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CHRISTIAN VALUES IN PUBLIC LIFE

Over the last forty years, some nations under communist regimes fought for independence and liberty. Now that these nations, and specifically Poland, have gained their freedom from communism, a lack of positive social structures has become evident. There is a vacuum which must be filled with some consensual self-definition of values and of socio-political structures.

The Poles, as a Christian people in the democratic tradition, will certainly base their legal structure in the common values of the liberty and equality of all people, of justice as their natural duty, solidarity, and brotherhood. They will also base their government less directly on specific Christian values: forgiveness, mercy and love. These were the major guiding principles in the overthrow of the communist regime, which was achieved with remarkably little bloodshed and bitterness. These central values, however, cannot be legislated, nor does the Church ask it. They enter society in a different way: through the teaching, preaching and example of the Church as it proclaims and lives the Gospel.

Obviously, the situation is very complex. Proposals for the new government range from some type of Catholic “confessional state” at one extreme, to a religiously neutral, secular state at the other.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE STATE

Let us begin with a short historical introduction to the dialectical relationship between Church and state. After the French Revolution (1789) the separation of Church and state was emphasized everywhere in Europe. Since there was agreement on the functions of the state, this new secular concept served as a pattern for other countries. This principle guarantees the equality of all religions in the eyes of the law. This is

a very important principle, according to which the state considers itself neutral in all religious matters. In certain countries, although there is institutional separation between Church and state, there is at the same time functional interaction between them.

According to political principle, it is reasonable to accept this separation. But the life of a religious believer must be spent within the confines of some state, and the tenets of faith can, and often do, influence the political life of the citizens of that state. Thus, though the state may preserve its neutrality toward religion, it cannot under all circumstances remain silent in regard to certain activities of a church. The governments in many countries positively encourage the “free exercise” of religion. When churches act in religious and charitable ways, they are not required to pay government taxes, as in the case of such Church-related institutions as hospitals, schools, orphanages, nursing homes, etc.

Although the Church’s primary job is to preach its articles of faith and not to involve itself in politics, the two often overlap. The essence of the Church’s ministry is to preach, teach and foster the bond between God and mankind. However, the Church does not operate in a vacuum. Political and religious issues occur in the context of real life, with its everyday problems and conflicts naturally arise between Church and state.

Let me explain more fully the role of the Church in the world according to the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et spes*, in which the Church examines the relationship between its members and the state in which they live.

The Church, by virtue of her role and competence, is not identified with any political system. [...] The Church, for its part, being founded in the love of the Redeemer, contributes towards the spread of justice and charity among nations and among the brothers of the nations themselves¹.

According to this text the Church does not claim to place Christians in a comfortable Christian civilization, nor in a privileged Christian state. It would be somewhat dangerous for the Church to be involved in world affairs. But, on the other hand, the Church may not abandon the world. She must live in the world, within political structures, without being of the world, without being party to these political structures (J.7.15–16). The Church should live with the world and, if possible, in peace with it. When the Church comes towards the world she approaches without power, rather in the spirit of service, following the example of Christ as the Good Shepherd.

¹ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World of Today Gaudium et spes*, 75, 76.

Keeping in mind the model of the Church as servant and, in view of the situation of the Church in Poland after 1989 when she suddenly regained many of her rights, some people, under the influence of Enlightenment and liberal thinking, began to fear the Church's power. It is sufficient to include the following ideas from an article by James E. Wood, Jr. concerning the law on *Guarantee of Freedom of Conscience and Religion*, 17 May 1989: "to establish schools and other educational institutions... and to print and publish newspapers and books". There is "great scepticism" and fear on the part of non-Catholic denominations in connection with this legal guarantee that their children may face discrimination"².

The question concerns two possibilities: shall we have a secular state under the influence of the Catholic Church, or shall we have a secular state that is absolutely neutral in its dealings with all denominations? The present debate in Poland on this topic reminds us of the debate in the United States in the late 1940s. At that time, John Courtney Murray formulated the theory of the "indirect power" of the Church in socio-political life, suggesting that the Church had the freedom to influence society through the consciences of Catholic citizens. He also criticized the conservative position that the Church should be given support and preferential treatment by the state³ Although Murray wrote of his American experience, his thinking was based on more universal principles and is relevant to Poland today.

