

Future Perspectives for Christianity and its Cosmology

Karol Jasinski

Ph.D., Postdoctoral Degree, Associate Professor, University of Warmia and Mazury in
Olsztyn (Olsztyn, Poland)

E-mail: karol.jasinski@uwm.edu.pl

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7695-499X>

This paper presents perspectives for the future existence of world and Christianity, which is discussed as a single entity (a religion), leaving out the issue of its division into different branches (denominations). The paper has two main sections. The first section analyses various dimensions of the crisis which currently afflicts Christianity, including: the decline of religious faith and practices, the institutionalisation and system-like character of the doctrine, the departure from intellectual and moral standards, break the Christian vision of the world (cosmology) and the disregard for the spiritual needs of man. The second section envisions Christianity, which comprises the following: consideration for the democratic tradition, a transformation veering in the direction of pantheism in future cosmology, a renewal caused by bolstering spiritual experience and fulfilling the spiritual needs of man. According to the central thesis of the paper, overcoming the crisis of Christianity and ensuring its further development necessitates a return to the original meaning of the religion as a style of spiritual life, emphasising the element of spiritual experience.

Keywords: Christianity; Christian cosmology; crisis; reform; needs of man; spiritual experience

Received: July 25, 2018; accepted: August 29, 2018

Philosophy and Cosmology, Volume 22, 2019: 109-119.

<https://doi.org/10.29202/phil-cosm/22/9>

Introduction

Indubitably, Christianity is one of the oldest religions in the cultural circle of Western Europe. Despite its beginnings in the context of Judaism in the territory of Palestine, Christianity soon became associated with Greek culture and came to define the cultural and spiritual image of the European continent. It is a religion with a turbulent history, marked by multiple successes and defeats, orthodoxy and heresies, pursuit of unification and schisms, faithfulness to the teachings of its Founder and submission to a 'worldly mentality', spiritual struggle and struggle for power, promotion of science and the conflicts with its discoveries. Despite all of these issues, the Christian religion seems to occupy an impregnable position on the map of Europe and serves an irreplaceable function in defining the European identity.

However, talk about the crisis of Christianity — not only as a church institution but also as a community of the faithful — is becoming louder and louder. The crisis manifests itself in the lack of faithfulness to the doctrine, divisions, moral scandals, secularisation, decline of identity, fading faith and practices among many of the faithful. This situation raises the question of the perspectives for the Christian religion and its future condition. The future of Christianity is connected with the future of the cosmos, which is from the Christian point of view the space of God's revelation and activity. The whole universe is predestined to transformation in the future, on the day of the Parousia, that is, the return of the Lord to the earth.

The analyses presented below, generally philosophical in character, are divided into two main parts. The first section analyses various dimensions of the current crisis. Christianity will be discussed as a single entity (a religion), leaving out the issue of its division into different branches (denominations), especially due to the ubiquitous nature of some aspects of the crisis. The other section envisages Christianity and its future vision of the world. The analyses have a common reference point in the following thesis: if we are to overcome the crisis of Christianity and ensure its further development, we need to return to the original meaning of this religion as a style of spiritual life, emphasising the element of spiritual experience, which for more and more people is becoming an important human need.

Facing the Modern Crisis of Christianity

Speaking of the crisis of Christianity, one should note that the word 'crisis' does not necessarily denote any moment of collapse, downfall, emasculation, lack of vitality [Kołakowski, 1984: 158]. It originates from the Greek term *krisis*, which generally refers to a choice, a decision, and a struggle carried on under the pressure of time. Furthermore, it may be understood as a watershed, a turning point. This paper will discuss the crisis of Christianity accordingly: as a turning point in its history but also as a moment of its collapse.

