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UPBRINGING FOR FORGIVENESS FROM A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

ABSTRACT:

The analyses contained in the article refer to the tension that occurs between the biblical call to forgiveness, the purpose of which is to regulate interpersonal relationships marked by weakness and harm, and the peculiar drama of forgiveness or revenge that takes place inside a person experiencing harm and includes not only reason and will, but also intense, negative feelings. These concepts are taken from a pedagogical perspective to define guidelines for Christian education, including upbringing for forgiveness. The author is looking for answers to two questions: how can we understand the call to forgiveness written on the pages of the Bible? How can we educate so that the call to forgiveness in the context of strong faith and experience of serious harm does not cause ideological and moral crises? The analyses have been divided into three parts: the first presents the biblical call to forgiveness, the second attempts to look at forgiveness from the perspective of the parable of the prodigal son, and finally the third part contains conclusions referring to the practice of Christian education, among them the statement that, in the upbringing for forgiveness, as well as indicating the rationality of the act of forgiveness it is imperative to initiate transcendent relations of the pupil.

Key words: forgiveness; relationship with God; religious education; upbringing for forgiveness.

STRESZCZENIE:

Zawarte w artykule analizy odnoszą się do napięcia jakie występuje między biblijnym wezwaniem do przebaczenia, które ma regulować naznaczone słabością i krzywdą relacje międzyludzkie, a swoistym dramatem przebaczenia lub zemsty, który rozgrywa się we wnętrzu doświadczającego krzywdy człowieka i obejmuje nie tylko rozum i wolę, ale także intensywne, negatywne uczucia. Podejmowane są one z perspektywy pedagogicznej w celu określenia wytycznych dla edukacji chrześcijańskiej, obejmującej wychowanie do przebaczenia. Autor poszukuje odpowiedzi na dwa pytania: jak rozumieć zapisane na kartach Biblii wezwanie do przebaczenia? Jak wychowywać, aby wezwanie do przebaczenia w kontekście silnej wiary i doświadczenia poważnej krzywdy nie wywoływało kryzysów światopoglądowych i moralnych? Analizy zostały podzielone na trzy części, z których pierwsza prezentuje biblijne wezwanie do przebaczenia, w drugiej podjęto próbę spojrzenia na przebaczenie w perspektywie przypowieści o synu marnotrawnym. Część trzecia zawiera wnioski odnoszące się do praktyki edukacji chrześcijańskiej, a wśród nich stwierdzenie, że w wychowaniu do przebaczenia nie można jedynie wskazywać na racjonalność aktu przebaczenia, ale należy także inicjować relacje transcendentne wychowanka.

Słowa kluczowe: przebaczenie; relacja z Bogiem; edukacja religijna; wychowanie do przebaczenia.

One of the most difficult challenges that the human faces, regardless of the socio-cultural context in which he/she lives, is dealing with harm, which is an inevitable consequence of relationships with other people. By solving a problem that has not been caused by oneself, one may decide to take revenge on the offender, pretend that nothing has happened, or attempt to forgive. While individual cultures may value the above-mentioned solutions differently, Christianity strongly advocates forgiveness as a response to those who cause harm.

Although forgiveness is positively valued by Christianity, it is impossible to ignore the associated controversy. The recognition of the value of forgiveness is difficult to combine, especially with the most serious acts violating the wellbeing of the victim such as sexual abuse or the murder of a loved one. How can we forgive sexual harassment, rape or murder? This question gains special significance when it is asked by the victims of the indicated acts. At the same time, the call to forgiveness is inscribed in Christian moral doctrine. It is integral the extent that it is treated as a condition of being a Christian; consequently, in persons who are unable to forgive harm, the call to forgiveness may cause a moral and worldview conflict where one pole is precisely the inability to forgive the injured person, and the other pole is a feeling of rejection by God whose requirements they cannot meet. This situation is described by, among others, Anselm Grün reporting on therapeutic practice. A woman who experienced sexual harassment survived the crisis of harm thanks to her religion, yet simultaneously the inability to forgive the hurt led to another crisis manifested in a sense of rejection by God¹.

