

Moral Christianology in Light of Selected Polish Language Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians

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“The Epistle to the Ephesians sounds like the summary of the great themes of the Christian faith.”¹ In it, we can find the first more elaborate attempts at emphasizing the idea of God as the father.² “One of the aims of St. Paul's epistles was to transmit moral teachings to his audience. The apostle's writings contain contents that are the basis and substantiation for moral norms.”³ The morality of the above-mentioned epistle characteristically gives rise to practical conclusions related to the fact of redemption and of membership in the Church; this means living in accordance with one's vocation. Maintaining unity is at the forefront. The Christian ethos was a complete novelty that contrasted with the pagan life marked by ignorance of God. Meanwhile, as children of light, Christians must shine with the truth of reborn life. Marriage between the faithful, which Paul devotes part of the epistle to, is a great mystery, just as it is a reflection of the relationship between Christ and His Body, the Church, His Beloved. Morality ends with a full expression of spiritual struggle against dark forces.⁴

This study is an attempt at answering the question of what guidelines St. Paul gives Christians in his Epistle to the Ephesians to help them imitate and realize Jesus Christ's teaching. Because Paul's Christianological material is very rich, I have limited this reflection to the most important aspects related to the topic of imitating Jesus Christ based on the Polish language commentaries to St. Paul the Apostle's Epistle to the Ephesians.

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- 1 R. Kreitzer, *List do Efezjan*, [in:] *Słownik hermeneutyki biblijnej*, red. nauk. wyd. oryg. R. J. Coggins, J. L. Houlden, red. nauk. wyd. pol. W. Chrostowski, Warszawa 2005, p. 511.
 - 2 Cf. H. Langkammer, *Teologia Świętego Pawła*, Lublin 1992, p. 26–27.
 - 3 R. Zdziarstek, *Chryścianologia św. Pawła*, vol. 1: *Aspekt ontyczny*, Kraków 1989, p. 28–29.
 - 4 Cf. A. Jankowski, *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, Poznań 1999, p. 248.

1. Ontic and Moral Christianology

Up to a certain point, the term “anthropology” was used in the New Testament vision of the Christian. St. Paul does not speak about man at all, but about a unique type of man. In this current of thinking, this is a man who is new in terms of quality, who is ontically new, and who is also called a new creation. The apostle above all has in mind the redeemed person and only casually refers to the one who has not yet received this grace. For this reason, the term anthropology’s definition of the new man is not exhaustive. The fact that the new term “Christianology” refers not only to the person who becomes Christ’s property from the moment of baptism is significant. This neologism has led to the distinction between two disciplines that do not overlap in their contents: anthropology and Christianology. The subject of the former is the general conception of man, while the latter refers to the redeemed person. “Christianology is the study of the Christian based on Divine Revelation, presenting the Christian in relation to God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.”⁵

Paul describes the believer as “in the spirit” (Romans 8 : 9a), “in Christ” (Romans 16 : 10), and “living for God in Christ Jesus” (Romans 6 : 11b). The believer is led by the Divine Spirit, which lives for Christ and for God. In the above-mentioned expressions, the Christian is presented as a relational reality in His life’s entire ontic and moral dimensions. Meanwhile, the relational view of the person is dominant in both the Old and New Testaments.⁶

The subject of this relationship is the Christian, while the object is God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. When we analyze St. Paul’s formula relating to the Christian, we see distinctness with regards to meaning. It allows us to discern two dimensions in the Christian: the ontic and the moral.⁷ The former means existing in opposition to what can only happen or what can be logical and thought of.⁸ The moral dimension is the one in which the Christian presently undertakes or undertook in the past free and conscious activities in order to not live just for oneself, but for the One who died and was resurrected for them.⁹

5 R. Zdziarszek, *Chrystianologia św. Pawła*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 35.

6 Cf. L. Stachowiak, *Koncepcja człowieka w Starym Testamencie*, [in:] *Materiały pomocnicze do wykładów z biblistyki*, vol. 6, Lublin 1983, p. 15.

7 Cf. R. Zdziarszek, *Chrystianologia św. Pawła*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 40.

8 Cf. M. Kowalewski, *Mały Słownik Teologiczny*, Poznań 1960, p. 263.

9 Cf. R. Zdziarszek, *Chrystianologia św. Pawła*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 40.

The Christian presented in the ontic dimension does not completely exhaust his or her identity. The complete Christian is the one who responds to the activity of God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit; the Christian is he who acts morally, thus becoming similar to Christ.¹⁰ Thus for the Christian the ontic dimension is a value given by the Holy Spirit, while the moral dimension is the contribution of his own work and at the same time is a requirement of the ontic status. In the ontic dimension, man already “is,” but in the moral dimension he “becomes.”¹¹