Leszek Kołakowski, a Polish historian of ideas and philosopher of religion, emphasises that for Christianity, crisis is a permanent and — actually — indispensable method of existence. The crisis in question involves the difficulty in meeting the requirements of the Christian religion. Kołakowski seems to discern two main requirements. The first one challenges human nature by seeking to relinquish hate. For therein lies the power of Christianity: in its ability to provide man's consciousness with barriers against hate. The second requirement involves a self-revelation of one's own evil, since moral evil, universally present in humans, is the fundamental challenge taken on by Christianity [Kołakowski, 1984: 162–164]. In this framework, men themselves would be the source of crisis, as they are incapable of dealing with the phenomenon of evil on their own and, thus, of contributing to any real change in the world.

It seems that Christians themselves were, and still are, aware of the permanence of the crisis afflicting their religion. For instance, this awareness has translated into an incessant call for conversion or redemption (*metanoi*) of which they are both the target and the source. Furthermore, the community of the faithful describes itself as always undergoing the process of change — *ecclesia semper reformanda*.

The modern crisis of Christianity is discussed in a slightly different context by George Weigel, an American Catholic writer, theologian and socio-political activist, who perceives this crisis in the individual and institutional dimensions. Firstly, the crisis afflicts many people who have stopped believing in the truth of the Gospel and fail to find joy in experiencing God [Weigel, 2014: 83]. According to Weigel, the fundamental crisis of personal faith is

the crisis of being a disciple, since any man who has experienced the presence of God ought to live as His disciple. Secondly, the Church also suffers a crisis as an institution plagued with excessive bureaucracy, which results in the following phenomena: an increase in financial outlays on administration, delays in decision-making, an inordinate number of useless meetings, undermining authority and questioning decisions. However, in the light of the existing crisis, Weigel does not lose hope. This is because the crisis may be perceived as a time of new opportunities [Weigel, 2004: 11–12]. Hence, it could be a watershed and a new chance for religion.

A Polish philosopher of religion, Ireneusz Ziemiński, presents yet another vision of the crisis, positing that we can see its real symptoms. Ziemiński believes that, on one hand, the crisis of Christianity ensues from the very content of the revelation (doctrine) and, on the other, it relates to the existence of the Church as an institution. The main doctrinal issue is the disconnect between the doctrine and our demotic moral intuitions (such as the eternal damnation of some people by the merciful God, the problematic nature of the hidden God, the issue of men being instrumentally used by God, salvation through the offering of own son, the question about the sense of suffering). Thus, the crisis touches upon the very essence of the Christian religion [Ziemiński, 2014: 128–135].

Another form of crisis is related to the Christian vision of the cosmos. God was earlier understood as being in space. He was an ordering power, which gave meaning to things. As a result, they gradually began to supplant God, and his place was taken by an autonomous human being. The concept of world order deprived of the divine element is more popular in our time. The concept of the cosmos was associated with some order of reality, which gives man a sense and a specific form of life. In the center of the cosmos stood God, from whom beings came. As a result of the materialist worldview of the scientific revolution, there was a departure from the concept of the cosmos in favor of the concept of the universe. It has its own order expressed in the laws of nature. The universe is subject to the process of evolution. The emergence of the concept of the universe has led to new forms of negation of transcendence. The idea of the universe has also led to a new concept of reality as a mechanism and a new idea of man as a rational being [Taylor, 2007: 60–61]. However, there can still be non-mechanistic but theistic concepts of cosmology [Kotowicz, 2013: 55–68].

The crisis of Christianity could also mean that over the centuries, the religion has turned into a collection of purely theoretical truths. As a result, spiritual experiences which cannot not be addressed within the framework of religion have not been sufficiently taken into consideration. Thus, the responsibility for the crisis would fall chiefly on Christianity itself [Jarocki, 2016: 115]. It is worth noting in passing that religious truth has not so much theoretical and noetic nature, but rather practical and existential [Jasiński, 2015: 23–26].

