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CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY IN THE BACKGROUND OF MODERN CONCEPTIONS OF SPIRITUALITY: OUTLINE OF ISSUES

Abstract. The notion of “spirituality” is very popular in the contemporary times and therethrough is an ambiguous. The abundant literature of the object presents different conceptions of the spirituality, so we can qualify them as a “new spirituality”. The atheistic spirituality (or the spirituality without God) and the psychology of spirituality are the most distinguishes among them. The common feature of them is to base on written in human nature the ability to a transcendency. Also Karol Wojtyła in that ability to the autotranscendency sees the essence of spirituality, which manifests oneself in wide understanding of the culture and of the civilization.

The author of the article proposes to name this basic form of spirituality which has its source in human nature the anthropogenical spirituality. If the ability to autotranscendency has a soteriological direction, it becomes then the religious spirituality. The Christian spirituality is her special form by virtue of the supernatural factor. Because its character is “from above”, it is not reducible to other form of spirituality.

Contained in the last part of the article the methodological proposal admits to solve, from one side, the possible tension between different symptoms of the “new spirituality”, especially the spirituality without God, and the Christian spirituality. From the second side, it forbids to put an equals sign between them. On the background of different symptoms of “the new spirituality” and the psychology of spirituality, the Christian spirituality appears as a particularly remarkable the proposal of the transcendency and of the fulfilling of the human spirit.

Key words: spirituality; transcendency; psychology of spirituality; methodology; anthropology.

Theologians and pastors, as well as many committed lay faithful with anxiety, or even with “righteous” indignation, may accept the fact that today, apart from Christian spirituality, there are different types of spirituality, defined by sociologists of religions as a “new spirituality.” It becomes more and more popular to

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such an extent that the researchers of this phenomenon are very serious about the question whether traditional Christian spirituality will survive over the next few decades. Theologians and pastors rightly notice numerous dangers to the faith that this “new spirituality” brings.

In addition to these questions, there is no less fundamental question how to practice spiritual theology today? The point is not that in pastoral work and in theological reflection, it should be a sign of equality between various manifestations of spirituality, but in order to find common anthropological ground, be able to prevent the danger of syncretism and indifferentism. Therefore, the issue addressed here is of a methodological nature.

1. “NEW SPIRITUALITY”

Analyzing contemporary socio-cultural changes, sociologists are now seeing the phenomenon characteristic of the turn of the second and third millennium, which is usually referred to as the “new spirituality.”¹ The use of quotes in this case is perfectly valid, since the phenomenon described is not a spirituality in the classical sense, nor completely new.

In the language of sociology, this term appeared only in the 1990s. It is used to identify a heterogeneous phenomenon that is shaped beyond the institutional forms of religion, and often also in a formal separation from any religious commitment. As one of the researchers points out, at first the spiritual experience was religious, and today it is also nonreligious. Spirituality is a very fashionable concept, but it also has a much broader meaning, exceeding the religious context, and the more ecclesiastical one. It is perceived as a much vaster reality than religion. This is especially true for the “new spirituality.”² It is noticed that the term “spirituality” has been used more and more often nowadays instead of the term “religiosity” in relation to the profession of faith. While so-far religiosity was considered a fundamental trait of human existence, at the moment when institu-

¹ This phenomenon is described by Fr. Janusz Marianski in the article titled “Nowa duchowość jako megatrend społeczno-kulturowy – mit czy rzeczywistość [The New Spirituality as a Socio-Cultural Trend—a Myth or Reality],” *Uniwersyteckie Czasopismo Socjologiczne* 2015, no. 13 (4): 22–45. The author gives several dozen terms describing the “new spirituality,” for example: spirituality without the Church, post-spirituality, universal spirituality, spirituality of the self, holistic spirituality, techno-spirituality, cyber spirituality, border spirituality. See *ibid.*, 29.

² See Katarzyna LESZCZYŃSKA and Zbigniew PASEK, *Nowa duchowość w badaniach społecznych.* In *Nowa duchowość w społeczeństwach monokulturowych i pluralistycznych* [A new spirituality in monocultural and pluralist societies], ed. Katarzyna Leszczyńska and Zbigniew Pasek (Kraków: Zakład Wydawniczy NOMOS, 2008), 17.

tionalized religions began—as it seems—to lose their importance, the “new spirituality” is understood in both the religious and the non-religious sense of that term. The latter generally does not have public representations, universally accepted dogmas, community rituals and cults. It is not a religious institution, but a concrete person that defines what is spiritual. Hence, the feature of the new spirituality is the transition from institutionalization to individualization.