The ontic dimension has fundamental meaning, because it is the essence of the believer and conditions the moral dimension: “to live for Christ.” Meanwhile, both these dimensions give us a basis for discussing the ontic and moral relationship. The former is of a necessary and irreversible nature, because denying the subject of the relationship (Christ) would lead to the end of the object of the relationship (the Christian). If one denied Christ in the formula “to be in Christ,” then the existence of Christianity would be denied. The latter is impossible. The latter relationship is not of a necessary nature, as one who “is in Christ” might not want to “live for Christ.” In this case, the believer does not lose his or her identity; alternatively, one would misappropriate its realization.¹²

The moral relationship is very dynamic, as the Christian who “lives for Christ” updates his or her potentiality contained in the ontic dimension. Paul sees all of reality created dynamically, because not only the Christian, but everything that makes up the created world exists for Christ, who is the fullest image of God.¹³

2. The Sources of Inspiration for Paul’s Christianology

Looking at the New Testament in general, we can say that its fundamental and basic source is Jesus Christ. Meanwhile, for the Apostle to the Nations the

10 Cf. S. Wronka, *Upodobnienie chrześcijan do Chrystusa w Nowym Testamencie*, “Polonia Sacra” 8 (2004) no. 14, p. 301–312; S. Wronka, *Racje upodobnienia chrześcijan do Chrystusa w Nowym Testamencie*, “Polonia Sacra” 8 (2004) no. 15, p. 349–370.

11 Cf. R. Zdziarstek, *Chryścianologia św. Pawła*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 41.

12 Cf. *ibidem*, p. 41–43.

13 Cf. S. Wronka, *Chryścus najpełniejszym obrazem Boga*, “Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny” 59 (2006) no. 2, p. 85–96, <https://doi.org/10.21906/rbl.400>.

source of this is also Christ, but the One Who appeared to him in Damascus.¹⁴ St. Paul's purpose was to present the person and work of the crucified and resurrected Christ in such a way that the Church could notice that He became the only Lord and Savior, so that the Church would have one common way of thinking in Jesus.¹⁵

St. Paul knew two conceptions of man: the Hebrew and Greek conceptions. The former presents man as a psychophysical oneness related towards God, while the latter conception was known to Paul from the Hellenic writings, especially the Platonic ones, which he encountered during his time in Tarsus, Damascus, and Antioch. The above conceptions were the source of inspiration for Paul's Christianology.¹⁶

The Hebrew conception of man is outlined on the pages of the Old Testament. The Old Testament man is presented as an existential oneness related to God. This is a trait of the Hebrew vision of man, which is opposed to the Greek conception, which presents the human person as the unified body and soul. In the Hebrew conception, man always stands before God and owes Him his existence and belongs to God. The act of the creation of man was the first time God had entered into directed contact with man.¹⁷ The Hebrew vision is a relational vision. According to it, man is not an autonomous unit, but a theonomic one, or one that is completely dependent on God. Here, there is also room for parts of the person, such as the body, soul, or spirit. These names direct one towards distinct aspects of human existence. Such a vision of man as oneness directed towards God is an original trait of Hebrew anthropology.

According to Greek anthropology, man is the coalescence of the body and soul. The soul, which directs the body just like a rider directs a horse, is of primary significance. The body can cease to exist, but the soul lasts for eternity; it is independent of the body, immaterial, and immortal. The soul descended onto the body because of sin, which the soul submitted to. Man is a soul that commands the body. This dualistic vision is completely opposed to the one that we find in the writings of the inspired authors of the Old Testament.

Keeping in mind these two antithetical conceptions of man, the apostle did not replicate either, but instead created his own. At its basis, Paul's "new

14 Cf. H. Langkammer, *Teologia Świętego Pawła*, op. cit., p. 7–8.

15 Cf. A. Paciorek, *Paweł Apostoł – Pisma*, part 2, Tarnów 1996, p. 29.

16 Cf. R. Zdziarstek, *Chrystianologia św. Pawła*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 48.

17 Cf. K. Romaniuk, *Stworzenie człowieka jako przejaw odwiecznej dobroci Boga*, "Zeszyty Naukowe KUL" 13 (1979) no. 3, p. 40.

person” (Ephesians 2 : 15; 4 : 24) is a continuation of Hebrew anthropology. Discussing the baptized person, Paul does not analyze him or her as a carnal-spiritual person, but instead treats him or her as an existentially unified being. The point of departure in Paul’s Christianology is not the relationship between body and spirit, but that between the Christian and Christ, the Christian and the Holy Spirit, and the Christian and God the Father.¹⁸

3. Renewal of the Spirit (Ephesians 4 : 25–5 : 1)

The human spirit, which is prone to sin, needs renewal. This is confirmed by the Holy Spirit, which confirms that in Christ’s work all sinners can receive forgiveness of sins and enjoy the privileges granted to children belonging to one family.¹⁹ This renewal occurs through the embodiment of God’s plan of salvation for the world through the Resurrected Christ.²⁰ Man receives his redeeming impulses from the Holy Spirit. Paul’s ethics are similar in this regard. According to him, we should act in a way that would not bring sadness to the Holy Spirit (see: Ephesians 4 : 30). The Holy Spirit stamped His seal on every believer “for the day of redemption” (see: Ephesians 4 : 30). Christ is the head of the Church, and the Church is His body (see: Ephesians 1 : 22–23). As a result of becoming aware of this, the body grows and matures “until we all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God [...] to the extent of the full stature of Christ” (Ephesians 4 : 13). Faith in the redemption offered by Christ revives and renews people who have died as a consequence of sin.²¹ An example of this is the baptismal liturgy contained within this epistle. Baptism, a sacrament of Christian initiation, is a ritual of death and rebirth: “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light” (Ephesians 5 : 14).