ON THE CONCERNS OF VARIOUS POLISH GROUPS

In what follows I would like to mitigate the fears of liberals, who might create difficulties for Catholics, who are the absolute majority of the Polish nation; and at the same time to caution some conservative Catholics who would attempt to introduce "Christian values" in all spheres of public life. The latter group may, on its own initiative, seek to exploit the Church for purely political aims.

Liberal concerns

(A) Can a state exist which is ideologically neutral? The liberals would answer: "Yes, we are working to create such a state within Polish

² James E. Wood, *Rising Expectations for Religious Rights in Eastern Europe*, „Journal of Church and State” 33:1991 no. 1, p. 4–5.

³ Cf. John Courtney Murray, *We hold these truths*, New York 1960.

boundaries". Under the illusion of neutrality they develop a vision of a totally secularized state in which the role of Church and religion would be reduced to a completely personal matter. In other words, the liberal envisages a secular state, so conceived as to be completely deprived of sacred elements of religion in the name of the state's autonomy and universal tolerance.

Let me now quote from a sermon delivered by Pope John Paul II in Lubaczów, Poland:

Faith and the quest for holiness are private matters only in the sense that nobody else can replace a person in his encounter with God and that God cannot be sought and found otherwise than in the context of genuine inner freedom. But God says to us: "Be holy, for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44). He wants to embrace with his holiness not only the individual person, but also whole families and other human communities, even whole nations and societies. That is that why the postulate of ideological neutrality consists mainly in the State protecting the freedom of conscience and religion of all its citizens, no matter what their religion or ideology. But to postulate that the dimension of holiness should in no way enter social and civic life is a postulate to render the State and civic life godless, and has little in common with ideological neutrality. We should have great goodwill and be well-disposed towards one another in order to determine how the sacred can be assured a presence in social and civic life in a way that will not hurt anyone or alienate anyone in his own country. At the same time, we Catholics ask for our point of view to be taken into account: that very many of us would feel uneasy in a State from whose structures God has been eliminated under the guise of ideological neutrality⁴

We may state that intentional isolation from the sacred elements of religion and limitation to a purely materialistic and secular world view is not at all a neutral position, as liberal parties would proclaim. Indeed, it is a conscious declaration of position in matters of God – it is the negation of God⁵. This then leads to intolerance and to a feeling of injustice, especially in the case of a nation in whose history religion has played so great role. In our discussion of the ideologically neutral state we must consider whether this type of neutrality might not be one-sided. It may happen that the majority, to avoid conflicts based on religious matters, acquiesces to the wishes of the minority and then we must state that this is, in fact, a one-sided neutrality. Perhaps a pseudo-neutrality. Is such a strictly neutral state only an utopian ideal? In the end, one side must always give in to the other.

⁴ John Paul II, *Homily delivered in Lubaczów, Poland*, 03.06.1991, see: "L'Osservatore Romano", English Edition; no. 23, June 10, 1991.

⁵ Marek Jędraszewski, *Szukanie siebie samych (Looking for ourselves)*, „W drodze” 1992 no. 9 (229), p. 25–26.

(B) Sometimes the declarations of liberals concerning an ideologically neutral state, where no consideration is given to the notion of holiness, may easily lead to relativism. Contrary to such liberal declarations, what the Polish nation needs now, after forty-five years of false communist ideology, is a stable foundation upon which to rebuild social structures. Let us add that such a basis must be truly European and at the same time based on Christian principles. According to the Declaration issued by The Extraordinary Synod of Bishops for European Matters (1991), nobody can deny that the Christian faith has been deeply rooted in Europe for a long time and this faith has consequently formed the basis of many European institutions, including its political structures. This statement has nothing in common with so-called fundamentalism or with attempts to found a confessional state. It is a simple reminder of the real basis for democracy, which modern states use as the model for their political systems.

We must note that not all democracies are authentic. For a democracy to be truly genuine it must be grounded upon immutable values which transcend temporary party interests. John Paul II spoke about these matters in his Encyclical Letter, *Centesimus Annus*.