Spirituality, which has been almost exclusively the domain of theologians and pastors, has now become of interest to psychology and social sciences and has begun to permeate the mentality of modern people. J. Mariański notes that the very term “‘new spirituality’ seems to already have an established position in the scientific discourse,” although due to the multiplicity and diversity of phenomena defined by this term, it requires detailed explication and development of an appropriate research methodology.³

Reflecting at least in part the “new spirituality,” it will be useful to assume that in the broad sense, spirituality is understood as “beliefs, attitudes and actions of man in which he pursues his aspirations to transgression, which is understood as transcending his own temporal condition and current life situation.”⁴ Similarly, spirituality is defined by Maria Gołaszewska, according to whom it is an existential attitude, based on “intuitive cognition and full acceptance of *Summum Bonum* through internal experience.” Gołaszewska adds that to take a stance means to manifest readiness for a particular type of behavior in action, thinking, pronouncing, putting theses and manifestations of will and feeling. It is an attitude that defines the way of life and commitment to making it meaningful. An important role in this respect is played by emotionality, expressed in some form of worship as the highest form of acceptance of this *Summum Bonum*. Gołaszewska writes that “in our case, the attitude is founded on certain beliefs, constituting the basis, assumptions, and reference system for our behavior. In the case of ‘spirituality’, this reference system is the intuitive knowledge of *Summum Bonum*.⁵

³ J. MARIĄSKI, *Nowa duchowość*, p. 25.

⁴ Katarzyna SKOWRONEK and Zbigniew PASEK, “Wstęp. Czy istnieje duchowość bez sacrum? Kilka słów o duchowości niereligijnej [Introduction: Is there a spirituality without sacrum? A few words about nonreligious spirituality],” in *Pozareligijne wymiary duchowości* [Non-religious dimensions of spirituality], ed. Zbigniew Pasek, Katarzyna Skowronek, and Radosław Tyrała (Kraków: Wydawnictwo LIBRON, 2013), 8.

⁵ Maria GOŁASZEWSKA, “Poetyka duchowości [The poetics of spirituality],” in *Oblicza nowej duchowości. Dyskusja o funkcjach piękna, dobra i prawdy na przełomie tysiącleci* [Faces of a new spirituality: Discussion about the functions of beauty, goodness and truth at the turn of the millenniums], ed. Maria Gołaszewska (Kraków: Uniwersytet Jagielloński. Instytut Filozofii. Zakład Estetyki, 1995), 207–8.

The highest Good, referred to in the above definition as a reference point for an existential attitude, can be defined in two ways: theistically and non-theistically. In the first case it is the Absolut, the personal God, the Creator of the world and the Lord of everything that is created. Therefore, spirituality has a religious background. In the second case, we are dealing with nonreligious spirituality, for which the point of reference is not a personal God, but the so-called universal values, such as: goodness, truth, beauty, pluralism or tolerance. The “new spirituality” discussed here is mainly situated in the latter area, because it develops essentially outside of religion, for example through contact with art or nature.

Psychologists and sociologists stress that regardless of the kind of reference point, in spirituality the central concept is transcendence understood in relation to something that transcends our “self” and inspires us to subjectively felt improvement and development. Spirituality understood in this way has become of interest to psychology and is analyzed with methods appropriate for this scientific discipline. Fr. Mariański notes that psychological research on spirituality is more advanced than research on its social aspects, which falls within the competence of sociology. The latter is more and more often concerned with the problems of spirituality, both religious and non-religious, as evidenced by the constantly growing literature on the subject.⁶ Especially for sociologists, the interesting subject of research is that in modern society there are more people who depart from traditional religions. And although they do not consider themselves religious, they define themselves as seeking a spirituality. It could even be argued that the more manifestations of secularization in the contemporary world, the greater the interest in spirituality in every form, not only religious spirituality. Most likely, this was what John Paul II described, who in the apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* wrote that “one of the signs of the times” is “that in today’s world, despite widespread secularization, there is a widespread demand for spirituality, a demand which is expressed in large part as a renewed need for prayer. Other religions, which are now widely present in ancient Christian lands, offer their own responses to this need, and sometimes they do so in appealing ways” (No. 33). It is justifiable to talk about “turning towards spirituality,” which is a characteristic feature of the turn of the second and third millennium.⁷

It is clear from the rapidly growing literature on spirituality that the sphere of life we are interested in, understood as a phenomenon related to religiosity, now emancipates itself from the influence of religion and gains independence. Having no longer religious connotations, it appears in very different contexts. Nowadays,

⁶ J. MARIĄSKI, *Nowa duchowość*, 28.

⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 30.

spirituality is regarded as a phenomenon occurring outside official church structures, and often as an alternative to religion or a form of opposition to traditional religions.⁸ In postmodernist culture marked by consumerism, spirituality is also seen as the subject of commerce, adapting to the needs of the market. For this reason, it is reduced to the role of a means to ensure well-being of a man and satisfy his various mental needs.

