

Christian moral values and educational theories¹

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Ethical and moral responsibility is based on concrete life situations in cultures changing from the static to dynamic and complex societies. Universal principles became relative, even as based on a religious tradition and a vision of the meaning of life in a spiral evolution of new challenges and decisions. Earlier Christians could rely on a stable society and church, now the emphasis is on personal decision. The priorities in the hierarchy of values have changed, and the meaning of values, including family, religion, and personal freedom, has become different. Yet Christian values have a core and specific hierarchy to express the sacred and the presence of God. The six images of educational systems, from the collectivist, individualistic, to the scientific, express the notion of the human person, and Christianity is faced with describing the meaning of its tradition in contemporary life experiences.

Keywords: values, universal principles, personal freedom, identity.

Introduction

This theme is to be situated in the context of the evolution of values perception and moral education in the 20th century – which of course is to be related with the important stages of ethical consciousness of the past centuries.

I hereby take into consideration that the experience in Western Europe, in the Western World, differs from the experience in communist societies, in Central and Eastern Europe. These differences need to be clarified constantly

in order to enhance mutual understanding, to avoid misunderstandings.

It is my personal experience that, despite the fact I had been reading about it and my childhood memories of World War II, I did not understand what the experience of a communist domination during decades concretely meant for the populations of Central and Eastern Europe until I had the opportunity to visit some of these countries and to meet people who helped me to see the lasting consequences. And vice versa, I think it is very difficult for people from these countries to

¹ Ethics: the branch of philosophy which treats of human character and conduct, of the distinction between right and wrong, and of one's moral duty and obligations to the community, as a whole (Collins English Dictionary);

moral: related to the conduct of duties of man; discriminating between right and wrong; verified by reason or probability (id.);

morality: the practice of moral duties; the right or wrong of a thing (id);

values: worth, utility, importance, estimated worth or valuation, precise signification;

Christian values: viewpoints or principles which help to discern the Christian value of (way of valuing) the various aspects of life.

imagine what a neo-liberal society stands for, to understand the dilemmas we face or to see the impact of what we call “secularisation”.

1. The story of value perception, ethics and moral conduct

One of the major difficulties of mutual understanding is the fact that we cannot see that both systems (capitalism and communism) are / were inter-dependent. The diabolisation of the other system is a form of dependency. With the long awaited collapse of the communist system the Western world entered into a crisis and is now identifying new enemies: terrorism e.g., or the ‘arab world’ or whatever form of opposition to the hegemony of the capitalist interests.

Here we meet the major issue of value systems and ethics, the morality of a particular type of society. This is a crucial issue in Western society, a daily struggle between contradictory options about the value of life, of people and populations, of cultures and traditions. It is easier to get important funds for archaeological missions to dig up crocodile skeletons in the African desert than to support the people living in the desert. Oil companies invest fabulous amounts in the exploitation of oil reserves in Africa at the expenses of the local population whose villages are destroyed and who are told to go somewhere else.

On the other hand, our common human aspirations and sensitivity for basic human values guarantees a shared search for truth, including a further exploration of the Christian interpretation of our ethical and moral responsibility today and in the near future.

2. A problematic issue

Moral values and moral education are related to the question of what is right and what is

wrong. With the evolution of sciences and technology and their impact upon concrete life situations, the distinction between right and wrong became a problem in many areas of modern society.

2.1 The shift from a static to a dynamic mindset

In the second half of the 20th century the transition from a static, universal and uniform understanding of ethics and moral conduct into a situational, context-related understanding represented a revolution. The phenomenological and existential philosophy contributed a lot to this transition. The most influential impact was initiated by the changes in technological advances, circumstances of work and life conditions, lifestyles and social communication. As a result, the individual is now the central reference point for orienting decisions and concrete behaviour. Even if certain rules are to be respected by all, e.g. traffic rules, the collective competence will be achieved through an educational process which enables people to rely upon their personal judgement and responsibility for respecting the norms, rather than to use blind coercion and generalised oppression.

