.<sup>11</sup> The common heritage of the united Europe is the perception of human dignity as an inalienable value which is tied with the very humanity of the human person. This very value circumscribes the scope of liberty and rights of people in general.<sup>12</sup>

All nations of the world have the right to fundamental development, which is conditional upon existing political and economic circumstances of a particular state. The whole humanity, both internationally and domestically, participates in the cultural and civilisational development in various ways. Changes are due to processes of migration, which are affecting directly or indirectly the growing social awareness of societies and their integral development.<sup>13</sup> Fundamentally, this development is best realised in North

<sup>9</sup> PAPIESKA KOMISJA IUSTITIA ET PAX, “Kościół i prawa człowieka (10.12.1974),” *Chrześcijanin w świecie* 50 (1977): 54; see F.J. MAZUREK “Prawa i obowiązki człowieka w świetle katolickiej nauki społecznej,” *Kościół i Prawo* 11 (1993): 50–53.

<sup>10</sup> MAZUREK, “Prawa i obowiązki człowieka,” 51–52.

<sup>11</sup> K. ORZESZYNA, „Stosunek Wspólnot Europejskich i Unii Europejskiej do Kościołów,” *Roczniki Nauk Prawnych* 10, no. 2 (2000): 229ff; see IDEM, “Karta Praw Podstawowych Unii Europejskiej,” *Prawo – Administracja – Kościół* 2–3 (2002): 175–95.

<sup>12</sup> IDEM, *Karta praw podstawowych*, 180.

<sup>13</sup> PAULUS, PP. VI, Adhortatio apostolica de Evangelizatione in mundo huius temporis *Evangelii nuntiandi*, December 8, 1975, *AAS* 68 (1976), 5–76; Polish text in *Misje po Soborze Watykańskim II* (Płock: Wydawnictwo Diecezjalne w Płocku, 1981), 257–91, no. 31 [hereafter EN]; cf. J. OZDOWSKI, “Rozwój integralny w świetle «Ad gentes» i «Evangelii nuntiandi»,” *Zeszyty Misjologiczne* (1982): 185–200.

America, Japan or Western Europe; in African states or those of Latin America, or even some countries of the Eastern Bloc, this evolution is at its worst. In many places around the globe, we encounter humans who have not attained even the basic level of development because they lack favourable living conditions and economic basis for building schools, kindergartens, homes, workplaces, cultural centres or places of worship, but first and foremost there is an insufficiency of medical staff in hospital units. The impossibility to develop economically is a serious issue in particular regions, caused by their poor financial base. Access to job market and the possibility to pursue different job careers is another question. Also, illiteracy, lack of educational facilities or their unavailability to many young people and children is a serious problem as this puts them at a disadvantage early in their life. The lack of health care, the proliferation of such diseases as AIDS, alcoholism, substance dependence, other addictions and lifestyle diseases such as cardiovascular diseases and stress. According to K. Świerszcz, “the human condition in the modern world seems to fall short of the demands of moral order, not governed by justice or, for that matter, love of one’s neighbour. What matters is the development of people, not the proliferation of objects which they could use.”<sup>14</sup>

From the perspective of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, nations and states are subject to development because they have an inalienable right to that. Contemporary evangelization requires that the Church proclaim and promote the human person in various ways,<sup>15</sup> and defend international human rights due to the innate dignity of the human being.<sup>16</sup>

### 3. THE MISSIONARY ACTIVITY OF THE CHURCH SEEN AS THE PROMOTION OF UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS

The origin of human rights is natural law, the conception of which – in light of the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas – demonstrates inclinations of natural law which justify the metaphysical existence of Man and his development. Given these inclinations, we speak of: 1) the right of Man and nations to life and existence; 2) the right to convey life and increase the population of a particular nation; 3) the right to develop in a peaceful community.<sup>17</sup> Man is in need of constant development

<sup>14</sup> K. ŚWIERSZCZ, “Postęp czy zagrożenie? Niepokoje współczesnego człowieka,” *Communio* 28, no. 2 (2008): 13–15.

<sup>15</sup> See P. COLOMBO, “Ewangelizacja a promocja ludzka,” *Communio* 2, no. 6 (1982): 72.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. MAZUREK, “Prawa i obowiązki człowieka,” 27–42.

