

REV. MARIAN NOWAK

FATHER JACEK WORONIECKI (1878–1949)  
– MASTER AND MENTOR OF CATHOLIC  
AND CHRISTIAN PEDAGOGICAL THOUGHT

In this article, devoted to Father Jacek Woroniecki, his pedagogical thought and his role in the development of Christian pedagogy, primarily Catholic pedagogy, we would like to focus particularly on his achievements and his contribution to pedagogical reflection, taking into account his unquestionable mastery in this regard. Apart from his input to the development of the scientific status of the discipline that is pedagogy in general, the particular attention of Fr. Woroniecki was focused on the analysis of the State and the prospects for the development of Catholic pedagogy, as well as care for the potential directions and fields of studies in this area. In his pedagogical analyses, our Author achieved such “significant insight into the reality of education,” that not only many of his writings, but also the inspirations and intuitions expressed in them, are still to be followed. In this regard Fr. Woroniecki remains a master and mentor of the Catholic and Christian pedagogical thought. In his views and testimony of life, Fr. Woroniecki still remains a master and teacher in answering questions regarding the real contribution of pedagogical reflection open to transcendence, and its prospects for development in the service of the integral education of man.

Of course, pedagogical thought is just one of the many fields of reflection and functioning of Father Jacek Woroniecki, who made his mark not only as a pedagogue, but also as an ethicist, theologian, philosopher, Thomist, and sociologist, a precursor to Catholic Social Teaching, and many others. In

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each of these fields, he delights with the clarity of his intellectual position, and the universality and originality of this thought, which reflects the leading problems and trends of Europe and the Catholic Church at the time.

This article, starting with selected facts from the life of Father Jacek Woroniecki, will address the issue of his contribution to the development of the status of Catholic and Christian pedagogy, but also of pedagogy in general, and his role as a mentor for future generations of researchers. In his theoretical proposal, Fr. Woroniecki is looking for such a status of pedagogy that will allow him to analyse not only religiousness in general, or to take into account transcendence and the influence of supernatural grace, but also to realise the integral education of man, the possibility of which he sees in Catholic pedagogy.

#### 1. THE BIOGRAPHY OF FATHER JACEK WORONIECKI – AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE PATH TO SHAPING HIS MATURE FAITH AND SCIENTIFIC REFLECTION

Korybut Adam Jacek Woroniecki, born 21 December 1878 in Lublin, spent the first years of his life in the Kanie estate near Chełm, in the Lublin Diocese. Fr. Jacek Woroniecki's life path itself is, in fact, a certain biographical experience, and meaningful testimony to how his views, his teaching and the works he left behind were shaped on the path of authentic spiritual progress and development of mature faith. Their understanding is linked to data gathered from the course of his life and his growth in the faith from which his scientific reflection originates. I can only add that these things should become the subject of research, especially of pedagogical biographical studies, for example.

The opinion of Ryszard Polak is worth mentioning in this regard, who notes that from childhood, Fr. Woroniecki was distinguished by his deep faith, to the extent that even as a young boy he contributed to the conversion of a certain English woman who belonged to the Quaker sect.<sup>1</sup> First, he became a graduate of a military school – a Russian grammar school – from which he graduated in 1898, with the rank of Cavalry Warrant Officer, and, in accordance with his father's wish, he undertook studies in mathematics and natural sciences, which he completed in 1902 with a Bachelor of Natural

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<sup>1</sup> The Quaker sect – a Christian religious community of Puritan origin, which particularly stressed the role of personal internal revelation.

Science in Freiburg, Switzerland. While remaining under the spiritual guidance of Blessed Father Honorat Koźmiński (1829-1916), he oriented himself towards theological studies, and obtained his Bachelor of Theology in 1905. That year, also under the influence of his spiritual advisor, he became an alumnus at the Higher Theological Seminary in Lublin. As early as on 10 March 1906, he was ordained a priest of the Lublin Diocese, receiving Holy Orders from Bishop Franciszek Jaczewski (Polak, 1999; Gliński, 1949, p. 478).

After his ordination, until 1907, he was the Chaplain and Secretary of Bishop Franciszek Jaczewski, and also lectured at the Lublin Theological Seminary on Sacred Scripture and catechism, and served as a grammar-school catechist, where he distinguished himself with good rapport with the students, especially with the scouts, with whom he made numerous trips to visit the most-beautiful corners of the Polish lands, still under the Partitions at that time. This rapport resulted in his writing short books on scouting, and education in scouting. He left for Freiburg again to continue his theological studies, which he finalised with his doctoral thesis on the subject “*The Fundamentals of Thomistic Sociology*” – *Principes fondamentaux de sociologie thomiste* (Ferdinus, 2013, pp. 9-10).

Inspired by the figure of St. Jacek Odrowąż, in June 1907 Fr. Woroniecki undertook to pursuing his vocation in the Dominican Order, which he fulfilled after the death of his father in 1909. Following this decision, he made his novitiate in San Domenico da Fiesole, Italy, adopting the monastic name Jacek. He was then sent by his superiors to Freiburg, where he became the Chaplain of the University youth and Vice-Rector of the priest’s residential school.

During the First World War, he stayed in Kraków, establishing cooperation with the Commission on the History of Philosophy at the Academy of Arts and Sciences, and undertaking work on archiving the documents of the congregation. After Poland regained independence, in 1918, when the Catholic University was founded in Lublin, its rector – Father Idzi Benedykt Radziszewski – invited him to work there as an academic lecturer. He taught moral theology at the Faculty of Theology and the Faculty of Canon Law (1919-1929), lectured on ethics at the Faculty of Canon Law and the Faculty of Humanities (1920-1923), and instructed in the methodology of teaching religion (1923-24) and pedagogy (1924-25) at the Faculty of Humanities, enjoying great popularity, and the respect and rapport of the entire academic community, especially the students.