Authentic democracy is possible only in a state of law, and on the basis of a correct conception of the human person. Nowadays there is a tendency to claim that agnosticism and sceptical relativism are the philosophy and the basic attitude that corresponds to democratic forms of political life. Those who are convinced that they know the truth and firmly adhere to it are considered unavailable from a democratic point of view, since they do not accept that truth is determined by the majority, or that it is subject to variation according to different political trends⁶

It would seem that each citizen in a free and democratic country wishes to build a democratic state based on law; however, it is important to begin building upon a just basis. Even a pluralistic state cannot renounce ethical norms in its legislation and public life.⁷

Certainly, it is difficult to create a legal system which would be axiologically neutral. Even in the light of ordinary pragmatism the creation of such an axiologically neutral state sooner or later requires a return to such basic values as freedom, justice and equality, which are also basic human rights. Today we see how important these neglected human rights truly are in building a society. For instance, the debate about basic values has continued in pluralistic democracies, e.g. Germany, for the last thirty

⁶ John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 46.

⁷ Cf. Maciej Zięba, *Demokracja i antyewangelizacja* [Democracy and anti – evangelization], Poznań 1997, p. 65.

years. Intellectuals and legal scholars seek a basis for cooperation in order to establish a commonwealth. They find such a basis in fundamental principles accepted by the majority of citizens. No human society, no state, can exist without basic values. These basic values are the dignity of the human being, human rights, freedom, the right to life (also for the unborn), justice, equality and solidarity. Undoubtedly, all these values are also Christian values.

We may talk of the universal nature of Christian values because they contain fundamental human values. Therefore, there is no reason to accuse Christianity of particularism. These moral values, as well as truth, are inexhaustible in meaning and realization. These values require us to have an open mind while we deepen our knowledge of them; they challenge human beings to reply to them in their personal life and in the political sphere. The former president of Czechoslovakia, Vaclav Havel, emphasized the vital role of moral values in political life. He valued the individual over the state and believed in the importance of courtesy, good taste, intelligence and responsibility. He tried to emphasize the spiritual and ethical dimensions of political decision-making⁸. The strength of these apparently romantic values is evident even in the graceful manner of the Velvet Revolution and even of the break-up of Havel's Czechoslovakia.

C) A new Polish law enacted in 1992 regarding radio and television programming guarantees that Christian values will be respected in the media. The guarantee itself stirred up a stormy debate in Polish society. To grasp the intention of this new law it is necessary to realize that the members of Parliament, reasoning on the basis of Christian principles, were motivated by their concern for the development of a national culture grounded in Christianity. Their concern was that a Christian system of values not be destroyed in radio and television programming. That Christian system of values had survived for thousands of year, and was never considered a threat to other religious denominations; on the contrary, it served as a guarantor of their human rights in the most difficult of times. At the time of the Reformation, for instance, Poland received refugees from many civil and religious conflicts. This tradition still exists, in spite of some failures; and it is hoped that it will persevere.

Respect for Christian values in radio and television need not mean the "Catholicization" of the entire culture. It is intended as a legal protection of human and Christian values, which during the forty years of Communist domination were systematically denigrated in an attempt to subdue

⁸ Lance M o r r o w, *I cherish a Certain Hope*, "Time" 03.08.1992, p. 46–48.

the Catholicism of the vast majority of the Polish people in favour of their preferred subculture.

One complication here is the novelty of the present situation. After forty years of suppression – one complete generation – traditional Catholic observances are being celebrated with great enthusiasm, and occasionally with a lack of tact. Understandably, many non-Catholics, together with some thoughtful Catholics, are concerned about the response of the minority. Both the majority and the minority must understand and accept the right and responsibility of the majority to maintain its religious traditions. The teaching of the Catholic Church, in itself, provides a strong guarantee for the minority. The most basic Christian value is love, which is perceived as stemming from human free will. From this basic principle there follow, automatically, such other Christian values as “social justice”, “the equal dignity of all”, “the common good”, and “community”. These values are shared by Catholics, Protestants and other believers alike; they form the core of traditional, liberal humanism. Such values themselves guarantee the right of the minority.