<sup>17</sup> M.A. KRĄPIEC, *Człowiek i prawo naturalne* (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 1993), 200–07.

to grow mature and enrich those who are to share existence with him. Saint Thomas defines natural law as participation of divine elements in the reasonable nature of Man. If God participates in us, then we originate in Him and our fate rests in His hands. The fact that the Lord wants to save Man reflects the ultimate dimension of the salvation history and the limit of human development, both on the individual and social planes. The missionary activity of the Church with her long history pervades and shapes the fundamental human rights.<sup>18</sup>

The Church cannot exempt herself from the mission of promoting human rights and respect for them, especially in places rife with injustice, where it is impossible to satisfy the basic needs of many peoples and nations. Human rights are conferred by neither a state nor any social authority. Instead, they are innate, inalienable and reserved to every human being from the moment of conception. Every human person contributes these values to the community which she is naturally born into. Certain human rights are proper to Man even before his birth, primarily the very “right to life,” whose deeper emanation is the “right to be born”. Human rights are universal due to the fact that natural law is their normative foundation. They are reserved for human beings regardless of their gender, skin colour, age, social background, nationality, circumstances of time and place in which they live, as well as religion and level of education. These rights are proper to all people, even if they do not fully exercise them.<sup>19</sup> A glance at history shows that the idea of universal human rights becomes an issue when local laws are treated as travesty of justice, also when those deprived of any rights and foreigners are demanding rights for themselves. According to K. Graf Ballestrem, human rights can be classified into three groups: 1) liberal, fundamental rights, such as: freedom of conscience and religion, protection of the private sphere of ownership, the right of free movement and choice of residence within the borders of each state and the right leave any country; 2) civic and political rights, such as: the right to be affiliated with a state, freedom of assembly and association, especially (universal and equal) electoral rights; 3) socio-economical and cultural rights, such as: the right to social security and care, the right to work and equal pay, and the right to rest and paid holidays.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> S. KASPRZAK, *Normatywny wymiar ekologicznych i socjologicznych idei w systemie prawa państwowego i kościelnego* (Lublin: „Bamka” Studio Komputerowo-Wydawnicze 2003), 196-207; see F. MAZUREK, “Nauczanie Kościoła o prawach człowieka,” *Chrześcijanin w świecie* 18, vol. 3 (1986): 9–10; see J. HOŁDA et al., *Prawa człowieka. Zarys wykładu*, 3rd (Warsaw: Wolters Kluwer Polska, 2011), 50–151; see S. KASPRZAK, “Prawnokononiczne implikacje nakazu misyjnego,” *Roczniki Nauk Prawnych* 25, no. 2 (2015): 129–50.

<sup>19</sup> H. WAŚKIEWICZ, “Prawa człowieka a prawa rodziny,” in *Prawa człowieka. Wybór źródeł*, ed. K. Motyka (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 1996), 24–25.

<sup>20</sup> K. GRAF BALLESTREM, “Kościół katolicki a prawa człowieka,” *Communio* 28, no. 3 (2008): 89–92.

At present, human rights are the central issue, therefore they should be construed with respect to concrete situations occurring in regions embraced by evangelization and missions. Evangelization encompasses the entirety of human life, social attitudes, all aspects of the life of nations and states, and governmental policies in the broad sense.<sup>21</sup>

Whenever starting her activity in new mission territories, the Church has always taught the Gospel and Catechism, set up facilities, mission stations, built hospitals, churches, chapels, leper colonies, schools, kindergartens, mothers' homes, orphanages, crèches, nursery homes for the sick and single people. In her missionary activity, the Church would often promote and defend human rights. The Church's mission, whose first and foremost role is to announce the "kerygma of salvation" and administer the sacraments, ensures comprehensive care of people and their life, loneliness, pain, suffering and exclusion from the distribution of property.<sup>22</sup> The Church has also been concerned with cultural, civilisational and material growth, addressing issues by providing specific forms of assistance to people. It can be argued that respect for human rights is realised in a local context where an individual, a nation, tribe or clan can open to the Gospel and live by it, or continue to live in its religious tradition since each of them has a right of self-determination. Religious tolerance and freedom of conscience is addressed by canon 748 §2 of the Code of Canon Law of 1983, which provides the following disposition: "No one is ever permitted to coerce persons to embrace the Catholic faith against their conscience."<sup>23</sup> According to F. Mazurek, "cases when human rights are infringed by using torture, arrest, or by restricting freedom of expression or freedom of information are clearly perceived but such violations as famine, poverty, lack of basic necessities, illiteracy, unemployment, unjust social structures in some countries in the world, the arms race and environmental pollution are all not given enough emphasis."<sup>24</sup>

Nowadays, human rights have a great deal of importance. We can distinguish the right to freedom, free religious expression or self-determination, the right to fundamental development, which is still not observed in many corners of the world.