After the death of the first rector – Rev. Radziszewski – he undertook some of the most-important administrative functions: Rector of the Catholic

University of Lublin (1922-1924), and, after a four-year break, Vice-Rector of the Catholic University of Lublin (1928-1929). During his academic activity in Lublin, he published 70 of his works, the following of which deserve special mention: *Metoda i program nauczania teologii moralnej* [*The Method and Curriculum of Teaching Moral Theology*] (Lublin 1922), *Katolickość tomizmu* [*The Catholicity of Thomism*] (Lublin 1924), *Pełnia modlitwy* [*The Fullness of Prayer*] (Poznań 1924), *Katolicka etyka wychowawcza* [*Catholic Educational Ethics*] (Vol. 1, Poznań 1925), *Okolo kultu mowy ojczystej* [*On the Cult of Homeland Language*] (Lwów 1925).

As Rector of the University in Lublin, Fr. Jacek Woroniecki founded the Society of Friends of the Catholic University of Lublin (KUL) and the Society of St. Thomas Aquinas, thanks to which the underprivileged youths studying at this non-State University could obtain funds from the benefactors for the purpose of studying abroad, and financial assistance in general. He took care of the University's funds by making sure that all the Bishops urged the collection of donations for the University, and even by seeking such help among the Polish diaspora as well.

In 1929, by order of the monastic authorities, he went to Rome and conducted lectures on moral theology and pedagogy at the Pontifical Angelicum University, earning the highest academic degree of the Order – *Magisterium in Sacra Theologia* – which attested to the recognition he received at that University.

A special expression of Father Woroniecki's apostolic and evangelising sensitivity and fervour, as well as concern for the life of every human being in the light of the revealed truth, was the founding in 1932 of the Congregation of the Dominican Missionary Sisters of Jesus and Mary, the aim of which was to evangelise Russia, then controlled by the atheistic communist ideology (Ferdinus, 2013, p. 10).

In 1933, fulfilling the will of the superiors of the Dominican Order, Fr. J. Woroniecki left Rome and returned to his country, taking up very-committed activities in Lwów, where, in addition to lectures, he conducted a wide range of pastoral activities, also introducing new forms of cultivating prayer and conducting frequent retreats for the local academic youth. He also engaged in lively journalistic and editorial activities.

During the Second World War, Fr. Jacek Woroniecki stayed in Kraków and held lectures for the Dominicans (one of his students at that time was Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec OP). After the Second World War, intensive academic and pastoral work strained his physical strength, he was often ill, and

he also suffered from progressive occurrences of cancer. He enjoyed the great sympathy of Cardinal August Hlond, Primate of Poland. On 18 May 1949 he died of a severe heart attack.

Rev. J. Woroniecki, like Rev. Jan Piwowarczyk, Rev. Aleksander Wóycicki, Rev. Antoni Szymański, Rev. Kazimierz Kowalski, and Rev. Franciszek Sawicki, as well as lay scientists Andrzej Niesiołowski and Ludwik Górski, have contributed greatly to the development of Catholic social thought, which, especially in the times of the social and economic crisis of the 1930s, and the pressure of ideological Bolshevism and liberalism, became particularly necessary, and played an enormous role in Poland.

## 2. HIS VIEWS AND POSITIONS IN HIS THEORETICAL REFLECTIONS ON RELIGION AND EDUCATION

Father Jacek Woroniecki is mainly recognised in Poland as a theologian-moralist, but a closer analysis of his academic, social, and pastoral activities allows us to note that, in addition to the theological, moral, social, and political issues, as pointed out above, his works on the history of the Church, the history and spirituality of the Dominican Order, hagiography, homiletics, pedagogy, and belles-lettres are all important. In many of these fields, and especially in the discipline of pedagogy, he was not only a scholar, but also an excellent organiser and a precursor of Catholic and Christian pedagogy. In this article, we want to show that it is in the educational disciplines that he was and is a true master and mentor.

Mastery and mentoring usually arises in conditions commensurate with the reality around us – its perception, reflections on it, and taking the appropriate action. We observe all this in the biography of Father Jacek Woroniecki, briefly cited above, also with regard to the situation, threats, and prospects for the development of pedagogy, including Catholic pedagogy. A particular challenge for the discipline (considered to be young at the time) that pedagogy was becoming, was the idea of autonomy, extremely fashionable in the Interwar period, due to the renaissance of Kant's philosophy observed at that time. As was the case with other disciplines, pedagogues, including some Catholics, were also inspired by the trend to develop pedagogy as a discipline which was totally, or, to put it in Kant's style, absolutely, autonomous. Aiming to overcome Kantianism, and the concept of absolute autonomy (the easy prey of which could have been pedagogy,

emerging as an autonomous discipline), Fr. Jacek Woroniecki made an effort on Polish soil to change this kind of aspiration to absolute autonomy into relative autonomy. He did so by showing the relationship between and need for cooperation between Catholic pedagogy and philosophy – especially with ethics and theology – and especially moral theology. On this path, he aimed to develop a programme for the formation of a healthy Polish religiousness, based on the “authentically Christian doctrine of the moral education of man” (Karolewicz, 1989, p. 24). In a way, he therefore entered into the very centre of the debates taking place all over the world at that time, and he made his mark alongside Bogdan Nawroczyński in Poland, as well as Romano Guardini in Germany and Jacques Maritain in France, as a significant thinker, defending pedagogy from the dangers of pathless tracts of education and the simplified way of thinking about it. He also saw the threat posed by Kantianism, in particular to the Polish spirit, and, therefore, as G. Karolewicz points out, “worked to eliminate the excess of the emotional factor over the rational one, and the prevalence of the individualistic attitude over the social one, in Polish religiousness” (Karolewicz, 1989, p. 24). It is already by means of such a fact that he developed his position as a teacher, master, and mentor of not only Catholic ethics, but also of Catholic educational thought.