The approach of this new legislation incorporates great strength but at the same time weakness. On the one hand, it offers no platform to a would-be dictator, whether within the Church or outside it. On the other hand, it fails to provide definite and concrete programmes. Educationally, this openness is of great value; but as law it is dangerously vague. The Church properly inspires and guides its members. It is the nature of law to act coercively; while justice, in courts, must be tempered by charity. In the next few years, the Polish population will inevitably redefine itself as a nation. And, inevitably, the Church, with its heritage of traditional values, will have its influence on the process. One of our poets has cautioned: “Do not tear down the ancient altar until you are able to build a new one” (Adam Asnyk).

At present, the Church is in fact the primary source of the structure and stability of human values in the emerging Polish nation. It would be foolish and irresponsible to deny this. Respect for the values and rights of non-Catholic Poles must be a greater priority for the Church, so that stronger legal guarantees of freedom of religion are afforded to minorities. In Poland, this will certainly happen under the aegis of the Church, yet this poses no threat to those minorities, since Christian teaching respects their right to be different.

Furthermore, Catholic teaching assumes participation by the minority in the formulation of a Polish government and society. Even though it is the Church that provides the forum for discussion, an important and necessary outcome will be the withdrawal by the Church from direct political action. Fidelity to her own teaching will require this. Hence, the

Church's role in the Polish nation will be played out in the field of formation, teaching and inspiration.

At this time, the Church's teaching and directive authority are the major source of stability and identity for the vast majority of the Polish people. As such, they offer the only feasible starting point for discussion. From the very beginning, the Church's intention must be to relinquish all coercive authority in public matters. This does not imply that the Church will vanish from public life; but its role will change with the passing of time. It is to be hoped that the Church will be given the grace to move smoothly and securely into its new role.

A word of caution to those liberals who hope to build a secular society and to remove the Church rapidly from any future significant influence! According to the finding of Serif Mardin⁹, an expert in Islamic culture, one phenomenon would be certain. When a society rejects its culture and tradition in an attempt to secularize and modernize too rapidly (as Turkey has done, for instance), there will be a reaction: fundamentalism. Eventually the people will reclaim the lost traditions, with little subtlety or tolerance. As a point of prudence, it is in no one's interest to arbitrarily or ideologically deny the Polish people a major psychological support during a period of stress and rapid transition. Overall, then, it would appear that the interests of both the liberals and the minorities are well served by the Church at this point in time.

Conservative concerns

(A) In Poland there is a large, vocal minority of Catholics who want the Church to give official support to their conservative political platform, and to employ the coercive power of the State to enforce their understanding of Catholic teachings. They have entered the media debate demanding that the media be required by law to respect "Christian values" Father Józef Tischner¹⁰ responded by thoughtfully explaining that the essential nature of Christian values does not permit that they be expressed in the form of legislation. In the first place, the expression of key Gospel tenets changes its emphasis from time to time. Poland has experienced this recently. With the inception of Solidarity, the Gospel read:

⁹ Cf. Serif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey*, "New York: SUNY Press" 1989.

¹⁰ Józef Tischner, *Spory przed znakiem drogowym* [Debate before road sign], „Tygodnik Powszechny” 21.02.1993.

“Bear one another’s burdens”; with the murder of Jerzy Popiełuszko, it became: “Overcome evil with good”. Just now, it is uncertain where the emphasis should be placed, but we will surely find it. The search for the centre must be responsive; the Gospel deals with the good, not with the “correct” Christ Himself broke the Sabbath law in order to heal a cripple. Furthermore, in the process of transition, the Church’s catalytic function consisted largely in providing a place where the truth might be spoken and heard in freedom. The Gospel of Christ calls for great openness to the needs of our changing world. Christ invites people to follow Him voluntarily (“If you would be my disciples...”).

The requirements for discipleship, in a changing world, cannot be codified by law or exhausted by any philosophical system; they must be discerned by each individual and each group – by the Church and by the nation. The proposed legislation, the media, and any other attempt to ground civil law directly in Christian values, misses the basic point of the Gospel. Christian freedom and salvation are truly historical, and are grounded in day-to-day living. It is the place of the Church to guide and support, not to command in these matters. Józef Tischner respects the intentions and concerns of those supportive of media laws, but cautions that their methods may prove inappropriate and counter-productive.