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<sup>21</sup> See S. KASPRZAK, "Posługa pastoralno-duszpasterska Kościoła łacińskiego i jej publiczne oddziaływanie na współistnienie państwa," in *Problemy prawnicze i kanoniczne*, ed. S. Kasprzak (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Diecezjalne w Sandomierzu, 2002), 99.

<sup>22</sup> See also IDEM, *Wybrane zagadnienia z Prawa Kościelnego* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Diecezjalne w Sandomierzu 2000), 297–738; see J.M.G. LOPETEGUI, *Duch misyjny. Vademecum*, trans. A. Kajzerek (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Księży Werbistów Verbinum, 1991), 34–35.

<sup>23</sup> Codex Iuris Canonici auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatus, January 25, 1983, *AAS* 75 (1983), pars II, 1–317; the Polish version published as *Kodeks Prawa Kanonicznego*, translation approved by the Polish Episcopal Conference (Poznań: Pallottinum, 1984) [hereafter CIC]; the English version used by the Translator as provided on the official Vatican website.

<sup>24</sup> MAZUREK, "Nauczanie Kościoła o prawach człowieka," 15.



The right to life is still valid and should be respected since unborn babies are being murdered, and living children are murdered, too. The right to life does speak forcefully to those who perform euthanasia, yet such provisions have been legislated in many European states, but we must not forget that this law is unethical. The right of parents to educate children towards their own values, culture and forefathers' religion, their own tradition, in their own environment. Further, we can speak of the right to a dignified life, to work, to fair remuneration, or the right to rest.<sup>25</sup>

In R. Andrzejczuk's view, "due to the establishment of the system of United Nations, the issue of human rights protection awakened high hopes for an actual improvement in this respect. However, the realities of everyday life, widespread violations of human rights, recurring outbreaks of new armed conflicts, armament on an unprecedented scale or famine in many regions all pose a challenge for national defensive capabilities. Even though numerous conferences are held and various schemes are implemented, and despite UN's capacity to adopt and implement declarations, resolutions or conventions, the said cases of human rights abuse frequently call the charter of the United Nations into question."<sup>26</sup> The human being always represents the greatest value and even the best provisions of law will not be able to safeguard his rights and freedoms as long as the charters or declarations of human rights are not willingly adhered to. Notwithstanding the legislator's intent, Man is always the subject of liberties. It must be noted that the attributes of Man's dignity are: innateness, inalienability, permanence, and universality. From birth, the human person is equipped with reason, conscience and freedom, elements which he cannot dispose of or which cannot be taken away by anyone else. Human dignity with its attributes is the basis for human rights, which were proclaimed by Universal Declarations of Human Rights.<sup>27</sup> M. Piechowiak's analysis of the right to life and development is quite thorough, and it underscores the right to have these rights protected: "Let us consider the following example: art. 6 para. 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides that «every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law»."<sup>28</sup> Art. 2 para. 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights provides: «Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to take steps, individually and through international assistance and co-operation, especially economic and technical, to the

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 15–16.

<sup>26</sup> R. ANDRZEJCZUK, "Jednostka jako podmiot w prawie międzynarodowym a prawa człowieka," *Roczniki Nauk Prawnych* 9, no. 1 (1999): 98, 79–109.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 83; see IDEM, "Nadużycie prawa w świetle Art. 17 Europejskiej Konwencji Praw Człowieka," *Roczniki Nauk Prawnych* 16, no. 1 (2005): 72–80.