However, sociologist of religion Janusz Mariański believes that we are not facing a total crisis and the eclipse of religion as a relationship between man and the Absolute, but only a crisis of institutional religiosity. This is because of the increasingly marked presence of different types of religiosity and spirituality unrelated to the Church [Mariański, 2013: 93]. In this understanding, the crisis would primarily involve the excessive institutionalisation of the Christian religion, because of which man fails to perceive the community of faith and the opportunity to satisfy one's spiritual needs, seeing nothing but the ossified structure with its rigid and often incomprehensible rules.

Furthermore, it should be noted that there is a single Christianity as a community of faith and there are various Christianisms as forms of civilisations, regimes and structures bearing the mark of Christianity [Maritain, 1960: 99]. The Canadian philosopher Charles

Taylor speaks of two types of Christian religion. One of them is expressed in the religious faith that shapes the life of man and the community (Christianity). The second one is based on binding faith with cultural and social-political institutions and with the constitution of a specific social ethic within them (Christendom). According to the Canadian philosopher, man is now facing the challenge of distinguishing what is an element of living faith and what is associated with sometimes deadly religious institutions. Only the second type of Christian religion is subject to gradual withering, resulting in a more pure Christianity. Although the Christendom project is inspired by the incarnation logic (the embodiment of faith in life), its implementation in history turns out to be doomed to failure in connection with the occurrence of certain human attitudes (including coercion, conformism, narrowly understood interest). The existence of this project was dangerous because it led to a crisis of faith. Christendom's death is a humiliating but also a liberating experience. It turns out that the disappearance of certain forms of religion can be even providential, because it leads to its purification [Taylor, 1999: 16–19]. The current departure from certain socio-religious institutions (Christendom) and the return to a living Christian faith (Christianity) is, according to some people, a good opportunity for greater openness, broadening the spectrum of faith and dialogue with other religions, and to release it from various narrow ways [Connolly, 2004: 172; O'Shea, 2010: 190].

In this context, Italian philosopher Vittorio Possenti emphasises that Christianity is a social form emerging at the crossing of faith and culture. However, according to Possenti, Christianity is not equated with any of the plethora of Christianisms, which have developed over the centuries. Christianity is a religion of the Incarnation, or embodiment. Therefore, every Christianity is a manifestation of the incarnational character of Christianity, of the primacy of the historical and the conditional over that which is universal and unconditional [Possenti, 2005: 288–291]. Perhaps it is not Christianity in itself that suffers a crisis but the current form of its historical and cultural embodiment?

There is yet another issue to be raised. The fact that in the circle of the Euro-Atlantic culture, Christianity has lost many of its adherents, receded from the cultural sphere and stopped being a source of an attractive lifestyle, does not imply that all of Christianity is going through a crisis. Limiting oneself solely to the Euro-Atlantic perspective is out of the question. In addition, the belief that Christianity is suffering a crisis turns out to be erroneous in the light of empirical data, which reveal that Christianity is gaining adherents in various parts of the globe and remains the largest religious group in the world [Pijas, 2016: 69–92].

Possenti believes that Christianity is far from attenuation and may still present a source of invigorating power. It remains at its inception, in the phase of dawn, not twilight. However, it should propose a tangible project of religious and social renewal, since the vitality of Christianity is owed to the multiplicity of its possible interpretations rather than — as some would say — the literally preached doctrine [Possenti, 2005: 27]. Those interpretations aim to adapt the religion to the given spiritual and moral stage in the development of humanity. In this regard, it seems that Christianity still has much to offer, as corroborated by the emergence of a wide array of movements and communities drawing upon the religion of the first Christians or espousing the ideals of poverty, chastity and loving thy neighbour [Jarocki, 2016: 118].

Christianity of the Future

While discussing the future of Christianity, one should be aware of the differences in the position occupied by this religion in America and in Europe. In America, Christianity

is controversial but not rejected. In Europe, its status has become unclear with the decline of, among other things, the confidence in the Christian character of the roots of European history and civilisation [Possenti, 2005: 299]. Therefore, it seems that the future of this religion on both continents will be different.