The morality of the pagans was not good, and thus St. Paul wrote that we have to throw off the old person and become cloaked in the new one. He

18 Cf. R. Schnackenburg, *Nauka moralna Nowego Testamentu*, przeł. F. Dylewski, Warszawa 1983, p. 233.

19 Cf. M. J. Barth, *List do Efezjan*, [in:] *Słownik wiedzy biblijnej*, red. nauk. B. M. Metzger, M. D. Coogan, konsultacja wyd. pol. W. Chrostowski, Warszawa 2004, p. 438.

20 Cf. F. Rienecker, G. Maier, *Leksykon Biblijny*, przeł. D. Irmińska, Warszawa 2001, p. 435.

21 Cf. L. Ryken, J. C. Wilhoit, T. Longman, *Słownik symboliki biblijnej*, przeł. Z. Kościuk, Warszawa 1998, p. 627.

asks us to act in a way worthy of a new person.²² The moral guidelines that Christians who took on a new nature in baptism should follow are participation in one body, concern for the sanctification of one's neighbor, concern for the poor, and especially following God and Christ.²³ This all is to lead towards God's redeeming plan, which consists of uniting all people, pagan and Jew alike, in one Church. This unity consists of the fact that believers become one body and have one Spirit.²⁴

4. Telling the Truth to One's Neighbor (Ephesians 4 : 25)

"[S]peak the truth, each one to one's neighbor" (Ephesians 4 : 25). These words refer to words contained in the Book of Zechariah: "These then are the things you should do: Speak the truth to one another; let there be honesty and peace in the judgments at your gates" (Zechariah 8:16). This is a moral guideline explaining how Christians who adopted a new nature in baptism should act. People are to give truthful testimony in court. Meanwhile, a lack of truth is lamentable.²⁵

The requirement to speak the truth here has a wider scope than simply an encouragement to truthfulness. It is to be the essential moral truth of one's entire behavior. It must expose the falsehood contained within every sin.²⁶

St. Paul's epistles contain the truth about the meaning of knowledge, and not of trust or dependence on someone else. According to Paul, one should serve the truth. It attests to honesty and at the same time is the opposite of evil and perfidy. Thus we should aim for the truth and avoid false opinions. The unity of Christians strengthens truthfulness, which serves love.²⁷

22 Cf. A. Paciorek, *Paweł Apostoł – Pisma*, op. cit., part 2, p. 30.

23 Cf. *Katolicki komentarz biblijny*, red. nauk. wyd. oryg. R. E. Brown, J. A. Fitzmyer, R. E. Murphy, red. nauk. wyd. pol. W. Chrostowski, przekł. K. Bardski, Warszawa 2004, p. 1397.

24 Cf. H. Langkammer, *Teologia Świętego Pawła*, op. cit., p. 83.

25 Cf. *Encyklopedia biblijna*, red. P. J. Achtemeier, przekł. G. Berny et al., Warszawa 2004, p. 979.

26 Cf. A. Jankowski, *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 265.

27 Cf. *ibidem*, p. 265.

5. Doing Honest Work with One's Own Hands (Ephesians 4 : 28)

In Judaism, work with one's own hands was greatly valued. It was valued even more when it was tied to sharing with the poor. Unfortunately, in Biblical times, the upper echelons of society were disdainful of manual labor, as it was performed above all by the lower classes.²⁸ "Paul considered work to be an essential element of the exemplary Christian life. Despite the difficulties, slaves should still honestly work for their masters."²⁹ Meanwhile, the statement that one really works for God and not for other people is important to Christians: "One should work for the glory of God and the blessings of one's neighbors."³⁰

6. Language for Edification (Ephesians 4 : 29)

The Books of Wisdom emphasize that we should learn how to speak appropriately. The use of language is also significant in building a life in Jesus Christ. Instead of "foul" words that the person says that hurt others, the Christian should use words that are uplifting, perceptive, and bring grace to the listener. They cannot be profane words that anger the Holy Spirit.³¹

7. Be Kind and Forgiving (Ephesians 4 : 32)

St. Paul writes: "All bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, and reviling must be removed from you, along with all malice. (And) be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another" (Ephesians 4 : 31–32a). After mentioning basic flaws, St. Paul presents the main virtues governing living in a community. "Lists of misdemeanors were a literary genre that was frequently used in antiquity, especially in the time of the ancient moralists."³² Other moralists recommended imitating God above all in terms of ethics. The above-mentioned

28 Cf. C. S. Keener, *Komentarz historyczno-kulturowy do Nowego Testamentu*, Warszawa 2000, p. 423.

29 *Encyklopedia biblijna*, op. cit., p. 979.