To Father Tischner’s ideas, I would like to add that in reality the law requiring the media to respect Christian values would not lead to a “confessional” state, nor to intolerance of non-believers. Nevertheless, this danger does potentially exist. Therefore, the Catholic must be sensitive to this concern. “It is however, only in freedom that man can turn himself towards what is good”¹¹. The Fathers of the Council emphasized this in their *Declaration of Religious Freedom*: “Men cannot satisfy this obligation in a way that is in keeping with their own nature unless they enjoy both psychological freedom and immunity from external coercion. Therefore the right to religious freedom has its foundation not in the subjective attitude of the individual, but in his very nature”¹². I chose to emphasize this teaching because from time to time the over-zealous have maintained the opposite. For their sake, for the sake of the entire Church, and for the Polish people, it is important to clarify the respective functions of Church and State in the process of salvation. It is the responsibility of both to provide the freedom that is an essential component of faith. It is the re-

¹¹ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World of Today Gaudium et spes*, 17.

¹² Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Declaration of Religious Freedom: Dignitatis Humanae*, 2.

sponsibility of the Church to respect the freedom of Catholics and non-Catholics alike in proclaiming the Gospel, which itself calls for freedom. The appropriate proclamation of the Gospel consists in invitation, in witness by word and life, and in dialogue and discussion.

In essence the Church is apolitical. This does not mean that the individual Catholic does not exercise his rights and responsibilities as a citizen. But, if the Church, as an institution, acts as a political party, it would be confusing the transcendental with the historical; it would be distorting the proper relationship between Church and state. Jesus Himself clearly distinguished between the two: "Render to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's!" (Mt 22, 21). When this distinction is not maintained, it is the institutional aspect of the Church, rather than the central values of the Gospel, that are enjoined coercively. It is far simpler to require church marriages or Friday abstinence than to legislate faith, hope and love. Furthermore, if the Church binds herself to any political system she draws closer to one or the other and thus loses her universality. It is the Church's nature to proclaim the Gospel at all times, in all places, and under all conditions in which humanity finds itself¹³

(B) The Church's centre is transcendent and universal; by contrast, by its very nature civil law is finite and particular. As a human creation it is inevitably imperfect and biased, and its necessity is practical rather than absolute. Thus a law at times will come into conflict with moral values and individuals will be confronted with a personal choice. When this occurs, it is well to consider Socrates' decision:

Men of Athens, I love and esteem you, but I will obey the god rather than you; and as long as I breathe and have the power, I shall never abandon philosophy nor cease to admonish you [...] saying in my wonted fashion: "My good friend, you are a citizen of Athens, a great city [...]. Are you not ashamed [...] [of] caring nothing and taking no thought for wisdom and truth and the perfection of your soul?"¹⁴

For Socrates it was more important to be faithful to his own conscience than to change the law. In *A man for all seasons* St. Thomas Moore gives the same answer to the same question. The formation of conscience is the Church's primary responsibility. In civic matters it is to form and develop a deep fully. The law will never be perfect and the mature conscience must remain a crucial factor in the civil form. Thus the role of the Church in civil affairs is the spiritual and moral formation of the citizen.

¹³ Cf. Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde, *Wolność, państwo, Kościół* [Freedom, state, Church], translated by P. Kaczorowski, Kraków 1994, p. 82–84, 94–95.

¹⁴ Plato, *Socratic Dialogues – The Apology*, translated by W. D. Woodhead, New York 1958, § 29 D-E.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH IN THE NEW FUTURE

A major issue in the current debate is the position of the Catholic Church in the future of the Polish nation. During the communist period the Church was almost the only significant counterweight to the communist state. As such it received the support of many sincere people who were not committed Christians. But now other alternatives are open to them. The Church must recognize this and respect their withdrawal with a good grace. It would be a mistake to hold them coercively or to attempt to impose on them values which they do not hold.

Furthermore it is not the right of the Church directly to impose her values and teaching on anyone. After the experience of communism the Polish people have enough of values imposed from without. During that time the Church established herself as a supporter of human rights and advocate of human dignity. Now it is time to build on that foundation. The nation is free and the people know that they have the right to choose. If the Church fails to respect that right they may well make other choices. However, if the Church respects adult autonomy of conscience and addresses herself to the formation of conscience and spirituality according to the basic message of the Gospel, the Catholic population is quite capable of managing political decisions by itself. The good teacher accompanies the pupil on his journey, but always allows him to make his own discoveries, formulate his own principles and develop his own applications. Truth and values hold their own validation, they themselves persuade, challenge and enlighten the human mind.