Let us look closely at some future challenges for Christianity, which should be considered not only by the faithful but also by religious leaders of various denominations. Some of those challenges are more social, while others are strictly religious in character.

Ziemiński paints an interesting picture of the presence and the role of Christianity in social life. On one hand, he predicts that the Christian religion may decline, since no socio-cultural system lasts forever. On the other, he emphasises the possibility of religious renewal or return to the sources. Yet, in his opinion, attempts at renewal often end up in the founding of a new religion, which comes to be regarded as heresy by the source religion. Therefore, Christianity will disappear or give rise to a new religion. According to Ziemiński, the latter scenario seems more likely. In this case, the emerging religion could take the form of pantheism or a religion of the immanent Logos, which would be in a way consistent with the Christian belief in the immanence of God in the world [Ziemiński, 2014: 136–137]. It seems, therefore, that the Christian vision of the cosmos will be changed. It will be more emphasized the immanence than the transcendence of God. In cosmology, pantheism will be appreciated, and the experience of the divine being will be identified with the survival of the inherent depth of reality.

In the eyes of Zieliński, it is also probable that Christianity will continue to exist in a changed form — for instance, an ideologised form. Such a situation is exemplified by various currents of non-denominational or ritual (magical) Christianity where rituals are not a manner of worshipping God but serve other functions, like integration [Ziemiński, 2016: 157.179]. Another possibility is the transformation of religion into morality. It would result from the collapse of the faith in saving truths or from the lack of language wherein they could be expressed [Ziemiński, 2014: 127–128]. At this point, it should be noted that morality is an important part of religion, which should translate into a certain personal and social lifestyle [Sharpe, 1983: 95]. Yet, religion cannot be reduced to morality. This is because religious activity does not stop at formulating and abiding by moral principles but, above all, must have a reference to the Absolute, which is expressed through devotion and spiritual experience.

The Christianity of the future should also consider to a fuller extent some important elements of the democratic tradition. In the modern world, dominated by the idea of all people being equal, having the right to act and express their opinions freely, it is difficult to accept the claim of the uniqueness or the infallibility of judgment made by different churches or denominations. In the eyes of many, an institution claiming to be in possession of the truth is incapable of conducting authentic dialogue instead of maintaining the missionary attitude. In addition, the claim of being in possession of the truth may be legitimised only by the Church itself, which judges other institutions but is never judged by anyone. A democratic society cannot acknowledge this inequality for fear of questioning its own foundations. The idea of absolute and divine power also seems hard to accept since modern understanding of power remains at variance with the rules governing the Christian religion. Furthermore, there seems to be a tension between the concept of hierarchical Church as an institution founded by God and the idea of equality preached by early Christianity [Ziemiński, 2014: 116–129]. Thus, Christianity will be marginalised unless it shows respect for the principles of democracy. This may require considering to a greater extent the voice of the faithful in

decision-making, as well as allowing the faithful to exercise authority in those sectors of religions which necessitate specific professional skills (e.g. in economics, economy).

Meanwhile, in the strictly religious dimension, it should be emphasised that Christianity will face two major challenges: concern for the true image of God and fulfilment of spiritual needs of men by providing them with a profound religious experience.

It is especially Ziemiński who underscores that, first and foremost, the current image of God has to be cleared of any mythological, magical or idolatrous components. Note that because of the epistemological transcendence of God, all His images are limited and anthropocentric. Accordingly, any absolutisation would be a form of idolatry. Christianity of the future may exploit a fine opportunity for becoming a force, which opposes idolatry. Ziemiński posits that it might even involve the disappearance of the notion of God from culture [Ziemiński, 2014: 137–138]. However, that seems implausible. God will be necessary to explain the nature of the world and man. In this regard, science produces incomplete results. Conversely, the characteristics of God include full knowledge of the nature of the world and man, which is why the notion of such a God will be sustained in culture.