<sup>28</sup> M. PIECHOWIAK, *Filozofia praw człowieka* (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 1999), 174–75.

maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Covenant by all appropriate means, including particularly the adoption of legislative measures».”<sup>29</sup> Studies on the subject of human rights highlight the fact that states represent the only entities which are under the obligation to respect human rights, and that human rights are only applicable in the context of State–individual relations. M. Piechowiak stresses that “doubtlessly State–individual relations constitute an important aspect of the issue of human rights. This is so because the cornerstone of the modern conception of these rights is the non-instrumental treatment of the human person, but this good is threatened chiefly by collective entities, such as states, which – as institutions – exercise powers that are incomparable with those of individuals or social groups. [...]. The paradigm of human rights has always been influenced by international law. Theoretical studies demonstrate a trend to treat human rights merely as correlates of appropriate norms of international law. The characteristic aspect of treaties which are to protect human rights is the fact that they impose commitments so it is hardly surprising that states are regarded as obligated subjects.”<sup>30</sup> The protection of these rights can be perceived as a “shield protecting an individual against the mechanism of the State.”<sup>31</sup> Somewhat naturally there arises the question: what about states in Africa, who or what defends human rights, or who defends all victims?

The authority of the institution and the State urges everybody to observe the national and international law. From the perspective of the Christian conception of God, man and his dignity, the authority of the Church calls for collaboration with all who want to penetrate the truth of human existence, fathom and formulate the will of God. The Church’s role is not so much to moralize but rather safeguard Divine and human laws. The authority of the Church’s Magisterium fosters the proper formation of people’s conscience in the world. At the same time, any compromise regarding questions concerning the truths of the faith is ruled out. The Church cannot follow modern trends or the “winds of modernity” but she must defend the fundamental, relevant and eternal values, life, the Gospel, progress of nations, justice, freedom, charity and the dignity of humans, nations and cultures. The Church’s authority overthrows totalitarian systems, capitalistic ideologies and the unjust distribution of property, which is needed by some to have the good life.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 150–51.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>32</sup> S. ROSIK, *Wezwania i wybory moralne. Refleksje teologicznomoralne* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 1992), 225–26.

The Church is to be an ancillary authority within the framework of the worldly and ecclesial community, open to the voice of the disadvantaged and pushed aside to the social and political fringe. Wherever national governments neglect their duties and whenever international covenants fail, the Church – as a community of faith and evangelical testimony – stands up for the needy and harmed.<sup>33</sup>

Human rights are proper to every human being, irrespective of sex, age, mental or physical health, social background or education – on account of their legal basis, that is natural law.<sup>34</sup> Based on natural law, every person or nation enjoys the right to life and safe development.

#### 4. THE CHURCH'S MISSIONARY ACTIVITY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLES AND NATIONS

Salvation – as the fundamental goal – calls for a comprehensive development of the human person. By pursuing her evangelizing activity in missions, the Catholic Church promotes integral development of individuals and whole nations. Integral development is necessary for development of nations in its proper sense. The Church as such should not be identified with any culture since her mission has a supranational character. The Church's mission is to turn Africans into African Christians, Japanese people into Japanese Christians – not into Polish, European or American Christians. This approach envisages and requires a proper “inculturation” of the Gospel and Christian values into the mentality and cultures of individual nations.<sup>35</sup> Man, nation and various peoples not only have the right to self-determination and freedom but are also entitled to receive proposals of salvation from God, who sees and manages in ways other than those of humans.

Having civilisational advancement in mind, the proper development of countries, states and people living in a particular territory is a natural process. Civilisational and cultural development is less intense in remote villages, inaccessible locations where life goes on at its own pace while some people have poor prospects. Only rich and life-giving regions are attractive for business people and economic operators. The question of national development is still relevant. Various international organizations are seeking to improve people's living standards in many countries

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

<sup>34</sup> H. WAŚKIEWICZ, “Prawa człowieka a prawa rodziny,” 29.

<sup>35</sup> A. LEWEK, “Adaptacja kulturowa jako zasada Ewangelizacji,” *Chrześcijanin w świecie* 14, no. 9 (1982): 69–72.

and regions of the world. Also, the Church commits herself to – using different institutions at her disposal – bringing aid and stimulating pre-basic development. Nevertheless, these actions are not sufficient since numerous needs are to be catered for, for example giving a start in life to young people in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and also in some regions of Poland.<sup>36</sup> People want to work but there are no jobs for them; people want to eat but they go hungry because there is no money to buy food and implement social initiatives.