Before we point to Fr. Woroniecki’s views on Catholic and Christian pedagogy, or on pedagogy in general, let us briefly characterise his philosophical position, referred to as Thomism. He presented this, among other things, in his book *Katolickość tomizmu* [*The Catholicity of Thomism*] (2010). Thomism, derived from the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, was understood by Fr. Woroniecki as a compact universalist system, constituting the intellectual legacy of humanity in the service of the intellectual and creative development of man as a person. This Thomism is described as traditional, and is one of the ways of reading the thoughts of St. Thomas of Aquinas, which goes in the direction of scholastics – hence it is called neo-scholastics (Krasnodębski, 2009).

Father Woroniecki’s works and interventions did not lack issues concerning spiritual development, social life, and contemporary culture, which can be described as a kind of “foreground” to pedagogical issues. This is particularly evident in his theological study *Pełnia modlitwy. Studium teologiczne dla inteligencji* [*The Fullness of Prayer: A Theological Study for the Intelligentsia*] (2000).

In this study, starting from an analysis of the situation of contemporary culture, for which the essence of religious life is exclusively limited to feel-

ings, Fr. Woroniecki opposed such reductionism resulting from the abandonment of the scholastic vision of man as a spiritual and material being, pointing to the use of man's will, and, above all, reason (Polak, 1999, p. 236).

What is interesting in this work is the position expressed by Fr. Woroniecki towards the self-interest and unselfishness of our relationship with God, then referred to as our prayer, which should involve the whole man – including the body, senses, and imagination (Woroniecki, 2000).

In this respect, we can see the presence of Fr. Woroniecki in the main trends of the lively activity in the liturgical-reform movement which inspired religious Catholic communities in Western Europe at the time. They were a kind of preparation for the work of liturgical reform initiated and expressed at the Second Vatican Council. In a manner similar to the scientific and educational activities of Romano Guardini in Germany, known for his treatise *Liturgische Bildung. Versuche* (1923), Father Jacek Woroniecki saw the educational potential of participating in the liturgy of the Catholic Church, which was expressed in the above-mentioned study *Pełnia modlitwy* [*The Fullness of Prayer*] (2000).

Fr. Jacek Woroniecki's particular field of interest was pedagogy, which he recognised not so much as an autonomous and emancipated discipline of knowledge, but rather in keeping with the Interwar period's most-common understanding of its place as "practical ethics" – i.e., as Mikołaj Krasnodębski noted, "that part of a philosophy which has the task of transforming a man internally" (Krasnodębski, 2009, pp. 29-58).

According to Fr. Woroniecki, pedagogy recognised in such a way is a theory of upbringing which, by referring to the classical *paideia*, and especially to the anthropology and ethics of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, as well as to patristic and scholastic traditions, and finally to the Holy Scripture, is *paedagogy perennis* – a perpetual theory of education. Fr. Woroniecki wanted to perceive Catholic pedagogy and a Catholic pedagogue within the framework of this theory (Horowski, 2007).

### 3. BUILDING CATHOLIC PEDAGOGY AND THE FORMATION OF CATHOLIC PEDAGOGUES

Today, it is also easy to meet people, institutions (e.g. schools) or even organisations, adding the adjective "Catholic" to their names. Very often certain requirements are also made, especially for organisations or institutions, if

they want to add such a term to their name. However, we sometimes encounter criticism of these institutions when they do not meet the criteria associated with their name. The same might be true of Catholic pedagogy and Catholic pedagogues (Magier, 2019). Therefore, Father Jacek Woroniecki warned against too hasty a use of “purely external criteria” in this regard in classifying as Catholic pedagogues “writers who do not sufficiently respect the traditional educational teaching of the Church” (Fr. J. Woroniecki, 1961, p. 13).

According to Father Jacek Woroniecki, one can even be an “excellent Catholic” or even a Catholic priest, but if one does not study pedagogy “specifically” in its Catholic sources, one can very easily follow, even “unconsciously,” the “various slogans of modern pedagogy, which are completely incompatible with the principles of Christian education,” and “sometimes with the principles of faith.” In order to classify someone as a representative of Catholic pedagogy and as a Catholic pedagogue, according to Fr. Woroniecki, it is necessary to apply a criterion, which he describes as “internal, derived from the very content of the works, and not from the personal life of the authors” (Fr. J. Woroniecki, 1961, p. 13).

Father Jacek Woroniecki also provided a specific definition of Catholic pedagogy, indicating that it should be understood as “an academic system of education and teaching which is not only completely consistent with Christian philosophy and theology, but also closely related to them and drawing its principles from their educational experience” (Fr. J. Woroniecki, 1961, p. 13).

In this understanding of Catholic pedagogy, Fr. Jacek Woroniecki, especially with regard to the principles derived from the educational experience of principles, observes two levels: a lower – popularising, and a higher – academic, level, aiming to “take research in this field a little further” (Fr. J. Woroniecki, 1961, p. 13). We can see in these statements how Fr. Jacek Woroniecki takes into account the presence and knowledge-development role in Catholic pedagogy of both popular knowledge and knowledge at the academic level (Nowak, 1999, pp. 184-187; Nowak 2012, pp. 24-27). This level links Fr. Woroniecki to the search for “a deeper justification for educational activities,” “in which the system of Catholic pedagogy is further developed” (Fr. J. Woroniecki, 1961, pp. 13-14).

It is also very reasonable – as far as the former, lower, level is concerned – that Fr. Woroniecki did not demand “new results,” because at this level there were already known and tested truths which only needed to be reiterated to subsequent generations, taking into account the constantly changing



conditions of social life. Pedagogical literature was placed at this level, which Fr. Woroniecki only required to be correct in terms of Catholic principles. In this regard, he noted that, unfortunately, it was sometimes the case that “under the cover of a Catholic phrase,” views were promoted which were directly opposed to the principles of Christian education.