However, since it is the fundamental challenge of Christianity to offer men a tangible spiritual experience to animate their existence, the cardinal function served by the spiritual is inspiration [Possenti, 2005: 277].

Incidentally, let us mention that there are two possible approaches to religion. The former is theoretical, regarding religion as a set of judgments, which form a coherent system of power and whose truthfulness or falseness may be objectively determined. In this framework, religion resembles a scientific theory. The other approach is more practical, as it identifies the source of religion in the personal religious experience of an individual. Both approaches are rather complementary than mutually exclusive. However, it must be sadly concluded that traditional Christianity has favoured the former. In its core, Christianity has become a religious theory and resembles science with its postulates, proofs and arguments. However, it does not seem to stand a chance in this competition because science is characteristic in its practical momentousness, whereas Christianity appears to be the opposite of practicality, in some cases even a negation of life, a refutation of tangible benefits. All attempts at expressing religious truths are regarded as pointless and devoid of any important practical value. Furthermore, without any accompanying spiritual experience, the theory remains internally void. It serves men no momentous role. Therefore, religiousness based solely upon knowledge of the truths of the faith and upon their intellectual acceptance could hardly be called true faith. Above all else, religion rests on the spiritual experience, which involves an ability to understand the world and one's own life in a deeper, broader manner, also activating emotional factors. In a narrower sense, the experience involves sensing the divine presence or the supernatural character of events. Furthermore, it is an opportunity to express one's life stances, worries and fears. Therefore, within the religious life of man, this experience — free from crisis or decline — should be bolstered, as confirmed by the popularity of modern religious movements. Only those religions and denominations face a loss of adherents, which limit themselves to mere theory and a system of rigid rules of conduct, which fails to offer any spiritual experience or enrichment [Jarocki, 2016: 119–121]. Therefore, bolstering spiritual experience, which leads to a transformation of human life, is an urgent task for Christianity.

Even more so, as people miss spirituality and are open to transcendence. They desire to experience an absolute mystery wherewith they could initiate an existential dialogue [Grün & Halík, 2017: 122–123]. Dialogue with this mystery can be conducted through

the world of things. The absolute mystery is the basis and depth of reality. This approach, however, requires a change of the existing, sometimes purely materialistic and mechanistic, cosmology.

In this context, religion is understood as a transcendental occurrence, which allows men to go beyond themselves and come closer to the mysterious (personal or impersonal). Thus, the essence of religion lies in experiencing the supernatural and thus satisfying the human need for transcendence [Mariański, 1993: 5–6]. Taylor emphasizes that religious phenomena play a different role in human life. In religion, the transcendent and immanent sphere is important. This division has its source in the thought of Plato, who distinguished the world of ideas and the world of shadows. Religion in this case would consist in recognizing a man's way of life beyond temporal existence. It would be a form of belief in something transcendent. It would also be associated with some ideas about human fulfillment that would occur in the form of theory, moral rules and customs. Taylor noted at the same time that this fulfillment of human life could be understood in various ways and take different forms. The philosopher especially draws attention to Christianity, in which the earthly character of the fulfillment of human existence is abandoned and its extraterrestrial dimension is emphasized [Taylor, 2007: 15–17]. Transcendence is needed especially for Taylor in building the concept of the fulfillment of human life. Without it, it will be only partial and incomplete. In the above concept, the evangelical notion of "eternal life" is helpful, thanks to which the fact that man's fulfillment does not have to be accomplished only by transgressing the limits of earthly life and world, can be experienced already in the present, but it extends beyond the boundary of death, too [Taylor, 1999: 109–110].