The new spirituality, as a phenomenon characteristic of the turn of the millennium, is characterized by great diversity, which in practice makes it impossible to form an unambiguous definition of the term. Nevertheless, Fr. Mariański points to several characteristics of this socio-cultural trend, which has its source in various religious and esoteric traditions, both eastern and western. The “new spirituality” is associated with the process of individualization and subjectivization, which often leads to distance or open objection to institutionalized religions and rituals, and questioning dogmas and moral norms. Although there may be a lack of explicit references to religion, the “new spirituality” refers to transcendence and rely on the ability to transcend one's own self, which is to serve first of all personal development, perfecting the interior, feeling happy and satisfied. Therefore, we are looking for ways and tools for transcending, serving mainly to give meaning to everyday life. Religious faith is often transformed into faith in one's own self, and consequently there is a shift from community to individual and focus on immanent values and goals. In this sense, spirituality is associated more with the internal world of the individual, and religiosity has more external references.⁹

In other words, “the new spirituality is one of the trends of the beginning of the 21st century, it is the experience of the sacred, sometimes nameless, understood in terms of something personal, intimate, something that refers to the power inside human being. This spirituality emphasizes the role of experiences and spiritual exercises, treats the human body as filled with inner, spiritual meaning and manifestation of the creative power of the Spirit; respects nature and promotes healthy eating; attaches great importance to interpersonal relationships based on fidelity and love; to ethics expressed in respect for moral values that one recognizes; is sensitive to art, also emphasizes gender equality. This spirituality is holistic, democratic, easily accessible and non-hierarchical; it is opposed to an institutionalized religion, which means it is non-church-based.”¹⁰

⁸ See Zbigniew PASEK, *Nowa duchowość. Konteksty kulturowe* [A new spirituality: Cultural contexts] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo AUREUS, 2013), 37–38.

⁹ J. MARIAŃSKI, *Nowa duchowość*, pp. 38–39.

¹⁰ Janusz MARIAŃSKI and Stanisław WARGACKI, “Nowa duchowość jako megatrend społeczny i kulturowy – mit czy rzeczywistość [The New Spirituality as a Socio-Cultural Trend—a Myth or Reality],” *Przegląd Religioznawczy* 4 (2011): 138.

2. SPIRITUALITY WITHOUT RELIGION

As part of the broadly understood “new spirituality,” open-minded atheistic spirituality, as well as spirituality without religion, come to the fore. One should not regard atheistic spirituality and spirituality without religion as equal, because although they are similar categories, they are not completely identical. This is indicated by the reading of, for example, two books. The first of them, *The Little Book of Atheist Spirituality* (translated by Nancy Huston, New York: Viking, Penguin Group, 2007), was written by the French philosopher André Comte-Sponville, regarded as a materialist, rationalist and humanist. The second book, *Waking Up: A Guide to Spirituality Without Religion* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), was written by Sam Harris, an American philosopher, co-founder and general director of Project Reason — a non-profit organization that deals with the promotion of secular values.

Comte-Sponville admits that he was brought up in the Christian religion, and although he does not believe in the existence of a personal God, he still wants to remain faithful to the entire heritage that arises from Christianity and forms the foundation of European culture. Distinguishing faith from fidelity, he emphasizes that while faith is at the root of religion, fidelity is the foundation of spirituality. Thanks to fidelity to the cultural heritage, a spiritual bond is formed on which the society is being built. In turn, the lack of faith generates nihilism, and its distortion generates fanaticism. However, the lack of fidelity results in ordinary barbarism. Therefore, for the sake of preserving one’s identity, it is necessary to be faithful to the legacy from which he arises and which forms the basis of the broadly understood spirituality. Therefore, Comte-Sponville firmly states that “fidelity matters more than faith,” especially to humanity, which he calls practical humanism ‘which is not a religion but a morality. [...] The first duty and the principle of all other duties is to live and act humanely.’¹¹

According to Comte-Sponville, the second important aspect of atheistic spirituality, which is closely related to fidelity to humanistic values, is rooting in the present. He writes: “[...] Why dream about paradise? The kingdom is here and now. It is up to us to inhabit a material and spiritual space (the world, our bodies: the present) in which we have nothing to believe but everything to learn, nothing to hope for but everything to do (for those things we can change) or to love for those we cannot).”¹² Comte-Sponville says that capturing the present becomes the participation of mystics and contemplatives. It can also be attained through

¹¹ André COMTE-SPONVILLE, *The Little Book of Atheist Spirituality*, translated by Nancy Huston (New York: Viking, Penguin Group, 2007), 50.

¹² *Ibid.*, 71.

meditation. It is the pinnacle of spirituality. “I would say that I, too, have felt and experienced—rarely, but powerfully enough for them to be unforgettable—moments of mystery, self-evidence, plenitude, simplicity, unity, silence, eternity, serenity, acceptance and independence ... This is the culmination of life that we achieve in exceptional moments.”¹³ According to Comte-Sponville, it is also an experience of eternity. Spirituality remains in its service. It is the path and a journey to eternity experienced in the present. “[...] salvation and quest, goal and path are one and the same thing, and [...] the summit of life is none other than life itself in its true expression, which is to say its eternity.”¹⁴