Educators now encourage people to think for themselves and to speak their mind, rather than to depend upon other people’s opinion. The emphasis then is put upon personal responsibility and personal conscience. Inviting people to behave according to agreed rules is based upon the refinement of motivation and the quality of arguments. The discernment of the value of moral conduct also takes particular circumstances and personal situations into consideration. Universal principles became relative.

2.2. The shift from a religious hegemony to an a-religious mindset

Historically speaking, values and moral education are also to be situated in relationship to a philosophy of life, a religious tradition, a life vision... In the Western world – although religious freedom was never threatened in principle – the meaning and the social relevance of life visions and religious traditions was also questioned. The general trend in peoples' attitudes suggests that religion lost its major impact upon values and moral conduct. Although the long-standing Christian tradition undoubtedly shaped the moral conscience of the Western populations, its influence is becoming relative because more and more people weaken the importance of their belonging to a particular denomination for moral deliberation. The impact of the a-religious orientation of the public services, the media and the public opinion put the transcendental dimension into the private realm of life. Secular responses to dramatic events or important needs of populations in the world have a higher moral authority for reaching a consensus among people and for motivating them to act, than the traditional practices, inspired and supported by religious beliefs.

A different moral awareness emerges with (new) life experiences and with the involvement in a (changing) social, economic, political and cultural context. Cfr. circumstances of labour, housing conditions, economic and financial services [market, banks], social mobility, travel and tourist infrastructures, fashion, consumer attitudes, food and health care... A moral reasoning is suggested or is refined or more explicitly articulated for people, according to the multiple parameters which affect their life today.

Moral practice is part of a circular movement: general principles and rules are the result

of experiences, of failures and unexpected outcomes of conduct; at the same time moral principles and rules regulate the moral conduct of people in a variety of situations. There is no beginning and no end in this process; from the beginning of human life, the circular movement has been practiced and is constantly widening in an ever more complex spiral evolution.

At the same time, changes in social reality affect the status of religious beliefs and practices. Many people perceive such an evolution as disturbing. Their personal and social security and certainty is put into question; their belief system seems alien to concrete experiences. The institutional religions do not offer a real alternative; they seem to offer more of the same in a different form only. Many discovered that they have to find answers for themselves.

3. Context of the problems

The story of the 20th century in this regard is important because of the new kinds of moral questions individual people and large populations have been facing during the past decades. People were and are confronted with new dilemmas and address them by adopting different pragmatic solutions, using new information or new technical tools, judging for themselves with larger autonomy. All these possibilities are inherently related with the development of a modern (post-modern) democratic society. The process disturbs also the established forms of socialisation, in the family in the first place, in schools, through the integration in different social spheres like labour, housing conditions, social and cultural life, leisure and informal social contacts, etc.

3.1. *The “identity” issue*

Yet the “identity” of being a human person, of being a Christian, is a central issue in today’s reflection and in educational theories, including religious education. The “self” is a major philosophical category. Developmental psychology focused upon the stages of the formation of an identity throughout the life-time of an individual person. E.g. the “I” needs to be assertive in order to conquer a social space, to give content to the roles and functions a person has to take on in social settings. Whereas in the past, the collective identity supported people to find out what to do in particular circumstances. Christians, e.g., took it for granted that they should rely upon the normative teaching of the church for the concrete orientation of their life. Today, the individual has to make up his or her mind and to decide what to do, where to go and for what reason, after having gained appropriate information, also in response to their concrete situation.

More so, because religious traditions in some regards lost their manifest impact upon society at large, religion is no longer the organizing factor of social life or the authority of ethical principles. In an emancipated society, the rational communication praxis asks for the “better argument”; religious traditions have to prove the original value of their contribution in the public debate, in order to justify their presence and initiatives. This calls for different types of competencies among Christians e.g. in order to maintain their organisations or services in the heart of contemporary society.