Therefore, Christianity should emphasise the role of religious experience. For religion is fundamentally concerned with the spirituality of man which manifests itself in practice. One could say that the essence of any religion resides in the spiritual experience [Jarocki, 2016: 122–123]. Christianity also regards the spiritual (mystical) experience as its important component, together with a personal relationship with God and the ability to drive man away from moral and non-moral evil in its various forms. It is thanks to this experience that Christianity can endow human life and activity with meaning [Pijas, 2016: 77–78].

According to theologian of spirituality Marek Chmielewski, spiritual experience has a unique character in Christianity as it involves entering into a saving relationship with a personal transcendent reality, an act that engages all dimensions of human personality. Because of the relationship, rather than gaining knowledge, people undergo a reorientation of their worldviews. This transformation, deeply inscribed in the personality of man, becomes an integral part of one's identity. The entire experience does not involve the creation of its object but rather establishing a manner of communication. It is characteristic in that the object is perceived as the Tri-Personal God. As emphasised by Chmielewski, it is not only an intellectual and cognitive experience, but also emotive and affective, since the relationship with God involves love and entrusting one's life rather than cognition and knowledge. This occurrence has both an individual and a collective dimension, which may be verified in the light of faith and enriched with group experience. Spiritual experience is brought into actuality not only by prayer, worship and mysticism, but also by contact with the material reality, bodily experience and commitment to transforming the world. According to Chmielewski, it should also be noted that spiritual experience is always indirect, involving the intermediation of signs and symbols [Chmielewski, 2002: 217–219].

The indirect character of a religious experience is emphasised also by Piotr Moskal, a philosopher of religion. In his opinion, the spiritual experience comprises human acts

oriented at God, stances, forms of consciousness and experiences of the subject. In this framework, God is given as the substance of consciousness or the correlate of intentional acts of men. However, the object of the experience is not God Himself but rather: subjective states of consciousness, organic and affective states, extraordinary cosmological and anthropological states, forms of cognition (through the senses, the imagination, and the intellect), non-transparent signs (books, rites) and religious acts of man. Furthermore, according to Moskal, God has different substance in different cultures. Therefore, the substance of consciousness is also varied among religious men: for instance, the religious experience of men with pantheist beliefs is the experience of being one with the existential universe or of dissolving into the Absolute [Moskal, 2002: 35–36].

Contrastingly, Ziemiński believes bolstering the religious experience to be insufficient without taking into consideration *credo* as well. Any authentic religious experience must refer to an object and have some tangible content. Therefore, the question of the object and the content of the experience is of the essence. This is because such experiences may exist even upon the decline of religion. Furthermore, they may occur in various manners, not necessarily within the framework of Christianity [Ziemiński, 2016: 173].

Considering the wealth of religious experience, it should be emphasised that they are an important dimension of religious life, which allow men not only to satisfy their mental needs but also to experience the transcendent reality. In addition, there is one more reason that attests to their significance. Through religious experience, one's entire personality may be brought into actuality by developing one's intellect, will, emotions and body.

Religious experience plays an important role in the so-called “Evangelical” Catholicism. It is a concept created by Weigel, who postulates to perceive the Church not as an institution but as a dynamic Evangelical movement, whose fundamental mission involves the communication of the saving truth. In this understanding, the Church is primarily a community of man with God and with others [Weigel, 2003: 52–53]. Therefore, Christianity requires a renewal, which should be conducted by evoking the fundamental form left by Jesus. Hence, the true reform would be a ‘Re-Formation’ allowing men to get closer to the faith. However, the foundation of the Evangelical Catholicism is a certain type of experience, which involves a deep immersion in the mysteries through the sacraments and results in the constant formation of human life. At another point, Weigel observes that Evangelical Catholicism should rest on the belief that Christianity is the revealed reality, a gift from God offered to men so they could enter the path to salvation by an act of faith [Weigel, 2014: 78–80].