The problem outlined above implies two related questions. First, how can we understand the call to forgiveness written on the pages of the Bible? Second, how can we educate so that the call to forgiveness in the context of strong faith and experience of serious harm does not cause ideological and moral crises? The following analyses, divided into the three sections outlined above, are an attempt to find answers to these questions.

1. The biblical call to forgiveness and related controversies

On the pages of the Bible, the topic of forgiveness is addressed primarily in the context of the relationship between sinful man and God show-

¹ A. Grün, *Przebacz samemu sobie. Pojednanie – przebaczenie*, Kraków 2001.

ing his holiness through mercy². Its beginnings, therefore, date back to the first pages of the book of Genesis and the story of the first people's sin who experience God's concern despite being driven out of paradise. As stated in Genesis, 'God made tunics of skins for the man and his wife and clothed them' (Gen 3:21). Cain is treated similarly. On the one hand, he must experience the consequences of evil, but the punishment does not have the nature of revenge. This is reflected in the words: "whoever kills Cain will suffer a sevenfold vengeance." So Yahweh put a mark on Cain, so that no one coming across him would kill him' (Gen 4:15). God was therefore seen by the Israelites not only as one who does not ignore evil and responds to it through punishment, but also as someone who reveals mercy in the face of human sin. At the crucial moment of constituting the Chosen People when God hands over the commandments, God introduces himself to Moses: 'Yahweh, Yahweh, God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in faithful love and constancy, maintaining his faithful love to thousands, forgiving fault, crime and sin, yet letting nothing go unchecked, and punishing the parent's fault in the children and in the grandchildren to the third and fourth generation!' (Ex 34:6–7). These words – written on the pages of the Pentateuch – are undoubtedly a testimony of how God has been appearing to the Israelites³. In the context of such an interpretation of God's relationship with man, the words contained in one of the most beautiful psalms, in the text entitled "A Prayer for Forgiveness", are not surprising: 'Have mercy on me, O God, in your faithful love, in your great tenderness wipe away my offences' (Ps 51:1). The text attributed to King David after his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah is to some extent indicative of every man's relationship with God because over the course of a lifetime every man harms another man. Furthermore, in the New Testament, God is shown to be forgiving – emphatic examples of which are the stories of the sinner (Lk 7:36–50)

² S. Jankowski, *Przebaczenie w Biblii*, "Paedagogia Christiana", no. 1/37 (2016), pp. 29–41.

³ J. Giblet, M.F. Lacan, *Przebaczenie*. In: *Słownik teologii biblijnej*, ed. X. Leon-Dufour, Poznań 1990, p. 800.

containing the words ‘Your sins are forgiven’ (Lk 7:48) or those of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11–32).

Because a person experiences forgiveness for the evil that he or she has done, they are also obliged to forgive others. Within the Bible, even the connection between God’s grace granted to the sinner and the forgiveness he gives to another man can be noted. The words known from the prayer of “Our Father” – ‘forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us’ – have their equivalents in the Old Testament, in the Book of Sirach: ‘Pardon your neighbour any wrongs done to you, and when you pray, your sins will be forgiven. If anyone nurses anger against another, can one then demand compassion from the Lord?’ (Ecc 28:2–3). Experiencing God’s forgiveness conditioned with forgiveness given to another man was taken seriously in both Judaism and Christianity. The importance of the call to forgiveness in Judaism is demonstrated by the ritual of Yom Kippur, in which liturgical activities were combined with specific obligations towards one’s neighbour. Appeasement of a victim or accepting an apology from an offender was desirable to receive forgiveness from God for oneself⁴. In turn, the words of “Our Father” mentioned before or passages from the Gospel of Matthew reflect how it was perceived among Christians: ‘So then, if you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering’ (Mt 5:23–24).