3.2. *Values and the hierarchy of values*

When in 1971 some 4000 articles on values were examined critically, about 170 definitions

of the word “value” emerged. It is a vague term which refers to a fundamental aspiration of the human person for living a just life in society. As many aspects are taken into consideration of achieving this goal, it is not easy to find a satisfying definition. Generally speaking though, a value is associated with a deep motivation or orientation in people according to which they behave in a particular situation. Values are identified in reference to the behaviour of individual people; values seem to be stable; it is likely that the same person will be consistent in his or her response to similar situations.

However, the content of a stable value is influenced by the concrete context in which people are living. E. g. “to study”, “to become a learned person” is highly valued by many (young) people. People with this aspiration are prepared to pay a high price to acquire such a personal quality. But precisely the content of “study” shifted over the past decades. In some situations “to study” is associated with “tell me what I have to know, what I have to think, what I have to do...”. Students then seem to respond to a particular teaching ethic. They do not have any other ambition; their main concern being to respond to the expectations of the teachers. In that case, the image of a “learned person” is affected by a collectivist orientation of values; students depend upon something outside themselves; they are studying out of fear not to correspond to the expectations of other people. They are sacrificing the potential for personal thinking and autonomous behaviour.

“Hierarchy of values” can be seen in analogy with “hierarchy of truths” – re-emphasized in the Catholic church during Vatican II. Certain truths of the Christian tradition are considered as central and fundamental; others are seen as peripheral... although they are all inter-related.

The content itself of the Christian tradition requires such a distinction. Thus certain values are more fundamental than others, although they are all inter-related. Today, the value of life, the value of family, the value of personal freedom, the value of the human person in comparison to the value of nature and of animals... are weighed and classified in a different way than centuries or even decades ago.

Over the years, and in reference to a changing awareness due to instruction and education, some values considered as “absolute” became more relative. E.g., the discussion about the arguments in favour of a ‘just’ war, about the justification of an army, armament and arms production; the discussion about the right of ‘self defence’ and its interpretation in order to justify the use of violence (life of a person is at risk or a material good is at risk), the discussion about ‘terrorism’, etc.

Hierarchy of values is used in different disciplines, e.g. in the context of sociology, in the context of education, in the context of (moral) theology;

3.2.1. Hierarchy of values in a sociological perspective

Surveys are organized in order to have some indications about the hierarchy of values a particular population is referring to in their life praxis. If applied regularly, it is possible to identify changes in the hierarchy of values and the interpret its meaning. E.g. the European Value Study, a questionnaire applied in 1980, 1990 and 2000, allows to register the stability and or the changes of value systems in a particular society over a time span of twenty years.

But let us have a look at the order of values which emerged as a pattern for most of the western countries. The following ranking

seems to be a stable response among the people interviewed: family, friends, freedom, family education, ecology, quality of human development [self], tolerance, immanent religious/holistic connotation of life...

Family is recognized as the most important value in life. That seems to be obvious, but one can be mistaken.

– e.g. the “family” is a stable value, but the *content* of the concept of family is changing:

- the quality of the relationship between people is more important than the continuity of the relationship with the same person;
- the ‘single parent’ family, the ‘divorced parent’ and in that perspective the (male) father as the foster parent instead of the mother, the ‘re-composed’ (blended) family, the ‘homosexual couple’ and their right to adopt children ... , but also the inter-cultural, inter-religious family,, all are associated with “family” as a supreme value;

– e.g. “religion” seems to be a stable category; but here also the content associated with religion is changing:

- religion in the sense of an established dominant religious tradition (e.g. Catholicism or Protestantism) shifted to “religion” in the sense of “sects”, “Pentecostal” movements, eclectic composition of belief systems and practices...
- people adopt a very loose link with the institutional churches re beliefs and practices, solidarity and commitment, but still find “religion” important;
- the institutional dimension is fading away in favour of an individualistic affinity with “the sacred” or aspects of non-Christian religions;
- the meaning of religion in the sense of “Christian communities” is shifting from

a uniform, reproducible style of behaviour into a generalised claim for authenticity as regards the form, the content and the ministry. The quality of the inter-personal contacts becomes the major criterion for building the community and for ministering it; faith is an inter-personal reality within the community instead of faith as a strictly individual link with God or/and a set of (dogmatic) beliefs;