30 F. Rienecker, G. Maier, *Leksykon Biblijny*, op. cit., p. 654.

31 Cf. *Nowy Testament: dla moderatorów*, przekł. Nowego Testamentu i przyp. R. Popowski, objaśnienia i komentarze zbiorowe pod red. L. Coleman, Warszawa 2008, p. 457

32 C. S. Keener, *Komentarz historyczno-kulturowy do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 423.

sins have a destructive effect on life in the community. Thus St. Paul writes about compassion and forgiveness as a way of opposing evil.

God is only good. Good is not a human category, and its only measure is God's will. By sinning, people turn away from God, and it is difficult for them to be good in their iniquity. If they want to break with this state and become good in God's eyes, human efforts and trying to appeal to God are not enough. Rather, one must be reborn by the Holy Spirit, the fruit of whose activity is good. Good deeds are performed in Jesus' Church, in which the Holy Spirit acts (see: Ephesians 2 : 10). Good is the fruit of the activity of the Holy Spirit among Christians, which does not mean achieving an unblemished state free of sin in the worldly life, but rather striving for that state. Believers must be good to each other, which is a reflection of the good of God the Father present in His adopted children.³³

Other moralists, including non-Christian Greek and Roman writers, claimed that the imitation of God was the main ethical principle. The mercy that St. Paul speaks of is expressed in various Greek and Hebrew phrases whose main meaning is strictly tied to love, fidelity, goodness, and grace. In God, mercy means His inexhaustible love. In the New Testament, God sends His Son Jesus to save man as a result of His fidelity, which is full of mercy (see: Ephesians 2 : 4). Thanks to mercy, all can participate in salvation in Jesus Christ, but only those who come into union with Christ the Lord attain it.³⁴

8. Imitating God by Forgiving One Another (Ephesians 4 : 32)

"Being compassionate" to another person must be expressed in an indefatigable readiness to forgive one another. The fact of redemption is the most important reason of this attitude. It was expressed in the Father's great forgiveness of all sins thanks to Jesus' redemptive love.³⁵ Jesus' intercession, especially through His passion and death, are the basis for being forgiven.

Forgiveness occurs when the person has erred against or offended God's commandments or one's neighbor. Such an attitude causes one to suffer from the consequences of his or her wrong actions and thoughts, and one expects

33 Cf. A. Jankowski, *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 266.

34 Cf. F. Rienecker, G. Maier, *Leksykon Biblijny*, op. cit., p. 493.

35 Cf. A. Jankowski, *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 266.

liberation from the feeling of guilt in God. St. Paul's words direct us above all the personal, internal granting of forgiveness to those who have hurt others and those who have been hurt.³⁶ The call for forgiveness has significance for both sides. Through the gift of forgiveness, God becomes bound to each person so that he or she can forgive those who trespass against him or her. Such an attitude is closely tied to serious cautions against a lack of forgiveness: "But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions" (Matthew 6 : 15). Forgiveness is like love; it is patient and graceful.³⁷

9. Live in Love (Ephesians 5 : 2)

Our gratuitous grace of becoming a child of God obliges us to become imitators of God the Father. Love is the essential road that leads the Christian to his or her destination: to the Father's house. Christians should become similar to God in love. For St. Paul, love appears along with faith and hope (see: 1 Corinthians 13 : 13). Love is possible when the Christian responds with faith to God's redeeming gesture, which was accomplished in Jesus and in His death and resurrection. Thanks to hope, the believer anticipates the fulfillment of the future new creation initiated in Jesus Christ. Love is applied in a wide variety of ways in the New Testament: God's love for people and the resulting reciprocated true love for one's neighbor; love of one's enemy; the love between a husband and wife.³⁸ St. Paul's mission was to raise awareness of God's love in Jesus Christ so that we could persist in it and be transformed by it. It is love that leads Christ's pupils to imitate Him up to the point of sacrificing their lives. Ephesians 5 : 2). St. Paul presents love, describing the effects of faith in the life of the Christian who maintains a friendship with Christ.³⁹

36 Cf. J. Augustyn, *O krzywdzie, przebaczeniu i spowiedzi*, Kraków 2004, p. 117.

37 Cf. A. Jankowski, *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 120.

38 Cf. S. Wronka, *Dwa czy trzy przykazania miłości (Mt 22, 34–40 i par.)?*, "Zeszyty Naukowe Stowarzyszenia Biblistów Polskich" 8 (2011) no. 8, p. 375-393.