It is worth noting that the term ‘forgiveness’ has two ranges of meaning. The first relates to financial matters, specifically to the cancellation of the debtor’s payment obligations to the creditor. The second concerns the restoration of interpersonal relations which have been broken because of some evil act⁵. The former is exemplified by the parable of the unforgiving servant (Mt 18:21–35). The justification for forgive-

⁴ K. Pilarczyk, *Przebaczenie w judaizmie. W perspektywie rytuału święta Jom Kippur*, “Paedagogia Christiana”, no. 1/37 (2016), pp. 43–65.

⁵ J.P. Louw, *Przebaczenie*. In: *Słownik wiedzy biblijnej*, eds. B.M. Metzger, M.D. Coogan, Warszawa 1997, p. 632; J. Kręcidło, *Jakiego przebaczenia uczy nas Jezus?* “Ateneum Kapłańskie”, no. 1 (2011), pp. 25–34.

ness in this case is forgiveness that you have experienced yourself. The second type of forgiveness can be found in the story of Joseph, who is sold by his own brothers to Egypt (Gen 37:28). Joseph – despite having experienced evil – wants to rebuild his relationships with his brothers (Gen 45:1–15; 50:15–19).

In the New Testament, the call to forgiveness takes the form of a specific norm, the implementation of which becomes one of the conditions for being a Christian. In addition, this norm is included in the content of the prayer most often repeated by Christians: ‘And forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven those who are in debt to us’ (Mt 6:12). Following the words of this prayer, the Gospel of Matthew includes an explanation: ‘if you forgive others their failings, your heavenly Father will forgive you yours; but if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive your failings either’ (Mt 6:14–15). These words are extremely suggestive. The story of the unforgiving servant ends with a similarly strong conclusion: ‘And that is how my heavenly Father will deal with you unless you each forgive your brother from your heart’ (Mt 18:35). We can also find an inverted and slightly milder-sounding formula in the Letter to the Ephesians, where St. Paul the Apostle encourages forgiveness for the sake of forgiveness that man received earlier: ‘Be generous to one another, sympathetic, forgiving each other as readily as God forgave you in Christ’ (Eph 4:32).

When reading the Bible’s message about forgiveness, it should also be noted that – according to the words of the Gospel of Matthew – forgiveness has no limits, meaning it should always be given. This is because Jesus, asked by Peter ‘Lord, how often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times?’, responds ‘Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times’ (Mt 18:21–22).

Reflecting on the Bible’s call may lead to the conclusion that the requirement placed on Christians is difficult or even impossible to fulfil, especially when considering the nature of harm and forgiveness. On the one hand, forgiveness becomes a norm for regulating interpersonal relationships, and on the other, the entire drama of harm and, consequently, revenge or forgiveness takes place inside a person, embracing not only his or her mind and will but also the psyche. Moreover, forgiveness itself is also defined as overcoming emotions arising as a re-

sult of the harm suffered. It is worth referring to the words of Jeffrie G. Murphy building on the ideas of the 18th century Anglican bishop Joseph Butler: ‘What is this inner state or change of heart that is the essence of forgiveness? It is not itself an emotion or passion but is rather, according to Butler, the overcoming or limiting of certain passions, namely, the vindictive passions that are naturally aroused when we are wronged by others. These vindictive passions – anger, the desire to strike back, the desire to see the wrongdoer punished, sometimes even hatred – are called by Peter Strawson “reactive attitudes”, and he with Butler sees them as natural responses to being wronged. Butler uses the term *resentment* to refer to these vindictive passions’⁶. If forgiveness is seen as overcoming feelings, even the best intentions may not be sufficient to deal with negative feelings and consequently forgiveness itself may become impossible.