- “religion” in the sense of a regular religious practice, prayer, faith in a personal God, faith in the resurrection, the value of a family in its “traditional sense” ... is still a reality, but only for a small minority. It is exceptional that these characteristics are found together in the same person, and even less in young people;
- e.g. personal “freedom” becomes an ever more important value over the years; but the content of its meaning is shifting. From a freedom understood in reference to a community and the shared values within a community to a freedom intrinsically associated with the “self”, the “individual” as the cornerstone of society:
 - the importance of “privacy” as a sacred dimension of the individual; life is about building up privacy: the impact can be noticed in the life style; the re-adjustment of social contacts; young people having their personal bank account; privacy among partners, among parents and their children, within educational setting; religion and moral standards become a “private” matter, they are no longer relevant for public matters. And this “capitalist” understanding of privacy is different from the privacy people adopted under communist domination in order to avoid putting other people’s lives at risk;

- respect for the personal conscience, discernment, judgement and behaviour;
- job descriptions no longer can consider gender as a discriminative factor; schools are for all, irrespective of gender, race, religion, social background of the pupils and their parents;
- but “personal freedom” is also shifting from strictly personal interpretation to social concerns:
 - movements for human rights, children’s rights;
 - peace movements;
 - anti-apartheid; courts to judge and punish war crimes; processes to foster reconciliation among e.g. (war) criminals and victims;
 - emancipation of women.

At all these levels, we (in Western Europe and the Western World in general) face many a crisis as regards the impact, the authority and the meaning of ethics and moral principles, norms, rules on the one hand, and the impact of a religious, e.g. Christian life orientation on the other hand. The relationship between ethical and religious traditions is deeply disturbed by the process which we (in the Western World) call the secularisation, the demythification (disenchantment) of a taken-for-granted religious connotation of (social) life. The autonomy of the human person, of the secular, is to be distinguished from the religious dimension, the sacred; they are put in a different kind of interaction or inter-relatedness. The institutional religion has to come forward with a “better argument” in order to be accepted (as a valid partner in the communicative action for a better society) for its proper and unique value.

Not only is it important to rethink the link between moral education and institutional

religious traditions; there is a strong claim now to develop an ethics of religious belonging, of religious behaviour and thinking, of religious education in particular.

3.2.2. hierarchy of values as an strategic and educational category

The introduction of strategic changes often intends to promote a certain hierarchy of values in social groups or organisations. At this point, the changes in the values promoted throughout history are obvious.

- e.g. during the time of colonisation, and the related evangelisation, the missionary virtue was considered as a heroic value, even related to self-sacrifice and martyrdom in the name of Christian faith. Marriage and family life were considered as of a lesser value; many parents were considering the missionary vocation (for the priesthood or religious life) as a supreme value... Today, the concept of “missionary” is less popular: not only did the colonised countries become autonomous; the missionary zeal for “conversion” has now a negative connotation, missionary proselytism is seen as a lack of respect of personal freedom. Evangelisation is interpreted in a different perspective;
- e.g. the “preferential options for the poor” has been promoted recently as a prior criterion for evaluating the authenticity of the Christian identity. The analysis of the previously colonised countries revealed that the benefit of colonisation and related evangelisation was intended for the rich countries; the local population suffered immensely and was structurally prevented from having access to better life conditions. Hence the strategic choice of liberation theology – of Vatican II and of more recent church documents – to consider the preferential option for the poor as a value of prior

importance for people of good will and for Christians in particular, one of the essential features of the Christian identity. This strategic option is seen as incompatible with the hierarchy of values of the neo-liberal and capitalist society, especially in the context of the “globalisation” strategy. The neo-liberal ideology still considers the resources of countries and populations of the younger continents as a legitimate property of the previous colonisers, freely and exclusively accessible for their benefit.