39 *Encyklopedia biblijna*, op. cit., p. 753.

10. We Are Children of Light (Ephesians 5 : 8)

For St. Paul, light is a purely theological concept. Light means God and the sphere of divinity. Light is the greatest gift of God Himself, who adds this conscious depth and spirituality to life. It is a symbol of the essence of God. In the pericope of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians, there is a positive concept based on the principle of the Biblical contrast between light and darkness understood metaphorically at a religious and moral level. The author of the epistle takes note of the pagan lifestyles of his contemporaries, which were darkness, and emphasizes the light they became after transforming their lives: “[N]ow you are light in the Lord” (Ephesians 5 : 8).⁴⁰ Thanks to Christ, these people could become light.⁴¹ Here, light is called what has been illuminated thanks to light: “[E]verything that becomes visible is light” (Ephesians 5 : 13).⁴²

The reason why Christians should not engage in immoral practices is that they are people of light. It is important not only that they act in light, but also that they themselves are a light in the Lord.⁴³

11. The Fruits of Light: Goodness, Righteousness, and Truth (Ephesians 5 : 9)

God’s luminosity almost becomes second nature to man. The fruits of light are similar to the fruits of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the Epistle to the Galatians.⁴⁴ They are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5 : 22). Rectitude is tied to honesty and is the trait of a person acting in accordance with God’s will.

Righteousness is a relative concept and not an abstract social norm. Righteousness means the activity of a person who understands his or her relationship to another person or another group and acts in accordance to it. Meanwhile, another definition of righteousness is the state of being up-standing or justified. No person is righteous in God’s eyes, nor is any human concept of righteousness capable of standing up to God. Only a new person

40 Cf. A. Jankowski, *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 268.

41 Cf. A. Paciorek, *Paweł Apostoł – Pisma*, op. cit., part 2, p. 30.

42 Cf. F. Rienecker, G. Maier, *Leksykon Biblijny*, op. cit., p. 796.

43 Cf. *Nowy Testament dla moderatorów*, op. cit., p. 458.

44 Cf. A. Jankowski, *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 268.

in Christ can attain righteousness. He who rejects one's old self and becomes enlightened with the light of Christ is righteous. Such righteousness becomes a reality in faith. The same is the case with accepting Jesus' redemptive work. In faith, man is righteous before God solely as a result of God's pure grace. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, righteousness is not understood in a juridical way but in the sense of righteous behavior resulting from the Christian attitude imbued with love for one's neighbor.⁴⁵

The third fruit of the light – truth – is a reality that describes what is constant and what is obliging. The truth describes God's reality. Above all, God is real, which means that He is viable and certain. In the Bible, there is also the concept of the popularly understood truth. Truth means authenticity, truthfulness, purity of thoughts and actions, and honesty or is confirmed by an expression of factual validity and accuracy. The truth presented in the reality of God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Gospels is decisive for the Biblical, New Testament understanding of the truth.⁴⁶

12. Spiritual Struggle (Ephesians 6 : 10–20)

St. Paul's final teaching confirms the tension between the doctrinal and parnetical parts. In the doctrinal part, he emphasizes God's victory in Christ, the entirety of creation subordinate to Him, the participation of the Church community in glorifying Christ in heaven, and the Church as a sign for the authority and rulers of heaven. The fulfillment of God's plan took place in Christ. Meanwhile, the paranesis indicates that this victory must still take place through the various members of the Mystical Body of Christ.⁴⁷

After presenting the mystery of Christ and the Church, the apostle strengthens the attitude of inevitable struggle against dark forces. The weapon of battle is supernatural. It does not take place on battlefields, but in our spiritual interior.⁴⁸ This does not refer to the armor that Roman soldiers wear, but to God's armor, which God Himself has given us for protection.⁴⁹ The same armor that God wears in the Old Testament is to be the Christians' weapon. Following the