According to A. Pietrzak: “a transition from an agricultural to an urban community is important for the Church and theology since Man’s attitude towards Nature, community with others and most importantly with the Creator has changed.”<sup>37</sup>

Man often loses touch with the natural environment because his former place of living has become a city, a conurbation – a place which evolves. He is displaced from his own habitat. All social relations undergo changes, commerce and road transport develop, industrial and residential construction burgeons, luxury shops open. Frequently, Man trades his dignity and sensitivity to other people for material profits. Large cities turn into criminal places, full of various threats such as violence, theft, assaults or killings. Urban environment marginalizes the poor as well as those who do not have good opportunities for progress. Crime originates in places where the basic socio-existential needs are not satisfied; it is also born out of lack of appreciation and respect for dignity, and impossibility of self-determination.<sup>38</sup>

The Church’s multidimensional presence can be seen on many fronts, especially educational and socio-economic ones, in the area of health care, building construction, especially the drilling of wells and sacred architecture.<sup>39</sup> The undertaken measures do not exhaust all options offered by various projects or initiatives realised by episcopates of particular countries, the Congregation For the Evangelization of Peoples, as well as particular Churches and inhabitants of a given area in Catholic missions.

Evangelized nations are very diversified in terms of their wealth. A great deal of contrast can be seen in many countries, affluence existing side by side with poverty or even evangelical poverty, for example in Latin American slums. To be credible, the Church of

<sup>36</sup> See S. KASPRZAK, “Proces przygotowawczy Synodu Biskupów o Kościele w Afryce i adhortacja apostolska «Ecclesia in Africa»,” *Nurt SVD* 39, no. 1 (2005): 7–42.

<sup>37</sup> A. PIETRZAK, “Kościół katolicki wobec procesu urbanizacji w Ameryce Łacińskiej,” in *Pluralizm religijny i kulturowy współczesnego świata, Księga pamiątkowa dedykowana księdzu Profesorowi Henrykowi Zimoniowi SVD w 70 rocznicę urodzin*, ed. Z. Kupisiński and S. Grodz (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2010), 237.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 239.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. OZDOWSKI, “Rozwój integralny,” 185–200; S. KASPRZAK, *Organizacja działalności misyjnej Kościoła katolickiego w świetle prawa kanonicznego* (Lublin: Pracownia Poligraficzna przy PKLO „Petit” s.c., 1999), 100–02; see SORGE, “Ewangelizacja i rozwój człowieka,” 126–50.

Christ has to identify herself with the poor man through her pastoral work because he is a personification of the Christ in need. The Church is committed to the promotion of integral, social and human development in the material and spiritual-religious dimensions.

The Church is entitled to defend victims or people neglected and underprivileged by unjust political-social structures, often forced upon them by the political regimes of a particular state. Nowadays, the development of people, nations or states should be seen from a holistic perspective since poverty is born in the proximity of large centres of development as a sort of side effect of contemporary civilization. World politics is driven by its goals, tasks, connections, obligations and interlocking interests whereby it can exert a significant influence on the basic, economic and civilisational development of many nations or deprive them of it, being guided solely by its own benefits. There is some legal basis for the application of the UDHR with respect to nations. In this context, we need to invoke the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of December 19, 1966, which expressly provides that “all peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they can freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”<sup>40</sup> Many provisions and covenants of international rank have been legislated with the intention to protect human freedom and their right to integral development, but significantly in everyday practice they are not adhered to, therefore development of nations should be closely interwoven with the evangelization work carried out by the Roman Catholic Church, Christian and non-Christian communities, which call for respect for human rights.

In the history of mankind, the Church and her missions, we should notice multi-dimensional involvement of church institutions in the promotion of integral development of nations and the State.<sup>41</sup> This development is visible in many countries owing to initiatives and projects carried out by missionaries from all corners of the world in many spheres of life. The Church is a community of faith suffused with the presence of the Risen Christ. The faithful live in Him, having the fullness of faith, bestowed by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Divine Word and the sacraments.

There are two orders in the Church: the supernatural order with internal Divine Grace and the natural order with elements of a material institution based on an administrative structure. The ecclesiastical communion is represented by the union of the faithful with God and the faithful among one another, established to continue the

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<sup>40</sup> International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, open for signature in New York on December 19, 1966, published in Poland in Journal of Laws of 1977, No. 38, item 169.