Rooting in the present, which from the metaphysical point of view gives the experience of immersion in eternity, implies commitment to the reality that surrounds man. Therefore, Comte-Sponville states that he believes more in spirituality, which “opens onto infinity.” He says that “thought should have no home apart from the entire universe.” In a sense, he opposes the traditional Christian spirituality, which—in his opinion—pays too much attention to its own self, concentrating on internal life. However, “spirituality is the very opposite of introspection,” for spirit is the opening, awakening and liberation. Comte-Sponville writes: “Spiritual life—as I said at the beginning of this chapter—is the life of the spirit—but only, I should have added, inasmuch as we can break free, at least partially and occasionally [moments] from what Kant called ‘our precious little selves’. [...] Rather, I would say that it is a matter of living more—of living at last, rather than hoping to live - and, in order to do so, leaving oneself up behind as much as possible: not dying to oneself, therefore, but opening oneself up to life, to reality, to everything.”¹⁵

Based on this point of view, one can say that Comte-Sponville strongly advocates the spirituality of immanence, rather than of transcendence, the spirituality of the opening, rather than of interiority. From this he draws the conclusion that spirituality is prior to religion, and that spirituality, as the openness to the experience of what is *hic et nunc*, does not need religion, can go without it. Therefore, atheistic spirituality is not opposed to religious spirituality, as the colloquial understanding of atheism seems to suggest. Atheistic spirituality is more primitive and universal form of religious spirituality. Respecting the cultural heritage from which it grows and in which it functions, atheistic spirituality is focused not so much on the vertical dimension as theistic spiritualities, including Christian spirituality, do, but primarily on the horizontal dimension. Thus, it is a manifestation of humanism understood in a specific way.

¹³ Ibid., 201.

¹⁴ Ibid., 202.

¹⁵ Ibid., 200.

Harris, remaining in this trend of humanism, represents a more radical position. He states that “‘spirituality’ must be distinguished from religion—because people of every faith, and of none, have had the same sorts of spiritual experiences. While these states of mind are usually interpreted through the lens of one or another religious doctrine, we know that this is a mistake.”¹⁶ In the further course of his argument, Harris—starting from the thesis that “deepening that understanding, and repeatedly cutting through the illusion of the self, is what is meant by ‘spirituality’ in the context of this book”¹⁷—shows that it is based on the transcendence of the self. And like Comte-Sponville, he claims that “in fact, we can directly experience that consciousness is never improved or harmed by what it knows. Making this discovery, again and again, is the basis of the spiritual life.”¹⁸ However, the means to this is not the work of the mind, and the classic ways of thinking that the Bible or the Koran proposes, but the so-called mindfulness, that is, the state of pure, objective and intense attention directed to the content of consciousness, regardless of whether it is pleasant or not.¹⁹ Therefore, being mindful is not about more intense thinking about experience, but about more intense experience, including the process of creating thoughts. Harris considers the meditation methods that are essentially meditation with closed eyes to be pointless. What is important is “to come out of the trance of discursive thinking” so as to allow the free flow of thoughts, images and associations, and thus all that is the content of consciousness. As he writes, “the problem is not thoughts themselves but the state of thinking without knowing that we are thinking.”²⁰ In this way, one comes to the real goal of meditation, which is not to achieve undisturbed well-being, but to lose the sense of self-separation and the experience of open, boundless consciousness, to the feeling of unity with the cosmos. He notices that “investigating the nature of consciousness itself—and transforming its contents through deliberate training—is the basis of spiritual life.”²¹ Before describing in detail neuroscience and neurophysiology, Harris states that the goal of spiritual practice, and spirituality as such, “is not some permanent state of enlightenment that admits of no further efforts, but a capacity to be free in this moment, in the midst of whatever is happening.”²²

¹⁶ Sam HARRIS, *Waking Up: A Guide to Spirituality Without Religion* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 9.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 205.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 233.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 51.

²² *Ibid.*, 49.

The outlined concept of spirituality without God is immanentistic, although it contains the elements of Far Eastern anthropology. It is also close to the proper psychology of spirituality.

3. SPIRITUAL PSYCHOLOGY

Spirituality in its multidimensional form is not only of interest to philosophy, religion or theology, but also to sociology, and especially to psychology, which seems to claim specific rights to it, making it a specific subject of research, also empirical one. Organizational structures of psychology as a science (for example, the Polish Society of Psychology of Religion and Spirituality) and an extremely rich literature on the subject make it possible to distinguish the specialization of spiritual psychology.

Paweł Marian Socha from the Jagiellonian University is considered to be a pioneer of spiritual psychology in Poland.²³ He emphasizes that the spiritual (noetic) dimension of man cannot be reduced to his psychic dimension, let alone his biological dimension. Spirituality is the highest sphere of the mental activity of every person, decisive for the quality of his life. And because spirituality covers a very wide range of this activity, it is impossible to give an exhaustive definition, therefore the very term “spirituality,” appearing in many areas of science, is one of the most ambiguous.