The reform of Christianity in the direction of the Evangelical Catholicism is necessary or even indispensable because, in Weigel's opinion, Christianity is more than a religion and a spirituality since both of them focus on man's search for God. Furthermore, they are characteristic in their anthropocentrism and subjectivity, for they give the centre stage to the activity of man. Contrarily, Christianity rests on God's search for man. Thus, it is chiefly God who initiates activity and attempts to reach man, by a variety of means, to invite him to experience His presence and to enter a dialogue [Weigel, 2003: 44–45; Weigel, 2014: 49–51].

Possenti points to contemplation as a unique form of experience, asserting emphatically that Christianity of the future should adopt the form of sanctity, which rests primarily on the combination of contemplation and action. It is the contemplation, which orients men towards God and the word but at the same time, frees them from the worldly mentality. Simultaneously, it makes Christianity more Evangelical, oriented at the person, being an

extension of the love of God; adopting the form of the Church yet far from the American denominationalism, which is marked by individualism. To a limited degree, Christianity should possess institutions, although its institutions must be lightly structured in order not to cloud the image of the Gospel and its message. In general, the existence of Church institutions is legitimate only as far as they provide something original, lacking in the framework of secular institutions. The spiritual climate of Christianity is created by reading the Bible in an ecclesial community and in the context of non-Christian cultures. Christianity should be open to the faithful and non-believers, initiating a dialogue between both groups. Furthermore, it must protect religious freedom, letting both the faithful and the non-believers to remain themselves and maintain plurality both in the cultural (Evangelisation of cultures) and social (multiplicity of groups and communities) dimensions. Meanwhile, Christianity must still rest on the foundation of contemplation, which will allow it to preserve its identity and succeed in all its aforementioned tasks. [Possenti, 2005: 295–297]. Establishing an aforementioned denomination is dangerous because it causes that religion loses its function of integration but also it leads to the separation of religion and the state [Gavril, 2006: 23]. The creation of denominations is also an expression of secularization [Dobbelaere, 2008: 154-155].

Conclusions

The analyses presented above, generally philosophical in character, aim to point to some dimensions of the crisis, which currently afflicts Christianity, and outline a vision of Christianity and universe of the future. The analyses have a reference point in the following thesis: if we are to overcome the crisis of Christianity and ensure its further development, we need to return to the original meaning of this religion as a style of spiritual life, underscoring the element of spiritual experience. It should become the foundation and the reference point for other types of religious activity.

It seems that the current crisis does not necessarily have to be regarded as the collapse of Christianity but rather as a turning point in its history and history of the universe. The observable decline of religious faith and practices, failure to meet relevant intellectual and moral standards, failure to address spiritual needs of man, and excessive institutionalisation of religion make people leave their traditional Christian communities. Many of them look independently for a form of spirituality to satisfy their needs. Some join other religious groups. However, perhaps it is not Christianity in itself that suffers a crisis but rather its' culturally and historically conditioned form: ossified, intellectualised and bureaucratized to an inordinate degree.

The thesis on the decline of the Christian religion seems exaggerated. Christianity is more likely to survive, though it will surely undergo a far-reaching metamorphosis. Furthermore, it will probably need to consider new social and cultural realities. Traditional and folk forms of religion with their associated rituals are no longer capable of tackling the challenges of contemporary times and do not fit the current mentality of man. Traditional and religious vision of the world is very difficult to reconcile with modern scientific cosmology. Nowadays, instead of religion, it is the spirituality of man that is gaining increasing attention. This notion comprises all kinds of spiritual explorations related to the need for solving existential dilemmas, experiencing a supernatural reality, and expressing one's own feelings. They translate into a new approach and understanding of the cosmos, with which man wants to unite and in which he wants to experience his supernatural, spiritual depth. There is therefore a chance for a new type of Christian cosmology to emerge.