45 Cf. H. Langkammer, *Apostoł Paweł i jego dzieło*, Opole 2001, p. 348.

46 Cf. F. Rienecker, G. Maier, *Leksykon Biblijny*, op. cit., p. 655.

47 Cf. A. Paciorek, *Paweł Apostoł – Pisma*, op. cit., part 2, p. 32–36.

48 Cf. A. Paciorek, *Paweł Apostoł – Pisma*, op. cit., part 2, p. 32–36.

49 Cf. C. S. Keener, *Komentarz historyczno-kulturowy do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 426.

crucified Christ means struggle. Satan, who wants to separate man from Christ, is the one who is responsible for this struggle. This struggle is already over. “[T]he ruler of this world has been condemned” (John 16 : 11); hell’s army of demons has lost its power (see: Colossians 2 : 15); and the Lamb has emerged victorious (see: Revelation 5 : 6–8). All believers experience difficulties, oppression, and trials, which is why it is necessary to uncompromisingly oppose evil. Fully armed soldiers were practically unconquerable when attacked by an enemy, unless they panicked. Christians are such soldiers and must fight for the soul. One must put on God’s armor, because it is not enough to rely on human strength. The believer must carry God’s weapon, and this weapon is not from this world. He or she has God’s power to defeat the fortress of demons.⁵⁰ Wearing God’s armor is capable of crushing fortresses as well as destroying intrigues and all forms of hauteur directed against God. We have God’s full armor at our disposal; we have to wear it and fight with its aid, as the ruses of the tempter are a reality of this evil world.⁵¹ God’s armor guarantees Christians victory. “Evil does not function in light. It flits across the thorns and strikes at an unexpected time, in a cunning and shrewd way.”⁵² Not only the fighting person’s personal efforts, but above all the resurrected Christ is the source of spiritual strength and guarantee of human victory over evil.⁵³ This struggle consists not of coercing non-Christians into conversion, but of defeating demonic rulers and authorities using methods recommended by God.⁵⁴

13. Peace (Ephesians 6 : 15)

One of the components of armor – shoes on the feet – is a symbol of readiness to preach the Gospel of peace. This symbolic image of the feet, which foreshadows joy, has appeared in the prophets and in St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans. In order to win the defensive battle, the Christian should represent Christ bringing peace to the people with God, and neighbor.⁵⁵

50 Cf. *Komentarz żydowski do Nowego Testamentu*, a translation of the New Testament with a commentary by D. H. Stern, przekł. A. Czwojdrak, Warszawa 2005, p. 811.

51 Cf. A. Jankowski, *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 275.

52 *Nowy Testament dla moderatorów*, op. cit., p. 460.

53 Cf. A. Jankowski, *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 275.

54 Cf. *Komentarz żydowski do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 812.

55 Cf. Jankowski, *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 275.

In the New Testament, peace usually means the lack of war or conflict. At the same time, it means peace and order in the Christian community. Peace is a specific blessing that followers of Christianity can bring to others, and if they are not worthy, the blessing returns. Peace, an element of God's armor, is God's own spiritual blessing. God is the God of peace, and Christ's work is peace. This struggle for peace goes further, as Christ's death has led to peace between God and man. Peace brings harmony of the mind and unshakeable peace that exists regardless of the external circumstances.⁵⁶ Jesus Christ is the one who brings peace and is the peace that unites humanity (see: Ephesians 2 : 14–17).

14. Faith As a Shield (Ephesians 6 : 16)

Faith should be a shield defending against Satan's attacks. In such situations, one should direct oneself in all situations. The presentation of the faith in the context of the shield is very meaningful. A broad and long shield covered a heavily armored soldier's entire body. In battle, an arrow covered in oakum and moistened with tar and sulfur set aflame before being released from the bow was also used. The aim of these arrows was not to kill a soldier, but to set him on fire so that he would break ranks and sow panic. Such arrows are all of Satan's temptations.⁵⁷

God and His work of salvation revealed in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the subject of faith. Faith is born out of listening about Jesus, and this word is accepted by faith. The aim of faith is the salvation of man. Meanwhile, the Pauline concept of faith is not static; instead, it is dynamic in nature. It contains elements of progress. Once shaped and formed forever, it is strictly related to struggle: "[Y]ou are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind struggling together for the faith of the Gospel" (Philippians 1 : 27). In a later context, faith is supposed to protect against the temptations of lust, but above all before all sorts of dangers. St. Paul emphasized the fundament of the faith. It is tied to the salvific plan of redemption.⁵⁸

56 Cf. G. F. Hawthorne, *Pokój*, [in:] *Słownik wiedzy biblijnej*, op. cit., p. 606.

57 Cf. A. Jankowski, *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 275.

58 Cf. F. Rienecker, G. Maier, *Leksykon Biblijny*, op. cit., p. 435.

15. The Helmet of Salvation (Ephesians 6 : 17) and the Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6 : 17)

The helmet shields the Christian spirit, which is the hope of salvation. Everyone who has the Christian hope of salvation does not yield to temptations and attacks of evil spirits.⁵⁹ The helmet is an element of the armor given to every Christian for protection against evil.

The sword is the symbol of God's Word.⁶⁰ It is used in battle. It is the only offensive part of this armor. It serves for both offensive and defensive battle.⁶¹ In this way, St. Paul lets us understand that the basis is spiritual preparation for battle and then standing together to preach the Good News to those who do not know it. The most meaningful example of battle with the sword of the Word of God is Christ's answers to Satan's temptations.⁶²

16. Prayer in the Spirit (Ephesians 6 : 18)

Prayer should accompany us throughout the spiritual struggle, taking diverse forms, especially the form of petitionary prayer for help. Here, there is emphasis on constantly calling to God and on constant prayer.⁶³ It is the fundament of the entire process of struggle. "This motif of prayer for one another is a powerful weapon against Satan, because it is a reference to a close-knit formation in which one soldier protects another."⁶⁴ The spirit that the author deals with here is the origin of prayer. It is supernatural. This prayer in the Spirit means inspired prayer. It is directed by the Spirit. It is characterized by vigilance and persistence. Vigilance can be understood as encouragement to spend the night in prayer. Meanwhile, the subject of petition in this epistle is the prayer for all the saints (thus for all the faithful), for the Church, which is the Body of Christ.⁶⁵ If the motif of prayer for one another here is a metaphorical image of armor, it refers to the close-knit formation in which