When reviewing various concepts of spirituality, from the psychological perspective, Socha points to the five meanings of the term “spirituality.” First, he gives defines it as a) an innate, “essential” property, given to man by God or nature or other supernatural power. In addition, he mentions b) the natural biological property of the *homo sapiens* species; c) the field of spirits’ activity, that is the extrasensory dimension of reality; d) the field of practices aimed at “spiritualization and / or entering into direct contact with the supernatural realm,” and finally e) a process or an integrated set of mental processes, being an adaptive response of every man to the awareness of his existence and condition.²⁴

²³ See A. ANCZYK, *Paweł M. Socha. Sylwetka Jubilata. Bibliografia prac Pawła M. Sochy* [Paweł M. Socha: Silhouette of a jubilarian. Bibliography of Paweł M. Socha’s works], in *Religia. Religijność. Duchowość. W poszukiwaniu nowych perspektyw. Księga jubileuszowa dla Pawła M. Sochy od przyjaciół i uczniów* [Religion. Religiosity. Spirituality. In search of new perspectives. A jubilee book for Paweł M. Socha from friends and students], ed. Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska and Dominika Motak (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2015), 9-19.

²⁴ See Paweł M. SOCHA, *Przemiana. W stronę teorii duchowości* [Transformation. Towards the theory of spirituality] (Kraków: Zakład Wydawniczy NOMOS, 2014), 24–8.

Socha does not aim to define spirituality, which he considers impossible, but he proposes his own very interesting and noteworthy classification of the concepts of spirituality that appear in rich contemporary literature, presenting this issue from the point of view of theology, philosophy, sociology and psychology. For the latter, spirituality in recent decades has become one of the main subjects of research, though it is not always called in this way. Therefore, he speaks of both explicit and hidden spirituality in practicing psychology. Its distinctive features include among others: a) transcending or transformation, or going beyond the current state. This applies especially to the personality, image of the self, the system of values or beliefs; b) striving for meaning, understanding of the surrounding world, self and interpersonal relations and relations with the world; c) the ability to adapt to changing conditions; d) cognitive abilities and self-awareness; e) striving for internal integration, expressed by well-being, mental and physical health; f) integration with the outside world, including natural and supernatural beings. Therefore, it is not about presenting spirituality as an autonomous being that cannot be reduced to the psyche, let alone the physical properties of the brain, as this is of interest to neurophysiology.²⁵

Socha takes the fact that spirituality itself is understood as a supernatural or natural phenomenon and approached in a naturalistic or anti-naturalistic way as a starting point for the aforementioned classification of various concepts of spirituality that appear in contemporary literature. This results in four forms or ways of defining spirituality, in each case transcendence or transcending, that is, crossing the existing form leading to change, is crucial.²⁶

In the light of the above assumptions, the supernatural spirituality is that in which transcendence is understood as a noun, and thus as a being, while natural spirituality is when transcendence is understood as a verb, and thus as transcending.

Supernatural spirituality in a naturalistic sense is a spirituality which results from the “natural” transcendence, that is, having a status of being. In this case—when a man in a natural way, that is appropriate for his nature and existence, enters into a relationship with divine or other supernatural transcendence—spirituality is a reference to the transcendence of the personal God, Absolute Being or other spirit.

²⁵ See Paweł M. SOCHA, “Duchowość jawna i ukryta. Czy warto kruszyć kopie o naukowy status badania duchowości? [Spirituality: Explicit and Implicit. Hindrances to the Scientific Status of Research on Spirituality],” *Roczniki Psychologiczne* 16 (2013), no. 3: 369–70.

²⁶ See Paweł M. SOCHA, “Duchowość jako przemiana. Nowa teoria duchowości i jej zastosowanie w badaniach [Spirituality as a transformation. A new theory of spirituality and its application in research],” in *Religijność i duchowość. Dawne i nowe formy* [Religiosity and spirituality. Former and new forms], ed. Maria Libiszowska-Żółtowska and Stella Grotowska (Kraków: Zakład Wydawniczy NOMOS 2010), 263–5.

On the other hand, supernatural spirituality in an anti-naturalistic sense is a spirituality immanently contained in human nature, in its immaterial being, which is traditionally described as the soul and is not subjected to empirical research. In other words, it is an immaterial soul as a principle of existence.

Natural spirituality in an anti-naturalistic sense is an entry into a relationship. It becomes the subject of reflection and can be examined using psychological and phenomenological methods. Its aim is to provide the person with the welfare he expects.