He himself was especially active at this former level, leaving a rich legacy in the form of articles on education and self-education, understood as improvement (rationalisation) in acting in accordance with the requirements of human nature (rational and free). It considers aretology, or the theory of the virtues, and the moral nature of man, as a result of their formation, to be a fundamental issue for education in this sense. Indicating the ways and possibilities of improving character, especially of the teacher and the tutor (whose true virtue is longanimity), he dealt with the tasks of the school (especially education), but also showed the school’s tasks related to upbringing, which he made conditional primarily on the “abilities of those who work there” (Fr. J. Woroniecki, 2008).

It should also be added in connection with this former level, but also taking into account academic treatises, that Father Jacek Woroniecki had an incredibly masterful command of the language. He wrote his thoughts and guidelines, as well as his academic treatises, using beautiful Polish, and taking care to provide a wide range of solutions each time, as well as maintaining as far-reaching a realism as possible (Fr. J. Woroniecki, 2008).

Both with regard to the first level (“colloquial”), and especially with regard to the higher – academic – level of teaching, Fr. Jacek Woroniecki discussed the fairly frequent phenomenon that “Catholics, about whose personal religious beliefs we cannot have any doubts, are engaged in academic research in the field of upbringing as if this field had no contact with Christian philosophy and theology” (Fr. J. Woroniecki, 1961, p. 14).

In a footnote to the extract presented above, Fr. Woroniecki recalled nonsensical situations from Catholic universities in the USA and Western Europe, where there was no such subject as ethics in pedagogical studies. He even quoted the reply of one such representative of the educational department: “After all, ethics are not part of pedagogy.” As the reason for this state of affairs, Fr. Woroniecki mentioned the involuntary submission to the influence of modern secular pedagogy, and integrating with it the conviction that the whole issue of upbringing belongs to the field of psychology – “and it is experimental psychology” – notwithstanding the fact that such psychology also adhered to various philosophical directions, and was therefore as far

away as possible from any objective or selfless and non-ideological statements, not to mention the fact that its data was fragmented and fractional (Fr. J. Woroniecki, 1961, pp. 14, 317-318).

Taking into account the fact that materialism (both overt and covert, and even unconscious) is the basis of contemporary philosophical and psychological trends, originating from Cartesian philosophy, Fr. Woroniecki described it as “crypto-materialism,” which “also colours Catholic educational thought, and it does so in various directions” (Fr. J. Woroniecki, 1961, pp. 14-15). He also indicated specific illustrations of this materialism, starting with the rejection of the relationship between body and soul in man, sentimentalism abandoning references to the spiritual sphere in favour of the sensual, with the attribution of an excessive role to emotional factors, with moral intellectualism and the post-Kantian legacy, which significantly affected the minds of people in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. He noted and carefully analysed the threats of such directions as liberalism and the related naturalism, individualism, and sentimentalism which he tried to overcome in the Polish tradition of upbringing and thinking about it.

Fr. Jacek Woroniecki paid particular attention to the influence of materialism on moral life, on the role of the will, and on Catholic pedagogy in general, and he saw the basis of this influence in Kantianism. He very aptly and quickly noticed the threats posed by the idea of autonomy in particular, which was of particular interest in connection with the aforementioned renaissance of Immanuel Kant’s thought. Thanks to a thorough intellectual, Thomistic, and religious formation, Fr. Jacek Woroniecki analysed this problem very thoroughly. He believed that the fundamental mistake of modern pedagogy was its postulated autonomy in relation to ethics and religion. It was expressed in the assumption, as a starting point in the pedagogical activity of many scholars, of an attitude called moral intellectualism, which depreciated the role of will in the moral activity of the pupil (Gaweł, 1974).

A mentality associated with reformist tendencies, which can be reflected in slogans raised in Protestant factions: “sola fides” (faith alone) or “Scriptura sole” (Scripture alone), which resulted in the breakdown of the universality sought after in Catholicism, especially after the 13<sup>th</sup> century in the establishment of universities.

The above-mentioned trends of autonomy, which emerged with new strength in the neo-Kantian concept of absolute autonomy, were perceived by Father Jacek Woroniecki, as well as by many other representatives of Catholic pedagogical thought (among others Jacques Maritain, Rev. Romano

Guardini, and in Poland Bogdan Nawroczyński and Rev. Konstanty Michalski), as a serious threat, which lay pedagogy in particular brought with it.

Fr. Woroniecki also noted certain objectively assessed achievements of this pedagogy, when writing “secular pedagogy in its works – besides many things, whether erroneous or worthless – often leads to positive results, establishing the nature of pedagogical phenomena, and drawing from it the principles of educational behaviour in particular applications” (Fr. J. Woroniecki, 1961, p. 12). Fr. Woroniecki even warns “we must not ignore all that is positive and creative just because it is the result of work we have not done. On the contrary, it is an old tradition of the Church that all truth, whoever discovers it, should be incorporated into this ever-living and developing synthesis of knowledge, which the Church has been nurturing so diligently over the centuries” (Fr. J. Woroniecki, 1961, p. 12).

Therefore, with particular reference to Rev. Konstanty Michalski’s position, Fr. Woroniecki points to “the Church’s possessiveness”, which is connected with its bringing to bear “particularly in the field of upbringing, with regard to everything which has lasting value in the works of contemporary secular pedagogy” (Fr. J. Woroniecki, 1961, p. 12). At the same time, he encourages the proficient development of such a synthesis, which will not be a mere compilation of both components – i.e. elements of Catholic and secular pedagogy – but thanks to the in-depth knowledge of their past and new achievements, one should look for their compact synthesis, “which could become the basis for creative educational work [...]” (Fr. J. Woroniecki, 1961, p. 13).

Fr. Woroniecki also indicates the basic groups of problems which Catholic pedagogy should address and analyse. He originated the enumeration of these problems in the metaphysical doctrine of four causes, the following in particular.