59 Cf. A. Jankowski, *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 276.

60 Cf. W. S. Sanford, *Broń*, [in:] *Słownik wiedzy biblijnej*, op. cit., p. 74–75.

61 Cf. A. Jankowski, *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 276.

62 Cf. *ibidem*, p. 276.

63 Cf. *ibidem*, p. 276.

64 C. S. Keener, *Komentarz historyczno-kulturowy do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 427.

65 Cf. A. Jankowski, *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 276.

soldiers shielded one another. Not a solitary soldier, but the united strength was unconquerable. This is a perfect metaphor for the strength of prayer.⁶⁶

17. The Christianological Traits of Marriage (Ephesians 5 : 21–6; 9)

This fragment of the Epistle of St. Paul is something of a household code. The author of this epistle specifically looks at Christian life and its morality, as attested by the household code.⁶⁷ This household code dealt with the household duties of spouses, parents, children, lords, and servants in relation to one another and their surroundings.⁶⁸ We encounter a typical element of the household codes, which are mentioned in a binary way in the relationship between family members. In the case of this epistle, they are the husband and wife, parents and children, and masters and slaves.⁶⁹ These household codes receive a new function that transcends the area of ethics. They interpret the relationship between a man and woman in marriage as the reflection of the communion between Christ and His Body, the Church. In Christianity, the shared life of a husband and wife is elevated above the category of pure creation and is presented in its specific role as the consequence of the event of Christ incarnate in the Church.⁷⁰ Formally, Paul makes use of Greco-Roman moral texts. He undermines the absolute rule of the head of the household, the man. Above everything is God the Judge, or the Lord. Everything should be based on mutual love.⁷¹ Jesus Christ becomes the subject when the motif of love, which becomes concrete in the Church as a model of marital love, is mentioned.⁷²

66 Cf. C. S. Keener, *Komentarz historyczno-kulturowy do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 427.

67 Cf. H. Langkammer, *Apostoł Paweł i jego dzieło*, op. cit., p. 349.

68 Cf. H. Langkammer, *Teologia Świętego Pawła*, op. cit., p. 18.

69 Cf. J. Załęski, *Obraz kobiety w listach Nowego Testamentu*, Ząbki 2005, p. 274–277.

70 Cf. J. Roloff, *Wprowadzenie do Nowego Testamentu*, przekł. T. Mieszkowski, Warszawa 2008, p. 175.

71 Cf. H. Langkammer, *Apostoł Paweł i jego dzieło*, op. cit., p. 349.

72 Cf. H. Langkammer, *Teologia Świętego Pawła*, op. cit., p. 11.

18. Mutual Subordination and Love (Ephesians 5 : 21–33)

The ultimate expression of being filled with the Spirit is being subordinate to one another, because Christ is the Lord of believers. All rules of household life are based on this concept. Although he commanded subordination on the part of wives, children, and slaves, imploring all the members of a group to become subordinate to one another was something unprecedented.⁷³

In the Jewish law, a woman was an object, not a person; she had no rights. The subordination that St. Paul speaks of seems radical and brings freedom because the subordination was supposed to be bilateral. Wives should be subordinate to their husbands “as to the Lord” (Ephesians 5 : 22), and in Ephesians 5 : 21 spouses should be mutually subordinate in their fear of Christ, which does not mean the same thing in these pericopes. We should note that in this second fragment we are dealing with a unique kind of subordination that all men and women in the Church are called to. The topic of marriage begins and ends with the concept of fear. St. Paul did not have in mind legal regulations, but instead moral obligations. Christian spouses living in accordance with Christ’s teaching cannot abuse their rights in order to oppress their partners in marriage. Naturally, a woman can be subordinate to her husband as long as his claims do not collide with Christ’s will. The husband is the head of a family just as Christ is the Head of the Church.⁷⁴

Christ is the reason for obedience and limit of responsibility. By listening to their husbands, wives listen to Christ. This requires that husbands’ demands be in accordance with Christ’s law. This is the moment when the obedience of wives ends.⁷⁵ The analogy of the body and head become more of an image of unity than one of authority. The husband is the head of his wife not on the basis of the order of creation, but on the principle of Christological argumentation (Christ-the Church). An important reference is the fact that here we are dealing with the comparison: husband-wife, Christ-the Church.⁷⁶ Not everything that refers to the relationship between Christ and the Church can be applied to that between a husband and wife. In the latter case, we are dealing with that fact in the aspect of engagement, the preparation of an engaged couple for marriage, and the sanctification of their relationship. Meanwhile, in the

