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Faith, Culture and a Human Person in the Thought of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński

**Wiara, kultura i osoba ludzka w nauczaniu
Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego**

ABSTRACT

This article depicts the specificity and multidimensional nature of Stefan Wyszyński's personalistic conception concerning the Christian vision of involvement in culture. Therefore, attention has been paid to how the central tenets of personalism can form the basis for shaping culture, especially to contemporary (post)-modern reality? Thus, the analysis of culture carried out in the presented paper explains the discussed issues regarding a vocation addressed to every human being. Moreover, emphasizing such elements as the human person, family, nation, state, the international community, culture, economy, and politics understood in an integral way, as well as the Church proclaiming the universal message of salvation, the personalistic vision of culture shows a praxeological character, rooted in a concrete human existence and oriented towards the dimension of creative-saving.

It allows not only the direct inclusion of the human person in the current of civilization and cultural changes but also allows a person to discover the right place in the dynamically changing realities of the modern world.

KEYWORDS

Stefan Wyszyński, personalism, culture, evangelization, postmodernism

ABSTRAKT

Niniejszy artykuł ukazuje specyfika i wielowymiarowy charakter personalistycznej koncepcji Stefana Wyszyńskiego w odniesieniu do chrześcijańskiej wizji zaangażowania w kulturę. W tym kontekście zwrócono uwagę na to, w jakim zakresie główne założenia personalizmu mogą stanowić podstawę do kształtowania kultury, zwłaszcza w odniesieniu do współczesnej rzeczywistości (post)-modernistycznej? Przeprowadzona w powyższym artykule analiza kultury pozwala ukazać omawianą problematykę w kategoriach powołania skierowanego do każdego człowieka. Dzięki uwypukleniu takich elementów jak: osoba ludzka, rodzina, naród, państwo, społeczność międzynarodowa, integralnie rozumiana kultura, ekonomia i polityka, a także Kościół głoszący powszechne orędzie zbawienia, personalistyczna wizja kultury wykazuje charakter prakseologiczny, zakorzeniony w konkretnej ludzkiej egzystencji i ukierunkowany na wymiar stwórczo-zbawczy. Umożliwia to nie tylko bezpośrednie włączenie się osoby ludzkiej w nurt zachodzących przemian cywilizacyjno-kulturowych, ale równocześnie pozwala człowiekowi odkryć właściwe miejsce w dynamicznie zmieniających się realiach współczesnego świata.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

Stefan Wyszyński, personalizm, kultura, ewangelizacja, postmodernizm

INTRODUCTION

The concept of man presented by Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński emphasized its personalist character. It was part of the broader trend of the so-called “Relational personalism,” which recognized the person not only as of the highest value but also as the key to understanding the entire reality. In his understanding, man’s anthropological and philosophical vision, without relation to the whole existence, always remains in some way detached, isolated, and – eventually – fictional.

In this sense, the category of “person” in the considerations of man and culture is of fundamental importance to Wyszyński. In his understanding, the human person is the highest being in the hierarchy of natural beings. In other words, the human person makes what is “most perfect” in all nature. Therefore, he is (1) a real substance, determined by the same act of existence from conception to death. The beginning and the end of human life qualify a man as a contingent being, not having the ultimate reason for his existence, neither in himself nor in other beings similar to himself. (2) In addition, the man is a “potentialized” being. His actualization takes place both through the individual spiritual faculties, such as reason and will, as well as in the context of specific social relations with other people. (3) The third determinant of human existence is its transcendence, which – at the same time – determines the final coordinates of human life.

In all three aspects, therefore, the human person shows his dynamism. In each of his actions, there is a combination of personal contingency, potentiality, and transcendence. The consistent experience of one’s own contingency, which is a subjective expression of his potentialisation, motivates a person to act. Each of his actions, in turn, not only contributes to updating the personal potentialities existing in him but also becomes a complement to his personal existence. On the other hand, the transcendence of the human being establishes the perspective of man’s personal development. On the one hand, due to the acts of intellectual cognition, love, and freedom, the human person transcends the entire world of nature. On the other hand, through acts related to legal subjectivity, sovereignty, and religious dignity, a human being transcends every society he comes to actualize his potential, which means developing a specific personality.¹

¹ Cf. R. Ficek, *Christians in Socio-Political Life: An Applied Analysis of the Theological Anthropology of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Primate of Poland*, Toruń 2020, 27–43.

No wonder that one of the most crucial dimensions of Primate Wyszyński's personalist vision of Christian culture is its integral character. In this sense, culture is understood as the humanization of man's creative activity in the context of all temporal reality. The specificity of socio-cultural activity, however, cannot be reduced only to the category of progress, a purely material dimension, or the promotion of a scientific and technical civilization guided mainly by the principles of utilitarianism and economic profit and loss account. This kind of reductionist vision of culture rooted in a false conception of man and the world is not only unable to satisfy the deeper needs and aspirations of the human person, but – by showing a tendency to dominate man – can lead to the degradation and degeneration of essential dimensions of human life.

As a result, according to Wyszyński, only a personalistic vision of Christian culture is open to realizing a humans' personal fullness. No wonder then that the Christian vision of Primate Wyszyński's culture places man with all the richness of his personal being at the center of his interests.

As a result, according to Wyszyński, only a personalistic vision of Christian culture is open to realizing a humans' personal fullness. No wonder then that the Christian vision of Primate Wyszyński's culture places man with all the richness of his personal being at the center of his interests. In its assumptions, man becomes the main subject, goal, and sense of all creative activity, both in its cultural as well as cultural-formative character. Although the human person cannot live and function in isolation from the context of – broadly understood – culture, in Wyszyński's opinion, one cannot speak of an authentically Christian and humanistic culture that would be removed from the evangelical context of the truth about man and his place in the world. In other words, a personalistically understood

the culture, by shaping a human person following his vocation, becomes a special gift-challenge for him.²

In this context, man's primary task is to create space for an authentically humanist culture. It is possible thanks to the sphere of personal values which, in the service of man, condition the transformation of the whole reality of the world in the perspective of "a new heaven and a new earth" (cf. 2 Pt 3:13; Rev 21: 1). It is expressed primarily in cooperation with God the Creator in changing and improving the world. Moreover, supplementing the perspective of creation with the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ is the crowning achievement of the saving history of man's relationship with God and with the entire temporal dimension. Culture, inscribed in the creative and salvific perspective, is an essential dimension of the human person's relationship to God. It emphasizes the exceptional dignity of man and his vocation, understood as the full realization of the person in the individual and social dimension. In this way, one can speak of a culture that genuinely humanizes and shapes the reality of temporality in the spirit of the Master of Nazareth.