It is even more difficult if it is perceived by the individual as unfair; when the words written in the New Testament are read in a situation where the harm suffered by a particular person is less than the harm being done by that person, it is easy to accept them. Meanwhile, even if there is no one who has never hurt another person, there is no denying that the harm suffered by many people is much more significant than that which they have done to others. It can therefore be said that Jesus set the highest demands on those who were seriously hurt; while the awareness of the evil they have inflicted can help the hurting person to approach the perpetrator with forgiveness, a badly hurt individual who tries to live well must face the call to forgive harms that are more serious than those they have caused themselves due to the threat of rejection by God.

As a further point, it is worth paying attention to the conditions of forgiveness. Jesus’ forgiveness appears to be unconditional, as evidenced by his dealings with the harlot (Lk 7:36–40)⁷ or the words spoken on the cross to one of the thieves hanging nearby: ‘In truth I tell

⁶ J.G. Murphy, *Forgiveness, self-respect, and the value of resentment*. In: *Handbook of forgiveness*, ed. E.L. Worthington, Jr., New York, Hove 2005, p. 34.

⁷ C.M. Martini, *Głosic Jezusa. Medytacje nad Ewangelią św. Łukasza*, Kraków 1999, pp. 53–54.

you, today you will be with me in paradise' (Lk 23:43). Does this mean that the Christian has to attempt unconditional forgiveness without waiting for the one who has hurt them to correct it?

The controversies outlined here imply further dilemmas of a pedagogical nature which are especially important for Christian upbringing⁸. How can a call to forgiveness be integrated in educational processes? Whether and how should we talk about it to an adolescent? In a situation where a particular child experiences harm and the inability to forgive it, will the call to forgiveness not put a maturing person in a dilemma that they will not be able to solve and that they will not be able to deal with emotionally? Finally, should we convince an adolescent to grant unconditional forgiveness? Writing about upbringing for forgiveness in the pages of the *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Patricia White proposes education for such forgiveness, expressed in a short "No problem!" or "We all make mistakes!". One of the arguments she uses is Jesus' behaviour towards the harlot or the father towards the prodigal son⁹. Doesn't suggesting unconditional forgiveness lead to allowing the wrongdoer to evil and strengthening the victim's attitude in the person harmed¹⁰?

Before dealing with the questions formulated above, let's try to look at forgiveness from a slightly different perspective determined by the story of the prodigal son.

2. Forgiveness as a consequence of looking at the perpetrator of evil through God's eyes

The story of the prodigal son is probably the best-known tale of forgiveness in the Bible. The image of a father going out to meet his son and

⁸ K. Olbrycht, *Wychowanie do przebaczenia*, "Paedagogia Christiana", no. 2/38 (2016), pp. 45–60.

⁹ P. White, *What Should We Teach Children about Forgiveness?* "Journal of Philosophy of education", no. 1 (2002), pp. 57–67.

¹⁰ J. Murphy, *Forgiveness and mercy*. In: *Routledge encyclopaedia of philosophy*, vol. 3, ed. E. Craig, London–New York 1998, p. 698; C.L. Griswold, *Forgiveness. A philosophical exploration*, New York 2014.

forgiving him probably evokes positive feelings because it stimulates the hope of repairing broken yet important relationships that occur in the life of every person.

In the story of the prodigal son, the father's meeting with his son draws so much attention that the third hero of the parable – the elder son – is less often pointed out. He was also hurt by his brother. The prodigal son not only leaves his father, but also breaks off the relationship with his elder brother. The younger son has squandered his father's fortune and the older one has to support his father in recreating what was taken by the younger. In addition, after returning home the younger brother receives a robe, ring and shoes from his father (Lk 15:22), which means that he once again becomes the heir to the estate (of which he has already wasted half). Reading the parable of the prodigal son, it is impossible not to express sympathy for the elder son, who after returning from the field does not want to enter the house where the feast takes place in honour of the prodigal son returning home. Even if the elder son is not a perfect man – he accuses his brother of 'swallowing up his property on loose women' (Lk 15:30), which is not mentioned in any other passage – in an objective sense the harm caused by the slander he commits is small compared with what the younger son did to his father and brother. Why, then, would an elder brother 'overcome his hurt feelings', meaning forgive?