73 Cf. C. S. Keener, *Komentarz historyczno-kulturowy do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 425.

74 Cf. J. Załęski, *Obraz kobiety w listach Nowego Testamentu*, p. 280–284.

75 Cf. A. Jankowski, *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 270.

76 Cf. A. Paciorek, *Paweł Apostoł – Pisma*, op. cit., part 2, p. 31.

former case there is a specific marital relation.⁷⁷ “Despite this, there are similar points: Christ’s love, the love of a husband; the subordination of a wife, the subordination of the Church; the rule of the husband, the rule of Christ; concern for one’s wife, concern for the Church.”⁷⁸ Meanwhile, the difference between these two types of relations consists of the fact that a husband does not redeem his wife as in the example of Christ and the Church.⁷⁹

St. Paul asks husbands to love their wives (see: Ephesians 5 : 25). Love of one’s wife is to be something permanent, not an ephemeral affection. The main motivation for love of one’s husband should be Christ’s love for His Church. This is the ideal of love for Christian spouses. The relations between spouses are so essential and basic that they concern all of humanity. To love one’s wife does not mean to feel arousal or attraction. It is a supernatural love and sacrifice up through the very end.⁸⁰ This is so important a matter that the author repeats it three times. St. Paul pleads for a specific kind of love – *agape* – which consists of sacrifice and dedication. Husbands should love their wives as they love their own bodies, and the Church here is the Body of Christ. This does not mean that St. Paul wants to give as an example selfish love of their husbands. However, he has no doubt that it is Christ and His love for the Church (and not the tendency of men to love themselves) that should be the measure of their love for their wives. Through love of his wife, man also loves himself.⁸¹ Subordination to one another is described by the author in the categories of respect and reverence.⁸² “Christ is concerned for the Church, because He is the Body of Christ, and a husband is concerned for his wife because the two of them are the body of Christ.”⁸³

19. Children’s Obedience to Their Parents (Ephesians 6 : 1–3)

St. Paul justifies the commandment for children to be obedient in a Christian manner in two ways. First of all, it is righteous, or in accordance with all the

77 Cf. J. Załęski, *Obraz kobiety w listach Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 284–285.

78 Ibidem, p. 285.

79 Cf. ibidem, p. 285.

80 Cf. A. Jankowski, *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 271.

81 Cf. J. Załęski, *Obraz kobiety w listach Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 308–310.

82 Cf. C. S. Keener, *Komentarz historyczno-kulturowy do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 425.

83 Cf. J. Załęski, *Obraz kobiety w listach Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 318.

recognized laws of nature. The Fourth Commandment confirms this. Second, St. Paul notes that this is a command with the promise of a reward for respecting it.⁸⁴ The appearance of the topic of children's obedience to their parents shows that children along with their entire families participated in the congregations during which this fragment was read. To be obedient means not so much becoming subordinated to someone as it does listening.⁸⁵

Conclusion

The previous term "anthropology" used to refer to the Pauline vision of the Christian has been replaced with the neologism "Christianology." As someone who "is in Christ," the Christian is completely opposed to the unbaptized person, who St. Paul says is "living in the world." In the ontic dimension, the baptized person already is structured, while in the moral dimension he or she "becomes." Various publications have noted that baptism is an act of the structuring of the believer, while the above study especially presents the creative function of the three persons of the Godhead in specific activities of the person proclaiming the Word of God.⁸⁶

The Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians is a text in which God's activity in the life of the person is underscored. This epistle contains specific instruction on how to imitate Christ and how to reach for salvation. There are many obstacles, including Satan, who constantly wants to preclude this great and ever-important activity in the Economy of Salvation.

This study dealing with elements of Christianology in St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians does not completely exhaust the richness of these Pauline texts. One difficulty is the freshness of this topic, which appears in St. Paul's still largely understudied reflection on moral Christianology. It seems, however, that the above reflections can be something of a contribution to further creative efforts to deepen our understanding of this topic.

84 Cf. A. Jankowski, *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, op. cit., p. 273.

85 Cf. *Nowy Testament dla moderatorów*, op. cit., p. 459.

86 Cf. R. Zdziałek, *Chryścianologia św. Pawła*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 261–262.

Abstract

Moral Christianology in Light of Selected Polish Language Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians

One of the aims of St. Paul's epistles is to provide his audience with moral instruction. The apostle's epistles contain such contents that provide a basis and justification for moral norms. This study deals with elements of Christianology in St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. The earlier term "anthropology," used in St. Paul's vision of the Christian, has been replaced by the term "Christianology." St. Paul's material on Christianology is very rich; therefore, this study is limited to the most important aspects of following Jesus Christ based on selected Polish language commentary on St. Paul the Apostle's Epistle to the Ephesians. This epistle contains specific guidelines on how to follow Christ.

Keywords: Saint Paul; Letter to Ephesians; Christianology; Christian; Church

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