1. ANTHROPOLOGICAL-THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Throughout human history, culture has always been the proper environment for his life and activities. The complex structure of the human being encompassing and fusing two ontic dimensions – matter and spirit – determines the type of human immersion in the cosmos and the humankind of transcendence concerning the entire surrounding world.³ In this regard, "man is a rational and free being – he is the lord of creation."⁴ Since he is a potentialized person – subject to the constant law of development and updating of his personality – he enters into various

² Cf. A.F. Dziuba, *Humanizująca funkcja kultury, Z nauczania kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego Prymasa Polski*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo UKSW, 2013.

³ Cf. Wyszyński, „Konstytucja Pastoralna o obecności Kościoła w świecie współczesnym“ *Warszawa – bazylika św. Jana 20. 03. 1966*, in: Wyszyński, *Kazania i przemówienia autoryzowane 1956–1981*, (vol. 1–67), Archiwum Instytutu Prymasowskiego w Warszawie, vol. 23, 119–120; R. Ficek, *(Post-) Modernity and Christian Culture: In the Context of the Personalism of Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński*, "Roczniki Kulturoznawcze" 11 (2020), 51–56.

⁴ Wyszyński, *Spółeczność przyrodzona i nadprzyrodzona. II Konferencja Akademicka. Warszawa – kościół św. Anny 16. 02. 1957*, in: Wyszyński, *Kazania i przemówienia autoryzowane 1956–1981*, vol. 2, 61.

complex relationships, both with the world of matter and spirit. It is also reflected in a culture that encompasses virtually all dimensions of human life.⁵

Therefore, man's multidimensional activity means that the sphere of culture – explicitly human reality – requires direct involvement from him. It is expressed primarily because – due to cognition – the human person “assimilates” and interiorizes the existing world, enriching himself with the content of the reality understood in this way. The intellectualization of the existing reality allows a person to “come out of himself” in the act of voluntary action.⁶ It has its direct expression in the creative cultural activity through which the human person becomes – a kind of – *homo artifex*. Thus, the dynamic nature of the human being, expressed in the need for creative transformation and self-improvement, finds the right conditions in which a person can be fulfilled as a person.

In other words, the human person, created by God, is a miracle of existence and has something of the “preexistence of the Holy Trinity.” As a result, he exists and functions in a specific reality, enjoying the “secret” dimension of spiritual life that permeates his interior and – primarily through culture – transcends to the reality of the external world. As the subject – and simultaneously the object – of any cultural activity, the human person has his “inside and outside.” Man, therefore, can be both active and passive in his involvement in the transformation of mortality. Human personal identity is inscribed with specific content (e.g., through memory and imagination), as well as history – including the “transcendent history” of its existence, in which it can express itself through the “word,” work, deed, and all spiritual and material legacy, achievements, but also mistakes and failures. Therefore, man is not only an ordinary *compositum* of body and soul: it is a phenomenon whose being becomes a kind of “transcendence” directed towards the Absolute and the Infinite.⁷ In other words, he is the absolute existential subjecti-

⁵ Cf. Id., *Miłość i sprawiedliwość społeczna. Rozważania społeczne*, Poznań: Pallotinum 1993, 109.

⁶ Cf. Id., *Bóg-Człowiekiem, aby człowiek był... Bogiem. Do inteligencji katolickiej*. Warszawa-Miodowa 14. 01. 1970, in: id., *„Idzie nowych ludzi plemię...”: Wybór przemówień i rozważań*, Poznań-Warszawa: Pallotinum 1973, 48–49; Cz. Bartnik, *„Osoba” w filozofii i teologii*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo Standruk 2017, 14–15.

⁷ Cf. Wyszyński, *O katolickiej woli życia. List pasterski na Wielkanoc 1947*, in: Wyszyński, *Nauczanie społeczne, 1946–1981*. Warszawa: ODISS 1990, 33–34; Cz. Bartnik, *„Osoba” w filozofii i teologii*, 14; id., *Zarys myśli teologicznej Kardynała Wyszyńskiego*, „Ateneum Kapłańskie” 73 (1981), 97, 226–227.

fication of being with the possibility of internalization and self-transcendence inscribed in his essence towards a new form of existence in God. This time, however, without the boundaries of matter and time. Besides, man also has an inherent chance of development, but also the “irreversibility” of his potentiality. Therefore, he becomes more and more himself. Moreover, in the ontological and existential sense, it is – a kind of – “dynamics towards oneself” and at the same time “dynamics directed towards other people.”⁸

In this sense, when creating culture, a human person also “makes” himself, developing himself as a spiritual and corporal being.⁹ Man embracing everything that has been consciously and purposefully shaped by him – progress, science, art, technology, co-thinking, and cooperation with people, this whole reality transformed in and beyond him – he himself becomes the object, content, and goal of culture.¹⁰ It is rooted in the very nature of a man who “[...] seeks to maintain his existence. [...] We know it in the most ontological and eschatological terms as preserving one’s personality not only in the economic sense but also in the sense of its development and securing its duration – and its eternal extent.”¹¹

Man as a person – a specific micro-world and micro-community – becomes at the same time the main goal and content of culture. “The creativity of each person testifies to him, reveals his interior, his spirit, what he lives, what is his logos and ethos, what powers he has at his disposal.”¹² Such a “characteristic” of a cultural phenomenon expresses man’s attitude towards himself and the whole reality of the created world. The culmination of the process of personalization of culture

⁸ Cf. Id., *Do uczestniczek zjazdu pielęgniarek. Warszawa-Wawer 30. 12. 1956*, in: id., *Kazania i przemówienia autoryzowane 1956–1981*, vol. 1, 339); Id., *W słodkim jarzmie miłości. Warszawa 1. 06. 1967*, in: id., *Kazania i przemówienia autoryzowane 1956–1981*, vol. 26, 382–383; R. Ficek, *Christians in Socio-Political Life: An Applied Analysis of the Theological Anthropology of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Primate of Poland*, Toruń 2020, 27–34.