Therefore, the path to Christian renewal requires bolstering the profound spiritual experience which is the foundation and the essence of any religion. Christianity may survive only if it provides people with a sense of company in their spiritual explorations, a sense of direction, fulfilling their own personality in all its wealth (of the intellect, will, emotions, and body) and a true transformation of their existence. In this regard, Christianity shows potential because — as demonstrated by its history — it may be a path leading to a profound spiritual life. This life is a result of an indirect relationship with the living God in the immanence of the human existence and in the immanence of the cosmos.

References

- Chmielewski, Marek. *Spiritual Experience*, in: *idem (ed.), Lexicon of Catholic Spirituality*. Lublin–Kraków, 2002: 217–222.
- Connolly, William Eugene. Catholicism and Philosophy. A Nontheistic Appreciation, in: Ruth Abbey (ed.), Charles Taylor. *Contemporary Philosophy in Focus*. New York, 2004: 166–186.
- Dobbelaere, Karel. *Secularization. An Analysis at Three Levels*. Kraków, 2008.
- Gavril, Iuliana Elena. Religious Criticism in Contemporary Philosophical Reflection: Charles Taylor, *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 4, 2006: 15–28.
- Grün Anselm, Halík Tomáš. *God Is Lost. Faith in the Embrace of Unbelief*. Kraków, 2017.
- Jarocki, Jacek. Crisis of Christianity in Context of Religious Experience. *Filo-Sofija*, 3(2), 2016: 115–127.
- Jasiński, Karol. Nature of Religious Truth. *Studia Warmińskie*, 52, 2015: 23–36.
- Kořakowski, Leszek. *Can the Devil be Saved and 27 Other Sermons*. London, 1984.
- Kotowicz, Wojciech. Theistic Interpretation of Selected Aspects of Cosmology. Józef Turek’s Portrayal of Science — Faith Relations. *Studia Warmińskie*, 50, 2013: 55–68.
- Mariański, Janusz. *Religion and the Church in a Pluralistic Society. Poland in the Nineties*. Lublin, 1993.
- Mariański, Janusz. *Secularization, De-secularization, New Spirituality. Sociological Study*. Kraków, 2013.
- Maritain, Jacques. *Integral Humanism: Temporal and Spiritual Problems of a New Christendom*. London, 1960.
- Moskal, Piotr. *Is There a God? Outline of God’s Philosophy*. Pelplin, 2002.
- O’Shea, Andrew. *Selfhood and Sacrifice. Rene’ Girard and Charles Taylor on the Crisis of Modernity*. New York — London, 2010.
- Pijas, Paweł. A Reductive Vision of Christianity and its Consequences. A Polemic with Ireneusz Ziemiński’s Article “Crisis of Christianity from Philosophy of Religion’s Perspective”. *Filo-Sofija*, 3(2), 2016: 69–92.
- Possenti, Vittorio. *Religion and Public Life. Christianity in the Post-modern Age*. Warszawa, 2005.
- Sharpe, Eric. *Understanding Religion*. New York, 1983.
- Taylor, Charles. A Catholic Modernity?, in: James Heft (ed.), A Catholic Modernity? *Charles Taylor’s Marianist Award Lecture*. New York — Oxford, 1999: 13–37.
- Taylor, Charles. Concluding Reflections and Comments, in: James Heft (ed.), A Catholic Modernity? *Charles Taylor’s Marianist Award Lecture*. New York — Oxford 1999: 105–125.
- Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age*. London, 2007.
- Weigel, George. *What is Catholicism? Ten Controversial Questions*. Kraków, 2003.

Weigel, George. *The Courage to Be a Catholic. Crisis, Reform and the Future of the Church*. Kraków, 2004.

Weigel, George. *Evangelical Catholicism. A Thorough Church Reform in the 21st Century*. Kraków, 2014.

Ziemiński, Ireneusz. *Crisis of Christianity from Philosophy of Religion's Perspective*. *Filo-Sofija*, 2, 2014: 109–138.

Ziemiński, Ireneusz. *On the Crisis of Christianity — a Response to the Debaters*. *Filo-Sofija*, 2, 2016: 153–181.