Natural spirituality in a naturalistic sense disregards the ontic status of transcendence and the subject's reference to any supernatural. It is understood as the transcendence of the subject, going beyond oneself, exceeding one's *status quo*, which leads to change. In this sense, spirituality is the mechanism of adapting to changing conditions, because it serves development. This type of spirituality is the subject of empirical research, also using experimental methods.²⁷

The last two concepts of natural spirituality, sometimes called humanistic spirituality, are of interest to psychology, mainly in terms of development.²⁸

4. ANTROPOGENIC SPIRITUALITY UNDERLYING CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

Against the background of the main currents of spirituality outlined above, a fully justified issue of the place for religious spirituality, especially Christianity, and the shape of theological reflection on it is raised. However, it is not the purpose of this study to answer directly the question of whether and to what extent the "new spirituality," and especially the non-religious spirituality, is opposed to Christian spirituality, being a real threat to it. This issue was the subject of teaching of the Magisterium of the Church, included, among others, in the letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith addressed to the bishops of the Catholic Church on some aspects of Christian meditation *Orationis Formas* (from 15 October 1989) and in a joint document of the Pontifical Council of Culture and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue *Jesus Christ the Bearer of the Water of Life. A Christian Reflection on the New Age* (from 3 February 2003).

²⁷ P. SOCHA, *Przemiana. W stronę teorii duchowości*, 34–5.

²⁸ See Paweł SOCHA, *Psychologia rozwoju duchowego — zarys zagadnienia* [Psychology of spiritual development — outline of the issue, in: *Duchowy rozwój człowieka. Fazy życia. Osobowość. Wiara. Religijność. Stadialne koncepcje rozwoju w ciągu życia* [Spiritual human development. Phases of life. Personality. Faith. Religiosity. Stadiial concepts of development throughout life], ed. Paweł Socha (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2000), 15–44.

However, the subject of our interest are metatheological issues, namely, what methodological paradigm of spirituality should be adopted due to the ambiguity of this concept, and what implications result from this, for example, for spiritual formation and pastoral care.

The classical theology of Catholic spirituality, an example of which can be found in widely appreciated works of such authors as: Hadrian Tanquerey, Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange or Antonio Royo-Marín, is based on the neoscholastic model of theology, sometimes referred to as “top-down” theology. Still largely up-to-date, it is that the Revelation and the Magisterium of the Church are the major premise. From them, through deduction proper to philosophy, conclusions are derived due to the minor premise, which is a specific model of spiritual life, and not real determinants of the spiritual subject. This is deductive theology. This type of theological thinking about spiritual life, as a result of cooperation with the Holy Spirit, is—as it seems—incompatible with the contemporary models of reflection on spirituality presented above.

However, after the Second Vatican Council in the practice of Catholic theology, and particularly in spiritual theology, the “bottom-up” model, based on inductive thinking, has become more and more popular. It takes as its starting point the spiritual experience of the subject, which is identified by the phenomenological view, and then verified and interpreted in the light of the details of the Revelation and teaching of the Church. It seems that this type of practicing spiritual theology gives the opportunity to find “common ground” with contemporary spiritual trends, or rather to understand the meaning of spirituality itself and its implications for Catholic spirituality.²⁹

The inspiration for contemporary theology of Catholic spirituality is the thought of Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, continued and developed by him after he became Pope. In his work *The Acting Person* (Kraków 1969), writing about spirituality, he starts from the notion of transcendence understood in the epistemological sense, which points to crossing the subject towards the object. This ability to self-transcendence, as it was described by Wojtyła, is the heart of spirituality, understood broadly as a feature inscribed in human nature and rising from it. For this reason, I propose to call it anthropogenic spirituality.³⁰ When this ability for self-transcendence takes on a clear soteric orientation, and becomes a

²⁹ See Stanisław Celestyn NAPIÓRKOWSKI, *Jak uprawiać teologię* [How to practice theology] (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Wrocławskiej Księgarni Archidiecezjalnej TUM, 1991), 63–5; Stanisław KAMIŃSKI, *Metoda i język. Studia z semiotyki i metodologii nauk* [Method and language: Studies in semiotics and methodology of science] (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 1994), 476–8.

³⁰ Paweł M. Socha claims that “not so much religiousness as spirituality is an anthropic feature.” *Przemiana. W stronę teorii duchowości*, 58.

search for the Absolute, understood as *Summum Bonum*, which can give meaning to life, we are dealing with religious spirituality. So it is not about formal inclusion in structured religions, such as Judaism, Hinduism, Islam or Christianity, but about existential experience, often called spiritual, identified by the subject as religious, which is also expressed in some acts of worship.

As explained in the book *The Acting Person*, man as a person, through his act, in a conscious and free way, transcends the actual experience of his self, which reveals his immaterial and spiritual nature and the associated spirituality. However, one cannot equate it with the denial of materiality, as it was in the case of early scholasticism using the term *spiritualitas*.³¹ According to Wojtyła, who is an avowed personalist and masterfully uses the language of phenomenology, the essence of spirituality must be seen in truth, or in relation to truth.³² It follows that man's spirituality is expressed not only in consciousness and thinking, but also in action. For all manifestations of spirituality, and what is referred to above as anthropogenic spirituality, must correspond to the real immanence of the spirit, or some spiritual element. Therefore, as stated by Wojtyła, “the person can only partly and only in a certain respect be identified with nature, namely, only in his substantiality.”³³