⁹ Cf. Wyszyński, *Zadania i środki oddziaływania Kościoła w Polsce w zakresie kształtowania kultury społeczno-katolickiej. Warszawa – kościół św. Anny 15. 01. 1971*, in: Wyszyński, *Kazania i przemówienia autoryzowane 1956–1981*, vol. 36, 59–60.

¹⁰ Cf. Id., *O nowym człowieku w Jezusie Chrystusie. Jasna Góra 3. 05. 1964*, in: *Listy Pasterskie Episkopatu Polski 1945–1974*, Paris: Editions du Dialogue, 1975, 351.

¹¹ Wyszyński, *Homo Dei, I kazanie świętokrzyskie 13.01.1974*, in: Wyszyński, *Nauczanie społeczne, 1946–1981*, Warszawa: ODiSS, 1990, 575.

¹² Id., *Zaszczytna służba Słowu. Warszawa – Miodowa 8. 10. 1956*, in: Id., *Z rozważań nad kulturą*, 269; Cf. *Konstytucja duszpasterska o Kościele w świecie współczesnym „Gaudium et spes”*, nr 53.

as understood by Wyszyński is the exposition of the truth about man in a holistic creative and salvific perspective as a child of God (*homo Dei*)¹³ participating in the dramaturgy of the transformation of the created world (the sanctifying aspect) and awaiting a “new heaven and a new earth,” i.e., the eschatological perspective (cf. 2 Cor 12: 4; Rev 4: 2–8; 21: 2–10).

In this context, the good of the human person verifies the greatness and importance of culture. For this reason, as Wyszyński used to say, an “authentic” culture primarily has humanistic values; it is creativity undertaken with a human being in mind and focused on his fullness. “The Church,” the Primate emphasizes, “although it shows us heaven, it is realistic, and although it puts the person above

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things [...], yet it is based on earthly reality.”¹⁴ Through involvement in cultural activities, a person expresses his relationship to the world. At the same time, it is a particular realization of God’s calling to subdue the land. The specificity of this vocation is that man receives the privilege of participating in God’s work of creating the world. A positive attitude to the whole reality of the world, which is a gift of God, affirmation of man, showing his dignity, a call to complete personal development through cognition, love, and comprehensive creativity – these are the fundamental values of the culture in the social dimension.

¹³ Cf. Wyszyński, «*Homo Dei*» I kazanie świętokrzyskie 13.01.1974, in: Id., *Nauczanie społeczne, 1946–1981*, Warszawa: ODISS, 1990, 574–580.

¹⁴ Id., *Kształtowanie kultury społeczno-katolickiej w Polsce. Do prawników 15. 01. 1971*, in: id., *Nauczanie społeczne, 1946–1981*, 437.

“The common and community-building nature of culture is made up of personal human qualities, the gifts of reason, will, and heart. Upbringing and preparation for life also help – what a person takes from the family, from the nation, from professional work, and well-organized state life.”¹⁵ Valuation of social-interpersonal relations in culture – starting from the family that educates to culture, through the nation united by culture, to the whole of humanity, for which authentic culture, especially Christian, is a synonym of peace.¹⁶

In Wyszyński’s opinion, in Poland, there are opportunities to create its own cultural system – God’s and human harmony, based on the tradition of our nation steeped in the Gospel. It is evidenced by works expressed in art, the science of morality, and history.¹⁷ They reveal the depth of the human spirit, express man’s lofty desires and the values that he has adopted, ultimately striving for something higher than just purely material goals. Being the manifestation of culture, they show the objectified activity of a human, in which his interior and system of values are expressed.¹⁸

In other words, actual and integral culture is rooted in Christianity and cannot exist without the Church. To act in changing reality, the Church must also make use of culture. The very close connection of Christianity with culture – especially the spiritual one – does not mean that every culture is good in itself. Culture is always ambivalent, and it has the danger of alienation, which can turn – especially in the case of technology – even into domination over a man. But perhaps this is why it needs Christianity as a spiritual power that brings the “redemption” of culture, healing, cleansing from evil, from the sin of the world, delusion, and hypocrisy.¹⁹

¹⁵ Id., *Sumienie prawe u podstaw odnowy życia narodowego. Do wiernych w archikatedrze warszawskiej 6.01.1981*, in: id., *Nauczanie społeczne, 1946–1981*, 993.

¹⁶ Cf. Id., *Homo oeconomicus, II kazanie świętokrzyskie 20.01.1974*, in: id., *Nauczanie społeczne, 1946–1981*, 597–598; id., *Vratislavia – wróciła sława. Wrocław 31. 08. 1965*, in: id., *Z rozważań nad kulturą*, 70.

¹⁷ Cf. Id., *Ars longa.... Jasna Góra 5. 12. 1971*, in: id., *Z rozważań nad kulturą*, 201.

¹⁸ Cf. Id., *Obowiązek obrony kultury narodowej. Na zakończenie III Tygodnia Kultury Chrześcijańskiej w Warszawie 30. 04. 1977*, in: Wyszyński, *Nauczanie społeczne, 1946–1981*, 772; R. Ficek, *Moral Renewal as a Socio-Religious Imperative and the Destructive Actions of an Oppressive Totalitarian State: in the Context of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński’s Personalistic Concept of Social Life*, „Roczniki Teologiczne” 67 (2020) 5, 53–58.

¹⁹ Cf. Cz. S. Bartnik, *Chrześcijańska pedagogia narodowa według Stefana Wyszyńskiego*, in: id., *Polska teologia narodu*, Lublin: TN KUL 1988, 195.