As a consequence, educational programmes, also in the context of parish catechesis and religious education in schools, are preoccupied with the “new evangelisation” of the so-called first world itself. The commitment to the young countries shifted from “converting” the native population, into limited projects in view of supporting the local churches or communities. Nongovernmental organisations [also run by Catholic organisations] focus the claim for help upon projects as regards material equipment or basic needs of the local population. The pastoral leadership of the local church is in the hands of local people, assisted discretely by a larger, international network.

Educational programmes intend to raise the consciousness of young people about the economic, social, cultural, religious circumstances of their countries or region. They are helped to apply a systematic analysis of these conditions in order to invent the strategic options in view of a better future and to promote the appropriate political, economic, social, religious values. The main target being to change the relationship between the ‘rich’ and the so called ‘poor’ countries, or to let the “poor” become the unique representatives of the Christian identity.

A new question arises: what is meant by “Christian” values? Do they exist? Or should we speak of “values” as basic human conditions

for a good personal life and for a good society, leaving the attribution of a religious meaning to the people who are committed to these values?

As a result of the confrontation with secularisation and of the dialogue with non-Christian religions... more discretion is required as regards "Christian" values. With the Enlightenment and Modern Times, the human person (humanity) is considered as the source and the norm for any kind of human development. The religious qualifications are often identified as domesticating or as ideological and thus preventing the development of honest and fair human values.

One of the reasons for calling the Vatican II Council together was to study the link between the human reality, the evolution of contemporary society on the one hand and revelation, of the salvation / liberation offered by God in Christ. Human values in their fullest and deepest meaning then are to be seen as – a reinterpreted - "locus theologicus" for God's manifestation: revelation of the divine presence within the human reality. ("You have my Father's blessing... For when I was hungry, you gave me food; when thirsty, you gave me drink; when I was a stranger you took me into your home, when naked you clothed me; when I was ill you came to my help, when in prison you visited me ... " Mt 25, 34-37).

The hierarchy of values then is to be linked with the core truths of the Christian tradition in the first place. And this "hierarchy" may differ from the popular ordering or values or be in conflict with it. At the same time, the values as they are practiced and lived in relationship with today's society, are to be discerned carefully in order to re-interpret them in a Christian perspective. E.g., the value of "family": has a specific Christian connotation in the light of the Infancy narratives and the so called "holy family". When today, the

family is put at the top of the hierarchy, it stands for many forms of relationships and types of parenting roles. All of these forms are or may be soon recognised as legally justified and juridically protected. What is the link with the biblical model of family? On the other hand, the quality of care and the search for meaning and human dignity in dramatic situations may be the starting point of a journey into spiritual and sacred realms, into the discovery of a personal and loving God. E.g. the value of friendship and love. With the radical and sometimes brutal dissociation of human relationships, friendship and love from the Christian faith and ethics, one may be perplexed with the incompatibility of between certain types of hierarchy of values with the core of the Christian identity. At the same time, the diversity of experiences may help certain people to come to the discovery of a deeper meaning and to choose people or places where a gratuitous love is practiced in the name of Christ. A similar concern about the earth, the cosmos... can be re-interpreted as a sacred value and associated with the discovery, in a new language, of God's presence among people today. For the Christian meaning to be recognised as such, though, it is necessary to adopt, in faith, the specific consciousness of the manifestation of God's love in Christ and in other people.

4. Christian values and educational theories

To address a "crisis" adequately depends upon our capability of understanding the changes in our perception of the human person, of society and of the world. It is precisely at this level that major shifts occurred in the course of the 20th century.

The “images” we use in order to represent the human person and to develop a systematised understanding of the meaning of life in general, change over time in reference to modified social and cultural contexts. These “images” inspire the identification of values and their normative authority for (Christian) education. E.g. the “images” of the human person affect the concept of “childhood”, “youth” and “adulthood”; they are given a specific content and consequently, the educational goals will have different connotations.