As explained by Wojtyła, this spiritual element in a man as a person shows the visible connection of two dynamisms: action (“man acts”) and experiencing (“something-happens-in-man”). It does not destroy the unity of the person, but reveals the complexity of man as a bodily-spiritual being, thanks to which he is aware that he owns his body, and therefore he owns himself. This self-awareness of owning oneself in action and experiencing is one of the important manifestations of spirituality derived from the complex human nature. For this reason, as mentioned, I suggest calling it anthropogenic spirituality. Thus, the manifestation of the spiritual element in man is the immateriality of his cognitive-volitional-affective acts, which are revealed by action. In each of them, the innate ability to self-transcendence is realized in which both the consciousness and the freedom of the subject, as well as action and experience are involved. In addition to this, his entire physical dimension is necessary.³⁴

³¹ See Aimé SOLIGNAC, “Spiritualité,” in: In *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique*, Vol. XIV, edited by Maurice Viller, Ferdinand Cavallera, Joseph De Guibert (Paris: G. Beauchesne et ses fils, 1990), col. 1142–43.

³² Karol WOJTYŁA, *The Acting Person*, trans. Andrzej Potocki (New York: Springer, 2000), 94.

³³ *Ibid.*, 123.

³⁴ See Andrzej SZOSTEK, “Autotranscendencja podstawą duchowości w ujęciu kard. Karola Wojtyły— Jana Pawła II,” in *Jan Paweł II – Mistrz duchowy*, (Homo meditans, 27), ed. Marek Chmielewski (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 2006), 37–51.

This key truth recur in the preaching of John Paul II at least a few times. There is also a certain evolution of his views. In his later writings, he links spirituality understood in the anthropogenic sense, not only with truth, or the pursuit of truth, but above all with love, understood as the self-sacrifice of a person to another person—the divine or human. On the other hand, love is totalizing, that is, it embraces the whole person, in every dimension, both spiritual and moral, and psychophysical. Following the teaching of John Paul II, especially regarding marriage and the family, it can be seen that it evolves in the object-content sense from the veritative (the Latin word *veritas* means truth) to the agapetical (the Greek word *agape* means love) concept of spirituality, and in the formal sense from metaphysical to theological and even mystical concept of spirituality.³⁵

This thesis is confirmed, among others, by the words from the postynodal exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* (from 22 November 1981). John Paul II writes that God created man in his image and likeness, calling him to exist out of love and for love (see Genesis 1:27). At the same time, he emphasizes that God has inscribed the ability to love and responsibility for the community that is born out of it in the humanity of man and woman. In this context, it is said that “as an incarnate spirit, that is a soul which expresses itself in a body and a body informed by an immortal spirit, man is called to love in his unified totality. Love includes the human body, and the body is made a sharer in spiritual love” (FC 11). In these words the integrity of the soul and the body was emphasized, and love was considered the fundamental bond of the personal unity of man. What makes the spiritual and corporeal dimensions permeate each other inseparably is love, understood as the mutual self-sacrifice of persons for their happiness.

In the context of philosophical anthropology, this issue was discussed in the letter *Gratissimam Sane* (from 2 February 1994), published in the Year of the Family. Recalling the thought of Descartes, who made the modern thinking about man dualistic, John Paul II stated that “It is typical of rationalism to make a radical contrast in man between spirit and body, between body and spirit.” However, “man is a person in the unity of his body and his spirit. The body can never be reduced to mere matter: it is a *spiritualized body*, just as man’s spirit is so closely united to the body that he can be described as *an embodied spirit*” (No. 19).

Both statements of John Paul II, which are considered to be the most characteristic for his thought, reveal that the tension typical for the spiritual nature is not so much on the body-soul axis, which is of interest to philosophy and psychology, but on the truth-love axis, which is of interest to theology. The conclusion is that

³⁵ See Marek CHMIELEWSKI, *Duchowość według Jana Pawła II. Studium na podstawie encyklik i adhortacji* [Spirituality according to John Paul II. Study based on encyclicals and exhortations], (Library of Theology of Spirituality, 3) (Lublin: Polskie Stowarzyszenie Teologów Duchowości, 2013), 305–11.

the more a person discovers the order of things and gets to know himself, the more he fulfills himself in the act of self-determination and integrates as a person. The mentioned ability to self-transcendence, that is, to transcending the carnal dimension by the spirit, draws its dynamism from truth and love, and includes cognitive, volitional and affective acts that manifest itself in deed.³⁶ In short, everything that characterizes a human being as *homo sapiens*, that is, all manifestations of his rational activity, and especially the products of civilization and culture, are manifestations of his spirituality, understood in the anthropogenic sense.