2. FAITH VS. CULTURE AND CULTURE VS. FAITH: SPECIFICITY, INTERDEPENDENCE AND MUTUAL REFERENCES

Culture understood in the spirit of Christian personalism aims at the comprehensive development of man, thus changing the existing reality of the world around him. In this context, the entire complex actuality of culture – albeit multidimensional – can be treated as one culture, even though it consists of a set of diverse values and cultural activities rooted in faith.²⁰ However, many contemporary intellectuals, especially in the context of the discourse of the postmodern era, contrast faith – and often religion – with culture and recognize that faith does not and should not have a close relationship with culture.²¹ Moreover, in displaying

²⁰ Cf. Wyszyński, *In principio erat Verbum.... W 600-lecie powstania Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*, in: id., *Z rozważań nad kulturą*, 57–58; Wyszyński, *Do artystów scen warszawskich. Warszawa. Dom Arcybiskupów 10. 01. 1971*, in: id., *Z rozważań nad kulturą*, 180.

²¹ Postmodern discourse, however, is broadly based on the following principles: (1) First, *anti-historicism*, which is the rejection (condemnation) of tradition and, associated with it, historical thinking. Although the “historical trips” of postmodernists go back to the times of Plato and Aristotle (understood in Plato’s way of thinking), the most criticized is Descartes and the extremely rationalist current of post-Cartesian thought, as well as the earlier historic utopism and later ideologism, which became the principles of (social) philosophy in the Enlightenment – from its cognitive and anthropological optimism and its teleological historiography, according to which history has a transcendent sense-goal – that is why in the writings of postmodernists we find the most anti-Enlightenment rhetoric. (2) Secondly, *anti-essentialism (anti-fundamentalism or anti-foundationalism)*, which consists in rejecting the modernist dogma of the existence of the so-called “unshakable principles” or the so-called “permanent” – ontological, cognitive, moral, artistic, and religious. The belief in the existence of such “constants” is often called by postmodernists the “error of centrism”: logos-centrism, theo-centrism, or – as in feminism – *phallus-centrism*. Those mentioned above “unshakable principles” were treated in modernism as universal model causes of human civilization and cultural activities, which led to the totalization and mechanization of social life and the alienation of its fundamental structures; the so-called judgmental philosophies that arose from the spirit of modernism could only create nightmarish Leviathan states (K. Popper). *Antisessentialism* is generally expressed in the catchy psychological “obituary” presented in popular slogans heralding the coming of the era of the so-called “death” of culture – God, man, science, morality, or art. In this case, the word „death” means that the traditional ideas and concepts of God, man, and morality are logically “dead,” that is, they can no longer generate culture. In other words, humanity is in the so-called “exhaustion of opportunities” phase and thus reached the end of its own history. (3) Third, *anti-discriminatorism (anti-binarism, anti-dualism, anti-positionism)*, that is, negating the modernist myth of oppositions, e.g., subject-object; mind-body; reason – feelings; cognition – action; truth false; good evil; beauty ugliness. According to

faith in the dimension of public space, they see even – a kind of – reprehensible behavior.²²

According to Wyszyński's vision of culture, man as a *homo artifex* is its subject, purpose, and meaning, permanently displayed in the creative-salvific perspective. No wonder then that the Primate's understanding of culture aroused quite a lot of controversy, especially in the context of contemporary attitude towards the world described as modernism or postmodernism. The tendency that exists between the personalist concept of culture and broadly understood (post) modernity is inscribed in the specificity of contemporary cultural reality, which is rooted in the initial period of shaping the Christian vision of earthly reality. Moreover, the tensions between Catholicism and "modernity" that have arisen over the centuries are undoubtedly deep and lasting. Therefore, the above article fits into the context of the debate on the position and role of the Christian understanding of culture in the contemporary world to the Catholic tradition and its place in the (post) modern world.²³ Regression and inertia in the Christian tradition regard-

postmodernists, the oppositional way of thinking "obsession with binarism" – leads to the emergence of undecidable problems in the culture, e.g., "mind-body problem" or the question of the definition of truth in culture, and results in the petrification of human life, and thus unjustified privileging of recognized ideals (values), and condemning others, i.e., intolerance. Cf. H. Kiereś, *Postmodernizm: rzeczywistość czy kreacja*, in: A. Maryniarczyk, M. J. Godek (red.), *Poznanie bytów, czy ustalenie sensów? Zadania współczesnej metafizyki*, Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu, Lublin, 2016, 177–179; R. Ficek, *(Post-) Modernity and Christian Culture: In the Context of the Personalism of Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński*, „Roczniki Kulturoznawcze” 11 (2020), 59–63.

²² In this context, the entire pastoral ministry and teaching of Cardinal Wyszyński strongly and firmly oppose this view. Wyszyński thought that – yes – faith and culture should be distinguished from each other but not separated (cf. Wyszyński, *Zadania i środki oddziaływania Kościoła w Polsce w zakresie kształtowania kultury społeczno-katolickiej. Warszawa – kościół św. Anny 15. 01. 1971*, in: Wyszyński, *Kazania i przemówienia autoryzowane 1956–1981*, vol. 36, 59–60). Undoubtedly, the nature of religion and culture are very different (religion is not part of the culture, and culture is not a "quasi-form" of religion). Nevertheless, the religious act and the cultural act are linked together through the same subject of "action" as a man. Moreover, for religion to develop as a mature and personal relationship with God, it must be "led" through a cultural niche in which man shapes his relationship with the world, himself, and other people. Therefore, culture appears functionally "earlier" than religion (faith), although ontically, the first is man's relationship with God the Creator. Cf. Cz. Bartnik, *Personalizm*, Lublin: WN KUL 2008, 452–453.

²³ Cf. Jan Zbigniew Celej, *Kultura chrześcijańska duszą narodu* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Siostr Loretanek, 1995), 34–57.

ing an apparent attitude towards the liberal, collectivist cultural tradition or the so-called contemporary (post) modern culture is not a new phenomenon. Nor did it arise due to reforms initiated by the Second Vatican Council or the implementation of their ideas in the contemporary reality of the post-Conciliar Church. Nevertheless, *Vaticanum II* is widely regarded as an epoch-making event that has set the direction and priorities for modern Christian involvement in the entire sphere of culture.