1) **The subject of upbringing**, i.e. reflection on the man to be brought up, in connection with which he points to the need to clearly adopt the position of traditional Christian philosophy, and its distinctions between the two levels of psychological life – sensual and mental – and to take into account feelings, and especially capabilities, understood as a constant disposition for actions, which he also considers to be a central issue of pedagogy, together with knowledge of the general laws of human nature’s development, starting from childhood (Fr. J. Woroniecki, 1961, pp. 18-19).

Fr. Woroniecki also noted that although many tutors did not go beyond the framework of this section alone, there were others which should also be noted.

2) **The object of upbringing**, i.e. what we want to create in raising a child through upbringing activities – with the distinction of a purposeful and formal reason related to it, when we consider that it is a matter of shaping in the pupil certain permanent forms of behaviour, dispositions and capabilities, which will guide the pupil throughout his entire further life. In this problem field of Catholic pedagogy, Fr. Woroniecki stressed the need to take particular note of the supernatural element – related to the goal of bringing up Christians – i.e. the children of God following the example of Christ.

According to our scholar, pedagogy should be positive. This means that its aim should be primarily to shape moral virtues, and secondly to combat evil and sin. Because a man who knows how to implement the moral good in his life and has the habitual ability to do so, will also find the means and the strength to fight evil which, as a result of original sin, appears on his path in various forms.

Fr. Woroniecki also points to the basic treatises from both dogmatic and moral theology, in which he includes

- the treatise on Incarnation and Redemption
- the treatise on Justification
- the treatise on the theological virtues – faith, hope and love
- the treatise on moral virtues, both infused and acquired

as well as the treatise on faith – designed and developed *sub specie paedagogica* – in pedagogical terms (Fr. J. Woroniecki, 1961, pp. 20-22).

All the treatises mentioned above, in Fr. Woroniecki's opinion, required thorough consideration from an educational point of view and should be developed from both theological and Catholic pedagogical points of view. Like a good master, he inspired young academics, pointing out for these very fields of research "as being highly desirable for a young theologian to take the trouble to develop such a framework of pedagogical theology which covers treatises, both dogmatic and moral ones, from the educational point of view" (Fr. J. Woroniecki, 1961, p. 20).

At the same time, our Author made a meaningful accusation against Catholic theology that Catholic educators had been influenced by psychology in recent decades, also because of the lack of "support in moral theology, which is taught too exclusively by casuistic methods" (Fr. J. Woroniecki, 1961, p. 23)

3) **The tutor**, i.e. the one who, individually or socially, is to direct the process of upbringing in the pupil. The framework for this aspect of Catholic pedagogy would be determined by sociology (Christian sociology, which explores the bonds between people – especially within the family and the educational potential, not so much of the parents, but of the family as a whole, and similarly of the schools, and finally of the community of the Church), and also the theological treatises on the Church and the sacraments, which should be the source of the emerging “science of the causative factors of upbringing, that is, all the individuals or social groups which God, the chief educator of mankind, uses as His tools in His great work of educating the sons of God” (Fr. J. Woroniecki, 1961, pp. 17 and 24).

Noting how serious the deficiency in the pedagogical trends contemporary to our scholar it was that they were respectful of individualistic attitudes in teaching and upbringing – Fr. Jacek Woroniecki highlights the “social side of educational activity itself”, but at the same time, according to him, the “individual values of the tutor” are no less important. As he also rightly points out, however, these “individual actions will never produce complete results if they do not develop in a good educational atmosphere, and therefore any educator who is aware of his tasks should primarily strive to create such an atmosphere” (Fr. J. Woroniecki, 1961, p. 28, also pp. 24-29).

A man who, by his very nature, is a social entity, should be “trained” from an early age to work for the common good, both within the family and at school, and in youth and social organisations. Otherwise, the State will become a mechanical cluster of selfishly oriented human individuals (atoms), rather than pursuing the shared life goals of human beings.

Fr. J. Woroniecki, wanting to practically contribute to the development of pedagogy in the positive sense of the word, pointed out ways in which a human being should shape his character, or that of the pupil, so that the process of shaping his or her personality could bring the most-optimal results. He did so mainly in his fundamental work – *Katolicka etyka wychowawcza* [*Catholic Educational Ethics*].

He was one of those researchers who were very reserved about so-called “pedagogical novelties”, including a naturalistic school of work based on philosophical grounds. Our scientist repeatedly criticised the directing of his contemporary pedagogical thought, which, as he rightly said, had lost the concept of the purpose of human life, and focused almost exclusively on the material subject of its research – the child.

The author of *Catholic Educational Ethics* postulated, in order to rectify the mistakes resulting from the departure from the basic principles of scholastic philosophy, a return to the pedagogical principles of Christianity called pedagogical universalism, in which attention is paid to the formal object of the education – the man – such as the man should be when reaching the fullness of personal existence as a result of the proper, i.e. harmonious, development of all the natural and supernatural virtues.

4. THE PEDAGOGUE, THE PEDAGOGY OF RELIGION,  
AND CATHOLIC AND CHRISTIAN PEDAGOGY  
IN THE PEDAGOGICAL THOUGHT OF FR. JACEK WORONIECKI

We participate nowadays in a peculiar mosaic of terms related to the relationship between religion, Christianity, the Catholic Church, and pedagogy, and the terms which have been created as a result of these relations – Catholic pedagogy, Christian pedagogy, and the pedagogy of religion. In the days of Father Jacek Woroniecki, the expression “the pedagogy of religion” did not appear too widely, but rather more precisely the term Catholic pedagogy, or Christian pedagogy, or the pedagogy referring to its specific founder – for example the pedagogy of St. John Bosco.