Given that, it would be more accurate to speak of different types of anthropogenic spirituality, according to which man transcends through his freedom and rationality when searching for truth and love. If self-transcendence has a soteric orientation, which means it is a turning towards something or someone else that Wojtyła called a horizontal transcendence, or is a turning towards one's interior (vertical transcendence) in order to transcend space-time limitations and ensure the permanence of being and happiness, we speak of religious spirituality. It is a special form of anthropogenic spirituality. Here, the spiritualities of all religions of the world are included, which are diversified in terms of doctrinal, ethical and cultural-ritual spirituality, including Christianity, but with one very important caveat. Namely, different spiritualities of non-Christian religions can be described as "bottom-up", meaning natural or innate. On the other hand, Christian spirituality from the point of view of the Catholic faith should be treated as a "top-down" religion, and therefore supernatural. This is a kind of qualitative "leap" between the spiritualities of different religions and Christian spirituality. As it is known, it has the object of self-revelation of the Holy Trinity in the Incarnate Son of God Jesus Christ. It is based on biblical Revelation and is of Trinitarian-Christological, ecclesiastical, sacramental, and Marian nature.³⁷ This means that in doctrinal, ethical and cultural-ritual terms it cannot be compared or reduced to any other religious and even non-religious (atheistic) spirituality.

³⁶ The close relationship between truth and charity that underlies the anthropogenic spirituality is taught by Benedict XVI in the encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (from 29 June 2009). We read about "the need to link charity with truth not only in the sequence, pointed out by Saint Paul, of *veritas in caritate* (Eph 4:15), but also in the inverse and complementary sequence of *caritas in veritate*. Truth needs to be sought, found and expressed within the "economy" of charity, but charity in its turn needs to be understood, confirmed and practised in the light of truth" (No. 2).

³⁷ See Marek CHMIELEWSKI, "Główne rysy duchowości katolickiej [The main features of the Catholic spirituality]," in: *Duchowość, mistyka i medytacja chrześcijańskiego świata — katolicyzm*, (Duchowość Dalekiego Wschodu a chrześcijaństwo. Dialog czy konfrontacja?, tom 7) [Spirituality, mysticism and meditation of the Christian world—Catholicism (Spirituality of the Far East and Christianity, Dialogue or confrontation? Volume 7)], ed. Ireneusz Kamiński, Jan Perszon, and Joanna Kulwicka-Kamińska (Toruń: Wydawnictwo DRUK-TOR, 2014), 13–27.

In accordance with the scholastic axiom *gratia non tollit naturam sed eam supponit et perficit*, Christian spirituality, although it is the result of God's grace, is based on the mentioned dynamics of self-transcendence, which as a property of human nature is common to all religious spiritualities. For this reason, only in terms of the psycho-phenomenological, we can point to some manifestations common to all spiritualities. They are reflected in attitudes that, as mentioned above, have a cognitive, axiological-effective and action-related reference to the object of spiritual experience. This means that, in the sense of the subject, the supernatural Christian spirituality is one and irreducible, while in the subjective sense there are as many forms and manifestations of Christian spirituality, as people living it and practicing it. This issue is well illustrated by the image of sunlight, which, falling on various objects and living organisms, reflects and extracts from them an infinite number of colors and shapes. In the same way, the Christian spirituality finds its infinite and unique expression in every baptized person who lives it, due to his personal individuality. In this sense, there are various aspects of Christian spirituality, depending not only on objective doctrinal premises, but also on how and why individual people or groups accept and experience specific content of faith and how they practice it on a daily basis. There is one Christian spirituality in many forms.³⁸

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The Council's "anthropological turn" in the life and activity of the Catholic Church and in the practice of theology impels us to take into account the whole of human personal richness, which is reflected in spiritual experience. John Paul II referred to this in his first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*: "man is the primary route that the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission: he is the primary and fundamental way for the Church, the way traced out by Christ himself" (RH 14).

Speaking of spirituality, it should be remembered that as an attribute of human nature, it can take various forms and manifest itself in an infinite number of ways. It can be said that there are as many spiritualities (in the anthropogenic sense) as people. For everyone has a unique spirituality.

Non-Christian manifestations of the human spirit can also be called spiritualities. There is no reason to treat them as equal, especially in the content aspect, thus committing a shameful syncretism. Comparing different spiritualities, including Christian spirituality, and the more valuing them in the soteriological aspect,

³⁸ This topic is more broadly discussed in: Marek CHMIELEWSKI, *Metodologiczne problemy posoborowej teologii duchowości katolickiej* [Methodological problems of post-conciliar theology of Catholic spirituality] (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 1999), 93–100.

if it is possible at all, is only allowed on the level of phenomenology, psychology and sociology. The objective of phenomenology is to describe the very phenomenon of transcendence without preliminary assumptions, whereas psychology deals with the study of its mechanism, and sociology analyzes the social impact and effects of a given spirituality. Human sciences do not have adequate tools to examine the religious-soteric aspects of spirituality, because it is the aim of theology, or possibly of religion. Where the competences of the aforementioned humanities cease, a broad field of theological reflection emerges, which arises from faith in the Triune God. The multitude of spiritualities on the anthropogenic or even religious level does not depreciate Christian spirituality. Against this background, the latter is seen as a particularly remarkable proposition of transcending and fulfilling the human spirit.

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