Therefore, a personalist understanding of the human person must capture all the complexity and richness of human nature, which cannot be reduced solely to earthly reality but is oriented towards eternity and infinity.²⁴ Also, culture – admittedly penetrating and based on temporal and material – ultimately transcends the created world, striving for a supernatural reality.²⁵ Thanks to sanctifying grace and various supernatural gifts, man's personal involvement in culture acquires a new dimension, which has its source in God.²⁶ However, such an understanding of Christian culture allows Cardinal Wyszyński to identify it with a supernatural culture whose fundamental foundation is Jesus Christ.²⁷ The Son of God incarnates in human history, binds humanity with God, and creates a culture in which God's reality is combined with human existence. Moreover, He poured his culture-creating power onto the Church. He constantly wants to incarnate himself in human creativity, permeate it with the supernatural values of the Gospel, enrich it with the power of his grace and illuminate it with the light of his truth.²⁸

An integral view of man as a subject related to personal transcendence is a condition for a proper and complete understanding of culture. Such a vision of culture accepts man and assigns him a special place in the universe. At the same time, he emphasizes the personal model of life that Jesus Christ outlined

²⁴ Cf. Wyszyński, *Miłość na codzień. Rozważania*, Poznań: Pallotinum, 1980. 190.

²⁵ Cf. Id., *Słowo Prymasa do najwierniejszego Grodu Poznańskiego. Poznań 19. 03. 1958*, in: id., *Kazania i przemówienia autoryzowane 1956–1981*, vol. 4 87.

²⁶ „Bóg chce tego powiązania. On ustanowił przedziwny porządek, dzięki któremu wszystkie sprawy Boże dzieją się po ludzku, a wszystkie sprawy ludzkie dzieją się po Bożemu” (ibid., 89).

²⁷ Cf. J.Z. Celej, *Kultura chrześcijańska duszą narodu*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sióstr Loretanek, 1995, 43.

²⁸ Cf. Wyszyński, *Kształtowanie kultury społeczno-katolickiej w Polsce, Do prawników 15.01.1971*, in: Wyszyński, *Nauczanie społeczne, 1946–1981*, 439.

Himself.²⁹ The timeless character of human existence, inscribed in the perspective of the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, shows that even suffering and death are sources of new, creative values for the culture that permeates human culture both in an individual and social dimension.³⁰ Thus, a man rooted in his cultural environment, thanks to Christianity, can discover the proper meaning of human life.³¹

An integral view of man as a subject related to personal transcendence is a condition for a proper and complete understanding of culture. Such a vision of culture accepts man and assigns him a special place in the universe. At the same time, he emphasizes the personal model of life that Jesus Christ outlined Himself.

Undoubtedly, the pastoral teaching of Cardinal Wyszyński is carried out in the challenging and complicated socio-political situation of the Polish nation. For this reason, the problem of the nation is a fundamental topic on which other issues focus. Also, in deliberations on culture, the dominant concept is national culture, which, in a sense, constitutes the fundamental structures of national existence.³² The openness of Christian culture to transcendence is shown in sincerity and plainness to all while respecting the freedom of every human person. The inalienable right to one's own culture, based on truth, freedom, justice, and love, is expressed "[...] at all levels of the human structure, starting from the nature of

²⁹ Cf. Id., *Ewangelia pierwszym manifestem wyzwolenia człowieka*. Warszawa, Miodowa 7. 09. 1980, in: pd., *Kościół w służbie Narodu*, 41.

³⁰ Cf. Id., „*Krzyż stał się nam bramą*“. 20-lecie wznowienia pracy na Katolickim Uniwersytecie Lubelskim. Lublin 7. 06. 1964, in: id., *Z rozważań nad kulturą ojczyzną*, 36–37.

³¹ Cf. Id., *Zadania i środki oddziaływania Kościoła w Polsce w zakresie kształtowania kultury*, 59–60.

³² Cf. Bartnik, *Chrześcijańska pedagogia narodowa*, 196; Wyszyński, *Królowi królów... Kraków – katedra na Wawelu 18. 10. 1973*, in: id., *Z rozważań nad kulturą*, 214.

a person's personality, through his family life, social, professional, national, state and international coexistence, universal"³³ The universalism of Christian culture understood in this way becomes a platform for dialogue and a source of inspiration for other cultures.³⁴

Thus, culture in its most profound dimensions transcends temporality and is directed towards eternity. It means "that one must be able to use material gains because material wealth and prosperity alone will not yet create a lasting and enduring culture."³⁵ Therefore, "[...] the culture of the spirit must penetrate matter, because only at such a cost will it be preserved, preserved and bear a hundredfold fruit."³⁶ Thus, specific feedback means that material culture works always testify to a certain "spirituality" of matter. On the other hand, the works of spiritual culture show a specific "embodiment" of what is spiritual. According to Primate Wyszyński, the whole miracle of culture understood in this way is expressed in reducing the infinity of spirit to a fragment of matter.³⁷

Although the Primate emphasizes the co-relational character of spiritual and material culture in the whole teaching, spiritual culture is of primary importance for all human cultures. It is expressed in the fact that spiritual culture is a permanent element that integrates a person both in the individual and social dimensions. It is the spiritual culture that is the source of the development of the human personality, determines the actual progress of man and humanity, and is a treasury of values that have been accumulated over generations and are still relevant and needed. Thus, the creative involvement of man in culture – especially in its spiritual dimension – is expressed primarily in the experience of enlightenment, initiation, and revelation of the unchanging truth that reveals love and the pursuit of genuine good. Consequently, it leads to the discovery of imperishable and eternal beauty.³⁸

³³ Id., *In principio*, 58.

³⁴ Cf. Id., *Miasto nieujarzmione śpiewa. Warszawa – archikatedra św. Jana 24. 06. 1966*, in: id., *Z rozważań nad kulturą*, 98.