From the period of the Second Vatican Council, in addition to the name of the discipline – Catholic pedagogy – there also begins to be used the term pedagogy of religion. Let us try to conclude by connecting this name in particular with the above-mentioned pedagogical thought of Fr. Jacek Woroniecki, and also how it relates to the research of theological and biblical anthropology, as well as to the methodology of research into the humanities and social sciences. We note the possibility of these terms’ appearing in them, as it was characterised in great detail by Rev. Jerzy Bagrowicz (2012, pp. 14-17), but especially in the light of the position of Father Jacek Woroniecki discussed above, the attitude and theoretical position of a given author from which he speaks or presents his studies should be clearly defined.

Teresa Hejnicka-Bezwińska makes it very clear in this respect that the statement of one’s position and its expression play a significant role in the entirety of the reasoning related to the practice of pedagogy (1995, p. 15).

Each approach has its own specificity, and in this respect it can be emphasised from the position of Christianity, for example, in relation to the *Bible*, that it cannot be treated solely as a book of human experiences important to

man, that it is a book of experiences related to faith, and, similarly, it may be said that a believer who reflects on education and practises Catholic pedagogy does not confine himself solely to the pedagogy of religion, but carries out his search within the framework of Christian, or precisely Catholic, pedagogy. Therefore, Fr. Jacek Woroniecki's suggestions related to taking into account the educational implications of the main treatises on dogmatic and moral theology, or on the treatise on faith for building Catholic pedagogy – as mentioned above – should be regarded as entirely justified.

Just as a *purely humanistic* approach to the *Bible*, with a denial of its supernatural nature, will not lead to its proper evaluation, also in the opinion of believers the pedagogy of religion will not reflect the full educational potential of Christianity. It can, however, form the basis for development in humanity open to transcendence, but it becomes necessary for believers to experience a real belonging to the Christian tradition experienced in faith in Jesus Christ. As Romano Guardini emphasised in his treatise *The Foundations of Pedagogy*, “If there is a living God, then He also exists in upbringing. If God exists, and yet we exclude Him from the realm of the reality of upbringing, then such an upbringing is lame, and that it is such in its most-essential aspect” (Guardini, 1991, p. 277).

The lack of openness to the experience of faith might, as Joseph Gevaert noted, result in the fact that stopping at anthropological issues alone could not free young people from the belief which easily emerges in such situations, that the *Bible* was outdated and useless for modern times (Gevaert, 1978, p. 150). Without reference to a personal relationship with God, the pedagogy of religion can therefore lead to religion's being sent to a heritage park of lofty ideas of the past. In this case, it can be said that it is necessary to cross the barrier between human experience and references to biblical experience in education, as Zofia J. Zdybicka rightly emphasised: “recognition of the religious dimension of human existence, or its denial, and in particular knowledge of the nature of religiousness and its evaluation, presuppose not only knowledge of man himself, not only knowledge of religious experiences and facts, but above all a solution to the problem of the real existence of the transcendent object of religious acts.” According to Zdybicka, “the view of the nature of religion and its function in human individual and social life” also depends on this (Zdybicka, 1996, p. 471).

We also receive full support from Stefan Kunowski for the above-mentioned Father Jacek Woroniecki's position, according to whom the integral religious formation of human personality required not only the transmission

of theoretical or empirical knowledge, or even practical knowledge, but also ideological knowledge related to an emotional factor as part of the educational impact on a young person (Kunowski, 1959, pp. 472-482).

The development of a mature human attitude requires not only some kind of neutral communication of information, but also the communication of real knowledge, which should include concrete information, communicated in such a way, and to such an extent in terms of school disciplines, that the pupil would be allowed to acquire a critical attitude and emotional involvement, and this would be translated into practical action. The development of such a synthesis of these elements and aspects of knowledge could be perceived as a special task of Catholic or Christian didactic and pedagogy (Kaufmann, 1970, pp. 237-246).

Teaching and upbringing also inspired by the content of Divine Revelation directs man's attention to himself, helping him to discover his essence, his relationship to the world, and finally to God Himself. Modern times have particularly highlighted the role of experience, some manifestations of which can also be found in Woroniecki's studies – for example those regarding prayer. It is extremely important to experience oneself and to know one's own existential situation. In this respect, the threefold dimensionality of experience of every human being is highlighted, who

1) should constantly reach out to the world and have the will power to do so, and be able to face any problems which arise;

2) should constantly reopen to others and devote himself or herself in meetings with them, since it is only under these conditions that a genuine mutual meeting is possible;

3) a human being should know his or her hidden strengths and the aspirations of his inner impulses and needs, which are constantly experienced, so that he can really and responsibly shape them (Kaufmann, 1970, pp. 237-246).

In connection with the above statements, the two most frequently contrasted models of research approaches derived from Fritz Stolz are worth recalling from the methodology of religious studies, namely 1) the "from-the-inside" model (involving hermeneutical and phenomenological research), and 2) the "from-the-outside" model (involving the objective explanation of religion as a cultural and social phenomenon), indicating, on the one hand, the need for personal involvement in order to study religious phenomena or, on the other hand, maintaining that a completely objective (neutral) position is capable of providing an adequate distance from the phenomena studied.



According to F. Stolz's suggestion, while the *first model (from the inside)* – is associated with a situation of personal involvement as appropriate for the study of religious phenomena, the *second model (from the outside)* – on the contrary, maintains that in such studies a completely objective (neutral) position is necessary, capable of ensuring an appropriate distance from the phenomena under investigation. In the latter “positivist” model and the researcher's approach, the distance to the studied reality would become important, which, as well as its objectivity, would make it possible to talk about studies on a particular religion (Kaufmann, 1970, pp. 103-104).

In the first model, the believer, as an *insider*, would reflect on his or her own religion or the religion of others, and related acts, from the position of a practitioner. In pedagogy and its sub-disciplines related to education in religious conditions, it is precisely in this situation that we can speak of practising Christian pedagogy, Catholic pedagogy, or the theology of upbringing. In this model, the point of view is inscribed in the perspective of a believer who reflects on his or her own religion or the religion of others, and related acts – also as a direct practitioner. In the second – the positivist and scientific model – the requirement of distance from the studied reality becomes necessary – the researcher as an *outsider*.