Consider the visitor to an art museum. If his perception is not trained, he will see relatively little, but if he has the proper training and experience he will enjoy the intrinsic richness of the exhibition. Similarly, someone properly grounded in moral values will comprehend more accurately and completely the moral implications of the historical situation. It is the Church's mission to provide that moral and spiritual formation. It is a misuse of the Church's resources to devote too much energy or attention to values as part of civil law. In reality Christian values meet little opposition; it is the imposition of these values or any others that provokes resistance.

Parenthetically I wish to introduce the distinction of Henri Bergson between open and closed moralities and religion. The closed system provides codified rules and doctrines, while the open system permits the individual to understand a few deep principles and to build upon them. The closed system is characterized by control and defensiveness, while the open system allows for creative participation in both religion and secular society. It is this openness which the Church would wish to foster. Ma-

ture morality and spirituality and Bergsonian openness are prerequisites for dialogue, and dialogue is a prerequisite for a mature civil society. Without dialogue or communication, namely “without living together and talking together”¹⁵, society becomes a for of barbarism which lives under fear and force, by economic necessity alone, sacrificing higher values to baser ones. When dialogue is lost, all the components of communication fail. The parties to communication cease to listen to one another, they only trade monologues and misperceptions and the rules of rational thought are violated.

During the post war period, the Church in Poland offered the primary refuge from the barbarian clamour and the major forum for civilized discourse. A word of caution, however: Poland is the home not just of Catholics, but also of several kinds of Protestants, Orthodoxies, Eastern White Catholics, the Polish National Church, Jews, Roma, agnostics, and non-believers. It is necessary that all these people participate actively in the planning and development of their new homeland. The Church must extend the freedom and openness that the Polish people found within it during the communist period to those who choose to remain outside. This would be a greater gift than any other.

There is no cause for fear in this if we have a basic faith in the Church. As Joseph Ratzinger says, “when the Church no longer has the courage to remind the people of the Christian vision of man, which is essential for public life, it will cease to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world and the city built on the hill”¹⁶. From this there emerge several conclusions. Whereas at first it might appear that Poland has more urgent problems, for example the economy, the proper formulation of civic and religious values is equally important. In both areas of concern we face decisions in the near future which will determine long-term development. In these it will be important to bear in mind a number of things.

(A) The relationship – even in theory – between state and Church is complex. The state is, of course, an instrument of civil order; it is a means to achieve a good society, not an end in itself (*telos*). The idea of state and law do not lead logically to fundamental values of society such as equality, freedom, and justice, but follow from them. A truly neutral state reflecting no values is impossible as soon as it acts in the real world, for actions reflect values. Even a matter as apparently neutral as which side of the street to drive on presupposes such values as order, safety, and respect for life.

¹⁵ J. Courtney Murray, *We Hold These Truths...*, p. 13.

¹⁶ Quotation according to Jacek Sali: *Katolickie pojmowanie klerykalizmu* [The Catholic Concept of Clericalism], “W Drodze” 1992 no. 5 (225), p. 15.

(B) The separation of Church and state is a fine political principle, but in the real world cooperation and collaboration are essential. The Church routinely works with the state in such areas as the care of orphans, unmarried mothers and unemployment.

(C) It is important that the state recognize the Christian spirituality of the Polish people. Over the past few years the Christian values love, mercy and forgiveness have been instrumental in achieving a bloodless revolution. The state must do nothing to hinder or undermine these virtues.

(D) The Church too must continue faithful to herself and her task, which is to preach the Gospel. She must not become entangled in any one political system; her basic nature is apolitical. It is not the case that the obsolete Marxist ideology is to be replaced by Catholicism as some have suggested; the mission of the Church transcends time and history and must not be defined according to the means of a particular situation. To limit the Church in this way would be to abuse her true contribution. The Church does not ask the state for safety, power, and a privileged position; but rather seeks to give her gift to society: the good news of the Gospel, the hope of salvation, and the grace of Christian community. Especially in Poland with its overwhelming Catholic majority it is absolutely essential that the rights of religious minorities are strongly guaranteed and enforced by law; and the Church can only support these guarantees.