Forgiveness defined as overcoming negative emotions, gives, in the author's opinion, no grounds for answering this question. However, forgiveness can also be seen as a decision and this, in turn, cannot be reduced to feelings. Each decision is the result of a dialogue conducted between reason and will¹¹. The key role in this case is the role played by will. It is the will, through the desire for good, that moves the mind to seek solutions that can bring a given person closer to that good. In this understanding of forgiveness, rather than a reference to the past it

¹¹ J. Horowski, *What conditions education for forgiveness in terms of the neo-Thomistic philosophy of education*, "Journal of Religious Education", no. 66 (2018), pp. 23–36.

demonstrates a brave and hopeful¹² step towards the future and a pursuit of good that can be achieved in the future. Such courage is shown by the father who has a son who finally appreciates the value of staying in his father's house. The younger son, before he physically left his father's house, was mentally no longer inside. Now – after the humiliation experienced outside his father's house – he once again becomes a man who wants to stay in this house. The father does not return to the past, which cannot be changed and remains “fixed”. The father notices that the son's experiences have changed him and it is now possible for them to build a mature relationship. Therefore, he makes a bold decision to forgive in order to build this relationship.

The elder son faces a similar decision. The difference is that the father acts for the sake of his younger son, while the decision of the elder son – if he decides to forgive – should be motivated by the good of the father. The biblical story shows that the father did not dwell on the evil caused by his younger son, but simply missed him. Certainly – under normal circumstances – this longing would be noticeable to the son who remains at home with his father. The elder son faces a dilemma as to whether to make a decision as a result of which both sons will stay in the father's house or to prevent such a future, forcing the father to choose between him and the younger son. The key to resolving this dilemma is love for the father and the desire for his good. We can risk the conclusion that if the love for the father, recognition of his worries and his desire for happiness are dominating the elder son's decision making, he will tend to forgive his brother. In turn, forcing a father to make a choice between his sons would be indicative of a lack of love for his father and a lack of understanding of what is important to him, i.e. the desire to be with his two sons every day.

A scheme in which the decision to forgive is made for the sake of a third party's love is recorded in the Book of Genesis in a narration about the story of Joseph and his brothers. When the author describes the arrival of Joseph's elder brothers in Egypt for grain, he does not

¹² H.Ch. Giannini, *Hope as grounds for forgiveness. A Christian argument for universal, unconditional forgiveness*, “Journal of Religious Ethics”, no. 1 (2017), pp. 58–82.

mention any positive feelings experienced by Joseph. Joseph is deeply moved by the arrival of his younger brother Benjamin, who had nothing to do with selling him to Egypt (Gen 42–43). It is because of the younger brother and father that Joseph forgives his brothers. When the father dies, however, the brothers fear revenge and again ask Joseph for forgiveness, citing his father (Gen 50:14–18). Joseph confirms his decision to forgive, referring not only to his father’s love but also to God, whose role he has clearly seen throughout the story.

The story about the father and his two sons, recorded in the Gospel of Luke, also draws depicts the relationship between God and people which is present in Christianity, including the relationship of forgiveness. In this model, God, as a loving father, is willing to forgive if he sees a chance to establish a more mature relationship with a given person compared to the one in place before evil was committed. One could even say that forgiveness is not a problem that God is struggling with. The other person is the one who has a real problem with forgiveness, and the key to solving this problem is not the relationship with the man who suffered harm but the relationship with God. The closer the victim is to God, the more he or she is able to look at another person from God’s perspective. In contrast, the further the victim is from God, the more his or her own perspective, i.e. the perspective of injustice and unforgivable harm, dominates in his or her assessments.