This is a complex problem, which is known, among other things, from the practice and research output of cultural anthropology, where completely justified questions also arise: is a visitor from another culture a better researcher of a given (e.g. exotic) culture, or a participant of that culture and its manifestations? (Kaufmann, 1970, p. 104). Who is more suitable for such research: is it someone like an *insider* – a person immersed in the studied cultural or religious reality, with a better understanding of its “spirit”? Or is it someone like an *outsider* – a researcher who guarantees greater objectivity in their studies and their independence from the problems of *presupposition*?

If we take a factual approach to these problems, we can only conclude that the same fears and problems which arise in connection with a believing researcher of religion cannot be ruled out in the case of a non-believing researcher of religion. Both (i.e. the believing and non-believing researcher) are theoretically stuck in a similar epistemological situation, because, on the one hand, a believing religious-studies scholar will find it easier than a non-believing scholar to observe and classify certain phenomena as religious; on the other hand, a non-believing scholar might fail to notice these phenomena, or perceive them only in some critical perspective, looking in them for

confirmation of his or her own agnosticism or atheism (Bronk, 2009, pp. 105-106).

If we assume, following in the footsteps of contemporary researchers of religion, that the two ways of perceiving religion can (and should) be treated in a complementary way, we can also see that it is possible to transfer these kinds of issues concerning research, then the results of the studies and their analysis to pedagogical disciplines, and see the importance of research by both *insiders* – pedagogues (both theoreticians and practitioners, residing in the reality of Christian upbringing), and real *outsiders*, first and foremost in relation to pedagogy in general – representatives of completely separate sciences or scientific disciplines, who, within the framework of their disciplines, undertake or have undertaken research into religious upbringing, as well as researchers seeking a completely “objective” study of the phenomenon of religious upbringing – in relation to the pedagogy of religion (Bronk, 2009, p. 106).

In this context of analyses, Fr. Jacek Woroniecki fits in with the position of a clear *insider* and encourages young pedagogues to adopt this position. When it comes to pedagogical research conducted from the position of an *insider*, we can see it precisely in the practice of Christian pedagogy, and – especially in the Catholic Church – of Catholic pedagogy, whereas it is precisely in the case of in them pedagogy of religion that we can easily recognise its practice from an *outsider's* position. However, it would be important for each of these approaches to serve, above all, the integral development of man perceived in individual and social terms.

This is all the more possible today, with research, especially interdisciplinary research and aspirations to achieve transdisciplinary results, in which we can speak of complementary and mutually inspiring research approaches. It is a complement, not only instrumental, but also educational, to interdisciplinary cooperation.

The growing interest of researchers, as well as of politicians, and the public opinion in the phenomenon of religion and religiousness, today seems to be clearly contradictory to the wishful thinking voiced by those opposing religion, about the allegedly progressing laicisation and secularisation. In many places – and especially on a continental scale – there is rather talk of a great “return of religion” (Bronk, 2009, p. 477; Bronk, 2005, pp. 62-70) – which, of course, must be seen in the configurations determined by the continents, and countries, and places, in which these phenomena are taking place.

In view of the growing dangers of extremism (including religious extremism), it seems all the more necessary to seek ways, methods and tools for dialogue with religiously marked spheres of human activity as well, all the more so since they are probably most-closely connected with the upbringing of man, with thinking about his future and striving for the universalisation and unification of individual people and their communities, in order to achieve the goals of social, State and community life, while at the same time promoting what will always be completely specific and original in a given community.

If we assume, following in the footsteps of contemporary researchers of religion, that both ways of seeing religion can (and should) be treated in a complementary way, we can also observe that it is possible to transfer these kinds of issues concerning research, then the results of the studies and their analysis to pedagogical disciplines, and see the importance of research by both *insiders* – pedagogues (both theoreticians and practitioners, as well as real *outsiders* to pedagogy – representatives of completely separate sciences or academic disciplines who, within the framework of their disciplines, have undertaken research on upbringing. It is in this respect that we can observe the very-topical position of Fr. Jacek Woroniecki and the topicality of his thesis for practising Catholic pedagogy and pedagogy in general.

Examples are given in this regard, for example, of the works of Galileo and Isaac Newton, who in their research placed the emphasis on proving the existence of the Creator of the Cosmos, which does not rule out the epoch-making nature of their scientific discoveries as such.

The pedagogical thought of Fr. Jacek Woroniecki was created alongside other important areas of his scientific work, which is part of the examples mentioned above and is being considered in terms of its epochally and sought universality, is an important basis for rebuilding not only Polish Catholic pedagogy, but especially general pedagogy significantly neglected during the period of the Polish People's Republic, and now reborn also by reentering the authors of the interwar period. This is what this paper wants to serve, and this process is supported by the current article by showing one of her masters and mentors to which we belong without any doubt Woroniecki. The article can also provide a kind of introduction to the implementation of an interdisciplinary approach in the practice of pedagogy, in which the also cited approach of Woroniecki can be exemplary.

The testimony given by Father Jacek Woroniecki on the grounds of pedagogical issues remains a particular encouragement for us, to enter into

pedagogical issues from a position which we can define as the position of Christian wisdom, and in it, especially in the Catholic Church, to discover what he understood as the “individual values of the tutor,” as a good “educational atmosphere” commensurate with the state of affairs which every tutor aware of his or her tasks should strive to create. In this context, Woroniecki points to the virtue of prudence, which in general plays an important role in his educational system (Polak, 2007, pp. 82-90).