³⁵ Id., *Budowanie Wrocławia z żywych i wybranych kamieni. Wrocław – kościół Świętego Wojciecha 15. 10. 1966*, in: id., *Z rozważań nad kulturą*, 105.

³⁶ Ibid., 106.

³⁷ Cf. Wyszyński, *Postulaty duszpasterskie wobec budownictwa sakralnego. Warszawa 8. 11. 1957*, in: Wyszyński, *Kazania i przemówienia autoryzowane 1956–1981*, vol. 3, 189.

³⁸ Cf. Id., *Do artystów scen warszawskich*, 180.

One of the fundamental determinants of Christian spiritual culture is the pursuit of truth. It is expressed primarily in society's proper intellectual and moral formation – especially of the young generation. Christian culture – emphasizes the Primate – is “[...] the culture of truth. This culture links truth with love and would rather sacrifice itself for the sake of truth, as long as it would not give its brothers a scandal by a lie.”³⁹ This task is directed primarily to schools, universities, and other centers dealing with intellectual and moral formation. The inseparable relationship of Christian intellectual and moral culture permeates all human life structures, both its individual and social dimensions. A characteristic determinant of the social dimension of the human person – the creator of culture is “[...] a constant dialogue, guided in our personality by reason and will – reason that indicates the goal and the will that inspires us to act. And when we achieve the goal, we are faced, as it were, with the deepest problems of a rational being and make us get to know ourselves more and more deeply. The man then sees that his rationality and freedom are aimed at other people”.⁴⁰ Moreover, “[...] man not only shares himself with others but also uses personal and social values, the virtues of the mind, will and heart of other people.”⁴¹

Therefore, Cardinal Wyszyński demanded that Christian moral values be present and shape the human person and the family, nation, and state. According to the Primate, morality cannot be separated from either spiritual or material culture. On the contrary, it is an integral element of human culture because nature requires man – the immediate creator of culture. Such a statement entitles us to speak of moral culture not as a different human culture but as certain principles of culture that should permeate all human creativity if he wants to pursue the good in himself and everyone.⁴² Christian moral culture understood in this way is rooted directly in God, who is the ultimate criterion of moral good.⁴³ Recognition of man as a unique, intrinsic value, as a subject open to transcendence, puts in

³⁹ Id., *Płock-Czerwińsk-Grunwald-Konstancja-Jasna Góra. Płock-katedra* 12. 11. 1966, in: id., *Z rozważań nad kulturą*, 112; id., *Kamienie węgielne budowane na górach świętych. Na Jasnej Górze po powrocie z więzienia* 2. 11. 1956, in: id., *Nauczanie społeczne, 1946–1981*, 64.

⁴⁰ Id., *Sumienie prawe*, 988.

⁴¹ Id., *List pasterski o społecznej krucjacie miłości. Warszawa – Wielki Post 1967*, in: *Listy Pasterskie Prymasa Polski 1946–1974*, Paris: Editions du Dialogue, 1975, 543.

⁴² Cf. Celej, *Kultura chrześcijańska*, 55.

⁴³ Cf. Wyszyński, *List wielkopostny do duchowieństwa i wiernych. Gniezno* 2. 02. 1965, in: *Listy Pasterskie Prymasa Polski 1946–1974*, 473.

order the entire hierarchy of moral values that must permeate culture to be fully human and for man. At the same time, the mystery of the Incarnate Word is the highest and unsurpassable model for the incarnation of moral values in human culture.⁴⁴ Thus, any commitment to culture is possible only based on the Gospel hierarchy of values, the foundation of which is the commandment to love God and man. In carrying out this task, however, a properly formed conscience is essential. As a gift of God, rooted in the very nature of the human person, conscience becomes the primary and immediate norm of morality proper to all human activity, including cultural activity. Therefore, only people guided by a well-formed conscience are capable of adequately assessing their behavior and making good choices, thanks to which they “bring love, serve good and make peace.”⁴⁵ The typology of conscience understood in this way defines and conditions various levels of creating and developing moral culture. Thus, one can speak of the moral culture of the human person, as well as the ethical culture of the family and the professional, civic and political moral culture.⁴⁶

The Christian spiritual and moral culture that conditions the integral development of the human person manifests itself primarily in the aesthetic culture, which – according to Primate Wyszyński – “is the creative work of the spirit.”⁴⁷ Aesthetic culture, i.e., human creativity aimed at expressing beauty in works of art and experiencing beauty, embodied in sculpture, painting, architecture, poetry, and even literature, is at its most profound level rising to God – Eternal Wisdom, Good, and Beauty. It applies primarily to religious culture, which, drawing inspiration from the Gospel, takes up the consolidation of the experiences of faith, hope, and love as well as the most profound human feelings and experiences that result from them, reflecting the moral order. Their common attribute is a particular drama, which is expressed because the “spirit’s speech” is described and perpetuated through matter. The artist becomes the performer of this thought, which

⁴⁴ Cf. Id., *Aby byli jedno. Słowo ekumeniczne 27. 01. 1966*, in: Id., *Nauczanie społeczne, 1946–1981*, 271–276.

⁴⁵ Cf. Id., *Sumienie prawe*, 986–994.

⁴⁶ Cf. Id., *Harmonia Bożo-ludzka w Polsce. Bazylika archikatedralna w Warszawie 6. 01. 1980*, in: id., *Nauczanie społeczne, 1946–1981*, 930–938.