With great faith and hope Father Janusz Pasierb expressed his vision for the Polish Church:

I do not want "a Church which must still die for the Fatherland" (Maria Dąbrowska), a Church which must sacrifice universal and Catholic values on the altar of the Fatherland. I want a Church which has left political servitude behind, but still remains the conscience of Polish politics. For this the Church must remain impartial and disinterested, it must immerse itself in the teaching of the great spiritual masters of the past. The Church can and must be the ideal, the model, the example for secular society, this is a political apostate of the Church. Fortunately, the head of the Church is Christ, whose kingdom is based on truth, justice, and love. So both the behaviour of Catholics within the Church and their behaviour toward the state, which is now our own state, stand as very important witnesses. If we as Catholics teach citizens respect for civic institutions, if we think in terms of society and community, if we give up pride and privilege and domination, then we will serve as Christ did. I fear the opposite values will give us a Church which is used and manipulated by politicians to serve their own purposes. I fear a Church of only one party, which is not a church of all people who seek the kingdom of God¹⁷

¹⁷ Janusz Pasierb, *Pragnę Kościoła o szerokim, otwartym sercu* [I desire a Church with a Large and Open Heart], „W Drodze” 1982 no. 5 (226), p. 15.

The areas of the Church's activity in Poland have changed in 16 years of freedom. The Church does not have to create space for dissidents any more and it does not have to support the struggle for freedom. It devotes itself to ministry. But there are new challenges in a democratic political system. Democracy, according to various thinkers such as Francis Fukuyama¹⁸ or Samuel Huntington¹⁹, is conditioned both culturally and historically. The Catholic Church has been present in Polish culture and tradition for ages. Analysis of the Polish political scene reveals that there is a serious challenge facing the Church in Poland: the education of society towards freedom with respect for others while at the same time taking into account a sense of personal value. It is essential that Catholics in Poland respect minority rights as well as their own values and attitudes.

WARTOŚCI CHRZEŚCIJAŃSKIE W ŻYCIU PUBLICZNYM

Streszczenie

Jednym ze skutków Wielkiej Rewolucji Francuskiej (1789) był rozdział Kościoła od państwa. J. C. Murray sformułował teorię o silnym oddziaływaniu Kościoła katolickiego na życie społeczno-polityczne, sugerując, że Kościół wpływa na społeczeństwo poprzez formację katolickich obywateli. Należy zauważyć, że żadna społeczność, żadne państwo nie może istnieć bez podstawowych wartości, a do tych należą właśnie wartości chrześcijańskie. Artykuł podkreśla ich uniwersalny charakter – jako zawierających wartości fundamentalne dla człowieka. Nauczanie Kościoła Katolickiego uczy tych wartości i docenia ich wagę. Sam Kościół w swojej istocie jest jednak apolityczny – jego pierwotnym zadaniem jest formacja duchowa.

Kościół katolicki w Polsce jest mocno zakorzeniony w tradycji oraz historii państwa i narodu. W czasie komunizmu był on jedyną siłą zdolną przeciwstawić się systemowi, wspierając działania zmierzające do jego zmiany. Po jego upadku Kościół na nowo określał swoje miejsce w wolnym społeczeństwie. Autor artykułu przypomina, że Kościół mówi przez swoich wyznawców. Jego powinnością jest respektowanie wolności wyboru każdego obywatela i troska o moralną oraz duchową formację społeczeństwa.

Rozdział państwa od Kościoła jest zasadą polityczną. W realnym świecie Kościół wskazuje i strzeże wartości, ale nie powinien bezpośrednio angażować się w politykę, gdyż czyniłoby to z niego jedną z wielu sił obecnych na scenie życia politycznego i czyniłoby go partykularnym. O obecność wartości chrześcijańskich w życiu publicznym powinni zabiegać sami wierzący.

¹⁸ Cf. F. Fukuyama, *Koniec historii* [The End of History and the Last Man], translated by T. Bieroń, M. Wichrowski, Poznań 1996.

¹⁹ Cf. S. Huntington, *Trzecia fala demokratyzacji* [The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order], translated by H. Jankowska, Warszawa 1995.