Regarded as a governing virtue in relation to other virtues, also known as *auriga virtum* – a governing virtue in relation to others – it allows us to maintain a sense of proportion in the actions in the changing reality. Woroniecki works out the virtue of prudence to a greater extent, by referring to St. Thomas Aquinas, and pointing to its different types. These include familial and educational prudence, and they are also worth considering from a point of view of Catholic and Christian pedagogical wisdom – also about educational and didactic Christian and Catholic prudence (Woroniecki, 1961, pp. 28-29).

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FATHER JACEK WORONIECKI (1878–1949) – MASTER AND MENTOR  
OF CATHOLIC AND CHRISTIAN PEDAGOGICAL THOUGHT

SUMMARY

Fr. Jacek Woroniecki contributed to building not only Christian and Catholic pedagogy, but also pedagogical theory in general in Poland, having achieving unquestioned primacy in this regard. He appeared on the grounds of Catholic and Christian pedagogy as master and teacher, contributing to the development of their disciplinary status throughout his entire life, which we read as an illustration of shaping his mature faith and his scientific reflection arising from it.

In warning against the hasty classification of educators as Catholic educators, he embraced the pedagogical issues from a position which could be described as a position of Christian wisdom, and in this wisdom, particularly in the Catholic Church, he discovered what he understood as *paedagogia perennis*, including in his thematic blocks such fundamental groups of issues as 1) *the subject of education* as the reflection over the person to be educated, 2) *the object of education*, i.e. what we want to produce in education by means of educational activity, and 3) *the tutor*, i.e. the one who individually or socially is to direct the process of education in the pupil. Noting the domination of individualistic attitudes in teaching and education, Fr. Jacek Woroniecki exhibits “the social side of the educational action itself,” while not depreciating “the tutor’s individual values” at all.

Speaking on the matter of the specificity of pedagogy, Fr. Woroniecki contributed to the consolidation of this specificity, and simultaneously introduced pedagogical reflection, in the contexts of universality, and developed its status as a discipline with its own identity, but simultaneously open to reality, to other disciplines, and the manifold aspects and dimensions of human existence. In making a practical contribution to the development of pedagogy, he indicated the methods for the formation of the character and personality of a pupil, postulating a return to the pedagogical principles of Christianity called the pedagogical universalism, in which attention was paid to the formal object of the education – the person – e.g. how the person should be when reaching the fullness of personal existence as a result of the proper, i.e. harmonious, development of all the natural and supernatural virtues.

**Keywords:** Catholic pedagogical thought; Christian pedagogical thought; Catholic Pedagogy; Christian Pedagogy; *paedagogia perennis*; subject of education; object of education; tutor; pedagogue; mentor; master; Fr. Jacek Woroniecki (1878-1949); integral pedagogy and integral education.

OJCIEC JACEK WORONIECKI (1878-1949) – MISTRZ I MENTOR KATOLICKIEJ  
I CHRZEŚCIJAŃSKIEJ MYŚLI PEDAGOGICZNEJ

STRESZCZENIE

Ojciec Jacek Woroniecki przyczynił się do budowania nie tylko pedagogiki chrześcijańskiej i katolickiej, ale także pedagogiki w ogóle w Polsce, osiągając niekwestionowane mistrzostwo w tym zakresie. Jako mistrz i nauczyciel zaistniał na gruncie pedagogiki katolickiej i chrześci-

jańskiej, wnosząc swój wkład w wypracowywanie ich statusu dyscyplinarnego w ciągu całego swojego życia, które odczytujemy jako ilustrację kształtowania się jego dojrzałej wiary i z niej wynikającej jego naukowej refleksji.

Przestrzegając przed zbyt pochopnym zaliczaniem pedagogów do pedagogów katolickich, podejmuje problematykę pedagogiczną z pozycji, którą możemy określić jako pozycję mądrości chrześcijańskiej i w niej, zwłaszcza w Kościele katolickim, odkrywa to, co rozumiał on jako *paedagogia perennis*, zawierająca w swoich blokach tematycznych takie podstawowe grupy problemów, jak: 1) *podmiot wychowania* jako refleksję nad człowiekiem mającym być wychowanym; 2) *przedmiot wychowania*, czyli co w wychowaniu chcemy wytworzyć przez działalność wychowawczą oraz 3) *wychowawcę*, czyli tego, który pojedynczo czy społecznie ma pokierować procesem wychowania w wychowanku. Zauważając dominację postaw indywidualistycznych w nauczaniu i wychowaniu, Jacek Woroniecki eksponuje „społeczną stronę samej czynności wychowawczej”, nie deprecjonując w niczym „wartości indywidualnych wychowawcy”.

Zabierając głos w sprawie specyfiki pedagogiki, Woroniecki przyczynił się do umocnienia tej specyfiki, a jednocześnie wprowadził refleksję pedagogiczną w konteksty uniwersalności i wypracował jej status jako dyscypliny z własną tożsamością jak również otwartej na rzeczywistość, na inne dyscypliny oraz na wielorakie aspekty i wymiary ludzkiej egzystencji. Praktycznie przyczyniając się do rozwoju pedagogiki, wskazuje na sposoby kształtowania charakteru i osobowości wychowanka, postulując powrót do pedagogicznych zasad chrześcijaństwa zwanych uniwersalizmem pedagogicznym, w którym zwraca się uwagę na przedmiot formalny wychowania – człowieka – takiego, jakim on winien być wtedy, gdy osiągnie pełnię swojego osobowego bytu w wyniku właściwego, tj. harmonijnego rozwoju w nim wszystkich cnót przyrodzonych i nadprzyrodzonych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** katolicka myśl pedagogiczna; chrześcijańska myśl pedagogiczna; pedagogika katolicka; pedagogika chrześcijańska; *paedagogia perennis*; podmiot wychowania; przedmiot wychowania; wychowawca; pedagog; mentor; mistrz; O. Jacek Woroniecki (1878-1949); integralna pedagogika i integralne wychowanie.