<sup>41</sup> See S. KASPRZAK, “Fidei donum jako idea pomocy personalnej w misji ewangelizacyjnej Kościoła,” *Nurt SVD* 41, nos. 1–2 (2007): 77–101.

mission initiated by the Divine Master and to sanctify and save Man. Baptism imparts a special status to the members of the Church: they become subjects of rights and obligations. This personality is both natural and supernatural as Man is subject to the Divine Grace.<sup>42</sup> The Holy Spirit emerges as the soul of the Church, by Christ's will. He strengthens and inspires pastors, instils life and unites them, gives grace and forgiveness, prays with them and leads to salvation. The Church once came into being, is alive, purifies herself and is constantly evolving to read the signs of times. The institutional unity of the Church is achieved through the internal operation of the Holy Spirit – who is a genuine source of dynamism and growth – in the organism of the ecclesial community.<sup>43</sup>

##### 5. THE ROLE OF MISSIONARIES IN THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL AND PROMOTION OF DEVELOPMENT OF MAN AND NATIONS

Missionaries, regardless of their country of origin, have been called to proclaim the Gospel since evangelization began. They come from various cultures and countries. They take up missionary work in a country or national community determined by their superiors with the intention to bring hope and peace while standing by those entrusted to their care. If there are any presbyters, their role is invaluable since they are the closest to the faithful and baptised, administer the sacraments to them, proclaim the Good News about the Kingdom of God. While sending missionaries to overseas cultures and peoples, the Church grants them canonical-pastoral competences so that they can carry out their tasks in accordance with canon law, remaining receptive to the cultural context they came in contact with. The Church sends missionaries, bishops, presbyters, nuns and friars, as well as lay faithful who participate in evangelization in order to raise the awareness of Divine reality among peoples who are often left stranded just like sheep without a shepherd.<sup>44</sup>

In accordance with canon law “All persons are bound to seek the truth in those things which regard God and his Church and by virtue of divine law are bound by

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<sup>42</sup> IDEM, “Communio jako punkt docelowy obowiązywalności prawa kościelnego,” in *Abiit, non abiit. Księga poświęcona pamięci księdza Profesora Antoniego Kościa SVD*, ed. A. Dębiński et al. (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2013), 1042–43.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. R. SOBAŃSKI, “Inspiracje dla zagadnienia rozwoju wypływające z pojęcia Communio,” *Śląskie Studia Historyczno-Teologiczne* 8 (1975): 224–65; cf. S. KASPRZAK, “Teologiczny charakter prawa kanonicznego i jego porządkująca rola w społeczności Kościoła,” *Roczniki Nauk Prawnych* 15, no. 2 (2005): 313–49.

<sup>44</sup> See S. KASPRZAK, „Zadania misyjne wszystkich wiernych w Kościele partykularnym,” *Nurt SVD* 39, no. 3 (2005): 87–124.

the obligation and possess the right of embracing and observing the truth which they have come to know” (c. 748 §1). Human rights have their generations – the right to development is the basic generation of human rights. Man also has the right to hear the Word of God. This is a fundamental freedom. A member of the Church, who persists in her and becomes a faithful follower of Christ through baptism and who listens to the word of the Gospel has an inalienable right to believe in God. As a result, he believes the Church and in the Church. Getting to know the Gospel is the first step towards knowing God, Christ and Christian religion. It is intended to open the hearts of the listeners to the grace of the faith, renew their life, bring to it hope, new values, new criteria, appraisals, a better model and style of life. Evangelization should bear the fruit of metanoia, or “conversion,” but also the knowing of oneself in the face of God. Missionary activity excluding the internal conversion of Man and the saving aspect has nothing to do with genuine evangelization (*EN* 18–24; 79). Evangelization should seek to promote Man of any culture or nation and his right to development and liberation. Promotion should be interpreted as “development” and “liberation” of Man of his determining factors and socio-cultural limitations. In other words, if we are to achieve progress in political, economic, social, civilizational or religious relations, both development and liberation should be emphasised simultaneously.<sup>45</sup> In its missionary and evangelization activity among peoples and cultures, the Church fosters humanity and affirms Man’s dignity.<sup>46</sup>

By opening to human existence, the Church is sent by Christ to serve Man in all his ways of life and for this reason she cannot become a servant of the world but must be prepared to accept that fact that the Gospel will provoke “outrage” or even kindle fire in the fossilized structures of this world.<sup>47</sup> Nations have the right to profess faith in Christian God. Missionaries have always promoted their mission outposts in the broad sense of the word.