⁴⁷ Id., *Postulaty duszpasterskie wobec budownictwa sakralnego. Warszawa 8.11.1957*, in: Wyszyński, *Kazania i przemówienia autoryzowane 1956–1981*, Archiwum Instytutu Prymasowskiego w Warszawie, vol. 3, 188.

he has idealized in his soul. This process expresses a kind of continuation of the incarnation of the Word-Eternal Wisdom, which was connected with human reality – with the work of hands and the work of human thought.⁴⁸

However, emphasizing the importance of spiritual culture does not mean depreciating material culture. “Progress and technical development reveal to modern man the value and meaning of creation, the value of the matter-work of the Creator and the extraordinary wisdom that God has hidden in the world of creatures.”⁴⁹ Therefore, the essential task of technical culture is implementing socio-economic goals leading to the integral personal development of a human being and satisfying all his living needs. Intensive development of culture – especially technological culture – does not always mean progress for the comprehensive good of man.⁵⁰ In serving the human person, it should consider the limits of moral norms that guard individuals and society.⁵¹

3. AXIOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS

The personal dimension of the personalistic concept connects the human being with the entire world of the cosmos that surrounds him, which he simultaneously transcends through the phenomena of consciousness and acts of intellectual and intellectual cognition. An essential expression of this is man’s openness to social reality, which is the primary plane for realizing the human person. He does this through various relationships to the structures of social life, which he also co-creates through his cultural commitment. Thus, social reality becomes a space of values that, by building and conditioning the development of the community dimension of human life, enable the realization of man as a person.

The sphere of values in the teaching of Primate Wyszyński is understood not only as of the reality that Christianity received as a deposit and cultivated in social

⁴⁸ Cf. Celej, *Kultura chrześcijańska*, 59.

⁴⁹ Wyszyński, *Kościół w obliczu nowej siły społecznej. Warszawa 21. 05. 1968*, in: id., *Kazania i przemówienia autoryzowane 1956–1981*, Archiwum Instytutu Prymasowskiego w Warszawie, vol. 28, 431.

⁵⁰ Cf. Id., *Radość stała się dzisiaj temu domowi. Warszawa-Włochy 24. 06. 1965*, in: id., *Kazania i przemówienia autoryzowane 1956–1981*, Archiwum Instytutu Prymasowskiego w Warszawie, vol. 20, 452.

⁵¹ Cf. Id., *Człowiek współczesny musi być świętym, jeśli nie ma stać się zbrodniarzem. Ołtarzew 2. 09. 1980*, in: id., *Kościół w służbie Narodu*, 32–36.

life. The axiological dimension of Christian involvement in culture is realized primarily in the concern for the penetration of the entire reality of social life – especially human culture – with evangelical values that lead to discovering the whole truth about the human person. The category of truth in the personalistic sense is the fundamental value that makes it possible not only to find the proper place of the human person in the entire reality of the created world but also conditions the realization of his vocation in the temporal and eternal dimension.⁵² The social extent of truth means, above all, the common good of all people – the result of dialogue and interpersonal communication.⁵³

Nevertheless, the social profile of truth can be subject to dangerous manipulation. It is especially true in the dimension of culture that shapes the personal profile of man and society. It happens most often through hypocrisy, authoritarianism, demagogy, and instrumental use of the truth. “So two worlds face each other; the first is a world that is internally unified and linked by being truthful and teaching the truth. It is an eminently humanistic world because truthfulness is human. The second world is non-humanistic [...]; he believes that a man can be struck with what is his highest dignity and greatest right”.⁵⁴

Therefore, the greatest threat to the truth in social life – including culture – is all forms of dictatorship. Any compelling a person to accept the truth causes that it completely loses its humanizing and activating value. In the system of physical or spiritual violence, truth ceases to be accurate, becomes its contradiction, and is rejected internally. Reconciling man directly as a rational and free being does not enrich him spiritually but destroys him.⁵⁵ In this context, in his speech to youth, Primate emphasizes: “Do not want cheap truths, do not want simple truths, do not want brochure truths! Want all the truth. Want pure truth! Look for it in the nature of your mind, your mind.”⁵⁶

⁵² Cf. R. Ficek, *(Post-) Modernity and Christian Culture in the Context of the Personalism of Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński*, *Roczniki Kulturoznawcze* 11 (2020) 2, 56–59.

⁵³ Cf. Wyszyński, *Na niwie wypalanej ogniem wsiećcie nowe. Do młodzieży akademickiej w Wrocławiu 2. 06. 1957*, in: Id., *Nauczanie społeczne, 1946–1981*, 87.

⁵⁴ Id., *Nauczycielu prawdomówny!*, 170; cf. Wyszyński, „*Abyście byli synami światłości*”. *Do naukowców Warszawy 21. 03. 1959*, in: id., *Nauczanie społeczne, 1946–1981*, 124.

⁵⁵ Cf. Kowalczyk, *Filozofia kultury*, 130.

⁵⁶ Wyszyński, *Na niwie wypalanej ogniem*, 87; id., *Do rodziców katolickich w sprawie religijnego wychowania dzieci i młodzieży. Gniezno 15. 08. 1951*, in: id., *Listy Pastorskie Episkopatu Polski 1945–1974*, Paris: Editions du Dialogue, 1975, 208.

Only a spiritual culture open to love and other moral values gives a person inner maturity, naturalness, simplicity, and humility in intersubjective relationships.⁵⁷ In this sense, “[...] man must be loved and must love if he wants to perfect himself and fulfill his calling.” Therefore, there is a mutual correlation between the ethical level of man and the level of culture: the more significant the internal culture, the greater the righteousness of human life.⁵⁸ Thus, the economic and civilization level does not automatically determine the intellectual and spiritual individual and social culture.⁵⁹

The negation or even depreciation of a culture that promotes the importance of truth and respect for moral and religious values leads to severe threats to social life. It is expressed in the gradual “desensitization” of the social conscience and, consequently, the impoverishment of man’s spiritual culture, which leads to hypocrisy, violence, and enslavement. It is impossible to create an authentic culture that protects and promotes human dignity without permanent values and moral norms.⁶⁰

Therefore, the fundamental determinant of Christian culture’s personalistic character, as understood by Primate Wyszyński, is service to life. In his opinion, “[...] only in the course of life does each person acquire the full expression of their personality.”⁶¹ Life is a fundamental value of the entire human culture, and its promotion becomes the main task of Christian involvement in cultural and culture-creating activities.⁶² An essential element of Christian cultural activity is, therefore, sensitivity to aesthetic values, the chief of which is undoubtedly beauty. The category of beauty is expressed not only in works of art, architecture, or sculpture. Still, it is also associated with experiencing beauty in the natural world and the world of people as well as events.