The images are also related to a specific paradigm underlying the “explanation” of what it means to be a human person and of the meaning of life. Some authors distinguish up to six different images and related educational paradigms, as the result of changes which occurred during the 20th century:

1. the collectivist image: the human person only exists as part of a collective reality and has to give up all personal aspirations for the good of the whole;

2. the individualist image: the human person is seen as an autonomous, individual, atomistic reality, objectively distinguished from the rest of the world; the individual is recognised as the basic component of a controllable, deterministic, static reality (the essentialist philosophy);

3. the dual image of the human person (not dualistic as in 2.) is inspired by modern physics, biology and zoology. Scientists observed that the atomistic reality referred to under number 2., does not exist as such. What we believe to observe is a construct due to the particular look and instruments used for the observation of the so-called reality. The particles seem to exist and the next moment only waves can be registered. The human reality is an open-ended probability rather than a fixed and static essence;

4. the relational image of the human person: people are understood as part of inherently relational network where the physical, social, cultural and spiritual dimensions interact with one another. People’s life is shaped through a network of multiple interactions; even the capacity of owning a conscious response and taking initiatives is affected by the unconscious dimension of our self; the borders of human life are extended; the “I” is always part of a “we”;

5. the human person as the core of relationships and inherently affected by social factors: socialisation is a process of internalising the components of the self-concept as related with a social environment; the human person is imbedded in a simultaneous and inseparable duality (social-historical reality in a social environment; system and structure in space and time; the individual in society);

6. the human person as part of a ěosmic planetary evolution: nature is understood as a self-producing and self-regulating, living organism; the planetary human person is coping with changes in the perception of time, space, and the concept of being alive and or not being not-alive, of spirit and matter, of life-within-life (evolution and planetary theory).

The importance of these distinctions is obvious. Images of the human person are changing with the progress of sciences, with the development of technical possibilities and with the evolution of social and cultural life in general. According to new insights, different work and life conditions, new systems of trade and financial exchanges, communication, leisure and consumption... a new awareness emerges about life and its meaning, about the future, about the possibilities of shaping life according to personal and collective aspirations. This kind of shift affects every dimension, particularly the relationship to value systems, to philosophical, ethical and religious systems.

It is obvious that it is necessary to study each of these spheres of influence, namely the contribution of particular sciences for changing the image of the human person. It is even more important to compare the different ways of looking at life, at the human person and society, in order to appreciate critically the implications of each approach for education, for Christian moral education in particular. In the context of our seminar, it is impossible to explore all these images and their implications for moral and Christian education. We will briefly have a closer look at two or three of them and start our discussion from there.

4.1. The collectivist image of the human person

In its extreme form, the collectivist viewpoint can be recognised in the bolshevist reduction and exploitation as introduced by Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky, Beria...; but also in the dictatorships of Suharto and his policy against communism (McCarty in the USA), in the policy imposed by the Chinese or the North Korean leaders, to name only a few. Of course, I have to be discrete and respectful in my approach. You know so much better than me what it stands for and you suffered from it for decades. You still are trying to overcome its consequences for yourselves, your children and the future generations. It will take a long time as the impact of this totally unjustified physical and mental dictatorship hit people and society at large at such a deep and fundamental level. My main interest is just to recall the presuppositions and to highlight its contrast with the second 'image', which may be perceived as the redeeming alternative.

Initially, the collectivist image is to be related with the dictatorship of proletariat, the class-struggle towards a class-less society, the collective property of means of production, a

society without "state" as an oppressive mechanism – democratic centralism, uniformity in behaviour; aiming at political, ideological, organisational unity, harmony between individual and general interests, labour as liberating for development of the creative human person.

Consequently the "system" moved further into an authoritarian, and bureaucratic society, a centralized administration of one hierarchically organized political party, a praxis of extermination – genocide – of e.g. the farmers, exploitation in the name of the collective interests (referring to Marxist-Leninist theories), with dehumanising results, destruction of history and of diversified cultural identities, and an exclusivist control of people's thinking, values of human, social aspirations and behaviour.

The individual person does not exist, is sacrificed for the so-called "good of all", as determined and controlled by the centralized administration of the party.

Educational theories then were developed in coherence with this image: the right attitudes are to be adopted and the appropriate kind of information is to be filtered in order to achieve the ideological consensus among all.