Forgiveness for the sake of God obviously does not mean naïve, imprudent forgiveness – it does not mean saying “No problem!” and thus accepting that the one who has already done harm may do the same once again¹³. Patricia White misses the truth in her reflection in the sense that she does not see the conditions of forgiveness. Forgiveness is not about fixing the past; it is not connected with fulfilling by the perpetrator of evil conditions that could constitute a hidden ritual of revenge, and in this sense forgiveness is actually unconditional. At the same time, forgiveness, as a step into the future, has its conditions. The perpetrator of evil must be someone with whom this “joint” step into the future can be made. Therefore, the injured person needs to be sure

¹³ J. Horowski, *Education for forgiveness in the context of developing prudence*, “Ethics and Education”, no. 3 (2019), pp. 316–332.

that the other party has changed and has become a different person, has come to different decisions than those made in the past. In each of the biblical stories mentioned above, the perpetrator of evil gives a sign to the victim that he can now be relied on, that he notices the evil he has done, and that he has now matured sufficiently to make different decisions. This is demonstrated by the behaviour of Joseph's brothers through his tests, by the harlot who comes to Jesus with alabaster oil, by the prodigal son who returns to his father's house and asks to become a slave, and it can be read from the words of the thief hanging on a cross next to Jesus who asks Jesus to mention him in his kingdom. A "joint" step into the future can only be made with someone you can trust. David, who did not see the evil done to Uriah, was first brought by God to the point where he saw the evil of his own act and changed¹⁴. It was only as a consequence of this change that God gave David forgiveness. Although the forgiveness shown in the Bible is therefore unconditional in relation to the past, it is conditional on the future; it is a decision concerning a person who meets the conditions to make a "joint" step into the future.

This reflection on the story of the prodigal son's life, his merciful father and his older son, provides grounds to answer the questions posed throughout the course of the previous argument.

3. Upbringing for forgiveness as building relationships with God – Conclusion

These reflections on the descriptions of forgiveness within the Bible leads to conclusions that are important from the pedagogical perspective. First of all, it should be emphasised that the call to forgiveness is a call to make a decision which effectively exceeds human strength in the case of the most serious harms. It is related to overcoming intense negative emotions. In addition, from an intellectual perspective it is a decision perpetuating injustice, especially when the injured party is unable to repair the wrong done.

¹⁴ C.M. Martini, *Dawid. Grzesznik i człowiek wiary*, Kraków 1998, pp. 66–68.

Secondly, forgiveness is a decision by which the individual changes the present and builds the future. In other words, forgiveness cannot be viewed solely as a method of repairing things in the past that cannot be repaired; rather, it is a step into the future that can be better than the present created by the harm done in the past.

Third, an individual requires a strong motive to make such a decision. In the case of the characters from the parable of the prodigal son, these motives are not difficult to identify. A merciful father faces a chance to regain his son, and through the decision to forgive the elder brother can help the father to achieve happiness. In concrete cases, the decision to forgive is therefore taken for the sake of the self, for relatives with whom relations have been broken, or because of third parties who are loved by the forgiving individual and for whom the act of forgiveness enables the achievement of a good which would otherwise be unattainable. Such arguments for forgiveness could be sought in many harmful situations. Let us refer to the case of, unforgivable at first glance, the genocide that took place in Rwanda in 1994. Around a million people lost their lives as a result of Hutu extremists. Why would their families forgive their torturers? Although the past cannot be repaired and it should be remembered, when deciding about the attitude towards the torturers, about possible revenge or forgiveness, it is first and foremost to consider the wellbeing of children. They have not experienced the civil war, but they will certainly experience its consequences regardless of whether they are derived from revenge or forgiveness. Revenge or forgiveness is therefore not a solution to the problems originating from the past; instead, it is a step into the future in which the decision is made for the good of loved ones¹⁵.