⁵⁷ Cf. Id., *Kamienie węgielne budowania na górach świętych. Na Jasnej Górze po powrocie z uwięzienia 2. 11. 1956*, in: id., *Nauczanie społeczne, 1946–1981*, 64.

⁵⁸ Id., *Słowo duszpasterskie na Uroczystość Świętej Rodziny. 8. 01. 1967*, in: id., *Listy Pasterskie Prymasa Polski 1946–1974*, 531.

⁵⁹ Cf. Kowalczyk, *Filozofia kultury*, 132.

⁶⁰ Cf. Ibid., 142.

⁶¹ Wyszyński, *W obronie życia nie narodzonych. Komańcza – wrzesień 1956*, in: id., *Prymas Polski w obronie życia*, vol. 1, 9.

⁶² Cf. Id., *Słowo pasterskie na tysiąclecie chrztu Polski. O przygotowaniu do odnowienia przyrzeczeń chrztu w wielką sobotę. Gniezno 27. 02. 1966*, in: id., *Listy Pasterskie Prymasa Polski 1946–1974*, 505; id., *Myśli przewodnie roku życia. Warszawa 7. 05. 1958*, in: id., *Prymas Polski w obronie życia*, vol. 1, 43.

At the same time, there are significant relationships between art and morality because their impact on a person – both in the individual and social dimension – is substantial. There is also no doubt that every human activity – including artistic creation – is subject to moral evaluation. In the opinion of Primate Wyszyński, such products of art that promote psychological falsehood deform the personal and integral vision of a human being, provoke attitudes of aggression and hatred, liberate and approve animal sexuality, destroy conscience and undermine the dignity of the human person is immoral.⁶³ The main goal of art is to form man and to sensitize him to material and spiritual beauty. Indeed great art is based on the truth about man and directs its audience towards constructive moral values.

In summary, the basic principle of supernatural Christian culture is ChristLogos – the Saviour and Redeemer of man. He is at the same time the healing and salvation of all social reality. However, the religious dimension of cultural creativity requires from a man not only openness to the absolute-transcendent truth but also moral integrity of the recipient of culture.

As understood by Primate Wyszyński, artistic creativity is a form of “language” whose “word” not only becomes a carrier of community-creating content – a bridge connecting the present with the past and the future – but also reaches the supernatural dimension. Thus, it introduces man into the spirit and the sacred space, responding to his eternal longing for the Absolute.⁶⁴ “Today,

⁶³ Cf. Id., *U stóp Matki Słowa Wcielonego*, 112; R. Ficek, *Mariological Dimension of the Theological and Pastoral Concepts of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Primate of Poland*, “*Studia Sandomierskie*” 27 (2020), 231–245.

⁶⁴ The integral relationship of art with the sacred-religious dimension is visible, especially in Orthodox thought, an example of which is the “icon.” This particular aesthetic phenomenon – the culmination of which is an icon as a specific type of religious icon – is a kind of theophany that shows in the visible fabric material of the image an invisible, supernatural, and sacred space. Cf. P. Evdekimov, *Prawosławie*, Warszawa: PAX 1964, 248–251.

we all desire and seek such harmony between the inner content of life and the proclaimed word that there is no discord between them. "Maybe it is tragic happiness of modern man that he understood that a lying word does not save. The word must be truly eternal. It has to be born from some immaculate nursery, from some inner, spiritual purity, so that it can win, win over and nourish it".⁶⁵

In summary, the basic principle of supernatural Christian culture is *Christ-Logos* – the Saviour and Redeemer of man. He is at the same time the healing and salvation of all social reality. However, the religious dimension of cultural creativity requires from a man not only openness to the absolute-transcendent truth but also moral integrity of the recipient of culture.

CONCLUSIONS

Culture understood as a fundamental dimension of human life, and human activity plays an essential role in the entire teaching of Cardinal Wyszyński. The personalist perspective allows him to see the trustworthy source and purpose of authentically humanist culture in the human person. According to Primate, culture is all human activity rationally and purposefully aimed at the integral development of man in all its dimensions. Thanks to this, culture permeates the entire existence of the human person and – in a way – constitutes its essence.

Nevertheless, in Wyszyński's understanding, only an integral bond between culture and Christianity can shape an authentically humanistic culture. Therefore, the involvement of the human person in the reality of culture, combined with the richness of faith and grace, creates a specific synthesis that allows not only the full realization of man as a person. Involvement in culture also makes it possible to change the world's reality, making it truly "personal." In this way, personalistically understood culture becomes a reality in which man expresses himself and other people.

The Christian understanding of commitment to culture allows man to shape all complex levels of social life. The testimonies of human cultural activity – the realization of human spirituality – become at the same time an expression of the personalistic sphere of values deeply rooted in the community dimension of human life. Through goodness, truth, and beauty, the human spirit transforms the reality of the world of matter and becomes real both in works of culture and in

⁶⁵ Wyszyński, *U stóp Matki Słowa Wcielonego*, 112.

multidimensional social structures. The above process is directed not only at shaping human personality maturity, improving social systems, and humanizing the world but also shows human cultural activity through the prism of the creative and salvific plan of God's providence.

In this context, Cardinal Wyszyński emphasizes the role of Christian culture in the dimension of complex social conditions, especially from the perspective of the family and the Nation. A look at the history of the Nation from the point of view of the history of salvation emphasizes the fundamental value of Christian culture, which not only enables and stimulates the comprehensive development of more and more perfect forms of social and national life but also allows us to meet the challenges of history and – at the same time – becomes the essential condition for preserving the identity and sovereignty of the Nation. Undoubtedly, the Church plays a vital role in shaping a personally understood Christian culture. Therefore, the involvement of Christians in culture-forming activities is part of the process of shaping human culture. Thus, Christian culture becomes a kind of tool in the process of evangelizing the world. The introduction of God-Man into life in the world creates the basic foundations of authentically humanist culture, enabling the comprehensive development of all humanity based on truly personalistic values rooted in the Gospel message of the Good News.

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