4.2. The Individual as image and norm for moral education

In Western Europe – in the Western world – the image of the human person is focused upon the individual. Modernity developed an extensive philosophical justification and legitimation of this understanding of the human being. Initially, the "I" was seen as the key object for human and social sciences (philosophy, psychology, law, human biology and economics). The "individuum" (Latin), undivided, which cannot be divided, is to be associated with the undivided "I", with

autonomy, independence, freedom, responsibility, uniqueness, potential for interiority, creativity, critical reflection and judgment, rationality, objective consciousness, assertivity, the right of privacy, of property ... with control in every domain and communication with others. The emphasis is put upon individual achievements in the domain of 'having, of capability and of being'.

The origin of the concept of the individual may be located in the Jewish religion and the Greek philosophy: Aristotle states that.: the human person is the creator of ideas out of his personal reflection (Plato "participated" in the truth, was initiated, received the truths) – but still with awe for the physical nature: a passive, contemplative logos: to see the logical structure of reality. But the substance principle was understood to be the core of reality: the undivided component.

The Middle Ages see the individual as self-achievement, the capacity to enter into oneself – as opposed to the world (= loss of the self); the soul as capable of introspection which offers access to salvation – as opposed to "extra-spection", which means the discovery of the world based upon the (sense) experiences.

The Renaissance intends to achieve the emancipation of the individual human person through an objective view; the self-consciousness of the subject is a new form of autonomy. The self has an absolute status, in opposition with "tradition" (demythologisation of tradition – disenchantment of the world, de-divinisation of nature).

In Modern times sciences introduce a mechanistic worldview. The emergence of a civil society emphasises the full autonomous person (idealism, romanticism, existentialism). The emergence of the autonomous economic society guarantees the unique status of the individual private person (Locke). The

Enlightenment, e.g., extrapolates the concept of an atomistic individual person at the economic, political level: the independent state: idealism, property, democratic government. Also, for a long time psychology concentrated upon the properties of the individual person. The "IQ" e.g. was a symptom of a deterministic interpretation of human potential – with some corrective influences from the environment.

According to this perspectives educational theories are centred upon the individual student, his/her achievements as the major key to success. But repeatedly, research has observed that the social hierarchy controls the so-called self-realisation and autonomy, praised as the right of everyone, irrespective of the origin or social position. In reality, the family background is to be seen as a very important social (deterministic) control of personal emancipation and success in studies and professional life. The individualistic educational philosophy stays with a very selective reference to the wider social context.

Its impact upon the hierarchy of values. The following aspects are highly valued in order to achieve the goals proper to this individualistic image of the human person: autonomy, independent behaviour; control of achievements and competition; success in achievements is due to talents and merit; social hierarchy and the social position of the family is the guaranty for stability of the economic society; the future depends upon the investment into the human capital and the reproduction of a proper educational style (authoritarian control), authority relationships, disciplinary techniques and the development of appropriate attitudes. These "values" are to be reinforced through the educational system. They have been integrated into "Christian" education and Christian institutions as well, of course.

4.3. *Physics as the source for a new image of the human person*

The decisive shift is to be understood as the change from the *atomistic*, analytical thinking (the reality is composed of autonomous, identifiable elements which respond to fixed laws and foreseeable, deterministic processes) into a *systemic* understanding of reality (a system is a whole of inter-related, inter-dependent and organised elements in interaction with an environment). The quantum theory and relativity theory, evolutions in biology and zoology belong to the second – systemic – orientation. Their influence upon the image of the human person on the one hand, upon social and human sciences on the other hand, has been revolutionary.

The “reality” now is interpreted in different terms and responds to four main principles or presuppositions:

- “autonomous” elements as such do not exist: an element is sometimes perceived as a material entity, other times as a wave, according to instruments and techniques used for observation: a particle is the two at the same time! This causes uncertainty and powerlessness as regards the definition of “reality”: reality is not defined; the material reality as such does not exist but has a tendency, a probability towards existence: it is a not fixed network of probabilities;
- the “world” is a network of dynamic relations and interactions, not of static structures. Relationship is now a central concept, instead of substance; the expected course of events is affected by known and unknown factors = probability; the unexpected course of events is due to the impact of “foreign” influences, coming from “elsewhere”; there is no rational, logical link with the expected or known course of events;
- there is no independent, objective observer of what is happening in “reality”; the ob-

server is co-author of the occurring phenomena, events; object and subject are one reality;

- every part of reality refers to the whole (holographic representation of reality: every detail gives access to the whole of reality).