Fourth, rather than adopting a norm, the requirement of forgiveness for Christians is conditioned by building a relationship with God, who in this case becomes the point of reference for the decision to for-

¹⁵ Similar motives are at the basis of other acts of forgiveness, see: H. J. Muszyński, *Przebaczenie i pojednanie między Polakami i Niemcami jako dar i zadanie. W 50 lat po wymianie listów biskupów polskich i niemieckich*, "Paedagogia Christiana", no. 1/37 (2016), pp. 139–162.

give¹⁶. In other words, to make a decision about forgiveness, internal and personal religiosity is indispensable, as well as religiosity from an internal relationship with God and built on the belief that human existence is directed towards a transcendent union with God. External and non-personal religiosity, maintained in order to meet such needs as a sense of security, closeness to others or social position, cannot be a sufficient motive for making a decision about forgiveness¹⁷. Only an internal, personal relationship with God conditions us for looking at others – including those who have done harm to an individual – as people loved by God and as people who are subjects of God’s concern¹⁸. The attempt to show Christian forgiveness as merely one element of the doctrine effectively amounts to reductionism. Our attitude to other people, including that which causes harm, is one of the dimensions of our relationship with God. Therefore, it cannot be interpreted in purely secular categories.

The interpretation indicated here is indirectly hidden in these attempts to explain Christian norms which on the one hand try to rationalise them, highlighting the value of solutions to moral dilemmas proposed by Christianity, and on the other hand do not indicate that decisions in accordance with these solutions are only possible under the influence of a relationship with God. The aforementioned Joseph Butler shows the value of forgiveness, for instance from the perspective of a forgiving individual, by indicating that the lack of forgiveness leads to the development of a hatred defect¹⁹. Others justify forgiveness for

¹⁶ The relationship between the tendency to forgive and the relationship with God is confirmed in empirical studies, see: D. Escher, *How does religion promote forgiveness? Linking beliefs, orientations, and practices*, “Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion”, no. 1 (2013), pp. 100–119.

¹⁷ J. Michalski, *Edukacja i religia jako źródła rozwoju egzystencjalno-kognitywnego*, Toruń 2004, pp. 118–120.

¹⁸ S. Chrost, *Człowiek podobny do Boga przez przebaczenie w nauczaniu św. Jana Chryzostoma*, “Paedagogia Christiana”, no. 1/37 (2016), pp. 233–248.

¹⁹ J. Butler, *Fifteen sermons preached at the Rolls Chapel*, Cambridge 1827, available at: <http://anglicanhistory.org/butler/rolls/index.html>

the good of the perpetrator, the victim, the communities to which they belong, or the wider community²⁰.

Fifth, religious education cannot be reduced to shaping the intellect and instead should also include the initiation processes that introduce religious experience and the experience of faith²¹. Limiting religious education to implementation in religious doctrine may result in a generation of a worldview and moral conflict based on the contradiction between the moral norms important for religious beliefs and decisions that can be taken by a particular individual. If the introduction to the doctrine is secondary to the initiation processes, i.e. secondary to the experience of God and attempting to look at the world – including those aspects perceived as a source of harm – through God’s eyes, it will condition a completely different perception of the norms which constitute Christian moral doctrine.

At this point, the conclusions of the analysis touch upon the topic of initiation into sacramental life, which cannot be reduced to a religious ritual, but – especially in Catholicism and Orthodoxy – is understood as a space for humanity to meet with God, experiencing his presence and love. Developing this thread means entering the field of theology and thus exceeds the scope of this text.

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²⁰ J. Murphy, J. Hampton, *Forgiveness and mercy*, Cambridge 1988, pp. 78–79, 86–87; S. Lal, *On radical forgiveness, duty, and justice*, “The Heythrop Journal”, vol. LVI (2015), pp. 677–684; Z. Szablowinski, *Between forgiveness and unforgiveness*, “The Heythrop Journal”, 2010 vol. LI, pp. 471–482.

²¹ J. Bagrowicz, *Towarzyszyć wzrastaniu. Z dyskusji o metodach i środkach edukacji religijnej młodzieży*, Toruń 2006.

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