Depending on their talents, skills and competences, missionaries bring support and relief, reaching the most disadvantaged people; they initiate and coordinate crèches, primary and vocational schools for children and teenagers, as well as universities, schools of higher education, orphanages, nursery homes for the elderly and for single mothers; they coordinate the drilling of wells, the construction of homes, chapels and hospitals; in many locations they set up “baby hatches” in order to protect newborn life; they also run parishes, apostolates and pastoral centres.

<sup>45</sup> OZDOWSKI, “Rozwój integralny,” 185–200.

<sup>46</sup> COLOMBO, “Ewangelizacja a promocja ludzka,” 72.

<sup>47</sup> See R. SOBAŃSKI, “«Jako zczyn i niejako dusza społeczności ludzkiej» (obecność jako zasada stosunku Kościoła do państwa),” *Prawo Kanoniczne* 25, nos. 1–2 (1982): 33–42; cf. KASPRZAK, “Teologiczny charakter prawa kanonicznego,” 317–18.

Missionaries are known for their devoted apostolic work for the good of Man and nations. While experiencing stress due to inculturation, they gain various kinds of experience, which helps them to work with dedication in order to proclaim the Kingdom of God. Motivated by their own faith, they live among peoples of a particular culture to realise the missionary work of the Church.

### CONCLUSION

The article addresses the issue of the missionary activity of the Church seen as the realisation of the right to receive the Gospel exercised by all nations and cultures. The proper interpretation of peoples' development was suitably highlighted in the encyclical *Populorum progressio* by Pope Paul VI. Man living in his own culture has the right to share the Gospel and hear about it from the missionaries sent by the Church, which for centuries has been a haven of safety and human rights since Man has the dignity of a Child of God. This study demonstrates that our right to basic development is fundamental in many ways and cannot be negated by invoking the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international conventions.

It should be concluded that nations have the inalienable right to development and to hear the proclaimed Gospel, therefore the Church has continuously pursued missionary activity. Faith is born out of proclaiming so all nations of the world have the right to hear the Good News to be able to believe in Christ as the true God – Saviour, and they have the right to sanctify their cultures. This is guaranteed by human rights pervading social and religious relationships, however the main problem lies in the fact that not all people obey the law. In many regions of the world, inequalities between rich and poor nations and states are observed, having their roots in a biased or partial understanding of human rights or their incomplete realisation. By sending ordained or lay missionaries and being supported by international charity and peace organisations, the Church provides comprehensive assistance and care, but first and foremost spiritual support for needy or marginalised people.<sup>48</sup>

Missionaries proclaim the Gospel as the “Light of Faith” not on their own behalf but in the name of Christ and Church, going to the remotest corners of the world to reach those who have not got to know Christ. International conventions, pacts and treaties, as well as universal charters of human rights all guarantee the development of nations and peoples thriving in their own cultures – as long as these are observed by all people of the world.

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<sup>48</sup> Cf. E. MANTOVANI, “Canon law and the bush missionary,” *Verbum SVD* 24, no. 2 (1983): 173-91.



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THE RIGHT OF NATIONS TO DEVELOPMENT AND TO RECEIVE THE GOSPEL  
BY THE CHURCH'S MISSIONARY ACTIVITY  
AS A REFLECTION OF UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS

Summary

The article addresses the importance of the Church's missionary activity with respect to contemporary cultures and nations because she proclaims the Gospel and promotes the basic development in many corners of the world. By sending missionaries, the Church teaches the faith, Catechism, religious observances, life in accordance with the Commandments. She takes care of Christian formation of the faithful in a given particular Church. The Church organises pastoral and biblical apostolates in order to proclaim the light and hope of the Gospel in a way that is comprehensible to the modern man. It is argued in the article that the proper understanding of the missionary activity of the Church is essentially a realisation of universal human rights. The Church sees the need for respect of human rights on the part of world decision-makers; she appreciates the work of missionaries towards the good of nations and cultures, she sees a common denominator for evangelization and development of nations in terms of human rights. Provisions contained in covenants and treaties which guarantee the right to life and civilisational progress of all people are often disobeyed, therefore the Christ's Church uses her authority to get involved in the process of evangelization activities and all types of activity intended to improve the communal life of people of good will.

**Key words:** human rights; mission; Gospel; evangelization; developments.

*Translated by Tomasz Patkowski*



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