As a result a different image of the human person emerges:

- a “dual” (not dualistic) character of the human person, not defined: the individual and the collective are inseparable, simultaneously present (complementary and uncertain);
- relatedness as an essential feature of the human person; the independent individual does not exist; the encounter, the relatedness with the other person is a reality larger than the “self” (e.g. the relationship teacher-student);
- all penetrating subjectivity (instead of objectivity);
- the whole is inside the human person: holographic image.

Educational orientations will create a different learning environment, with the focus put upon independent learning as related to group learning; organisational learning as a condition for personal progress. The most important resources for learning are situated more in the society at large than in the school building itself. ICT, and communication at large is the key language of educational projects.

To conclude

A reflection upon Christian moral education then is a complex issue. The decisive question is related to the “image” of the human person which is underlying the educational system and theory and which is inspiring the educational practice (institutional structure, discourse, language, rituals, relationships, artefacts, topographic display, programmes, means and

equipment, discipline and control system, rewards and punishments, hidden rules and norms for social differentiation).

Many of the aspects of the “individual”-centred image of the human person and the way of handling it in the context of modern society, are opposed to gospel values (although highly identified with the “Catholic” ethos and tradition). An a-historical, uncritical approach to the Catholic tradition, to education and life in general, prevents us from seeing the real origin and content of our moral, educational, Christian conviction and practices.

In the historical shift from a collectivist type of society and ideological control of moral education into the “Western” type of society

and moral education – and the hoped for Christian moral education – it is essential to equip ourselves with the appropriate tools for a critical evaluation and discernment. This effort is also essential for a better understanding of the other images of the human person which emerged in the 20th century in the light of the developments in (alternative) psychology, sociology and the planetary, cosmic evolution theory. The image of the human person which occurred as a result of these scientific insights have decisive implications for a reinterpretation of the Christian identity (= of the meaning of the Christian tradition) and for Christian moral education.

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KRIKŠČIONIŠKOS MORALINĖS VERTYBĖS IR UGDYMO TEORIJOS

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Santrauka

Visuomenė pastaruosius šimtmečius mainėsi iš nekintamos santvarkos į judrų ir sudėtingą gyvenimo būdą. Amžini ir nekintami dėsniai nebepripažįstami tokie, kurie buvo, o atrodo sąlyginiai, atsižvelgiant į žmogaus ir žmonijos patirtį. Seniau krikščionys savo doros ir etikos nuosprendžius remdavo Bažnyčios mokymu ir dėsniais. Individualistinėje kultūroje, pabrėžiančioje žmogaus laisvę rinktis, atrodo, nebėra visomis sąlygomis tinkamų visuotinių dėsnių. Keitėsi ne tik vertybių pirmenybės tvarka, bet ir turinys – širma dabar nebe ta kaip prieš šimtmečius. Tas pats pasakytina apie vertybes – religiją, asmens

laisvę, socialinius uždavinius. Tačiau krikščionybė turi vertybių branduolį ir pirmenybių tvarką Dievo buvimui tarp žmonių išreikšti. Visos švietimo sistemos ar teorijos pagrįstos savitu žmogaus asmens supratimu, nesvarbu, tai – sovietinis kolektyvizmas, technologijos amžiaus samprata ar labai individualistinė. Modernaus gyvenimo sudėtingoje aplinkoje krikščionybės užduotis yra pagrįsti savo paveldo savitumą, reikšmę ir prasmę modernia patirtimi ir suprantamai išreikšti.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: vertybės, amžini ir nekintami dėsniai, asmens laisvė, identitetas.

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