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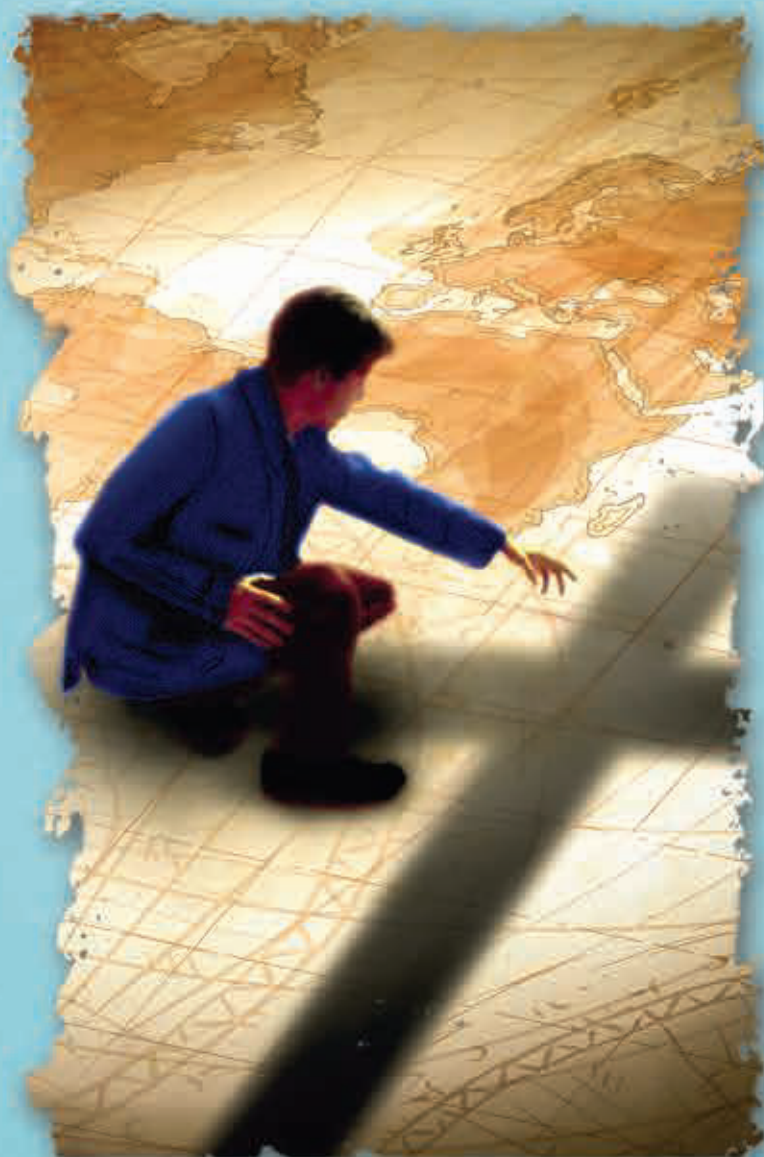
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**Thematic focus
of this issue:**

**SPECIFIC TOPICS IN
THE SOCIO-HEALTH
AND THEOLOGICAL
FIELD WITH THE
POSSIBILITY OF
CONNECTING THEM
TO DIALOGUE**



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TODAY'S INFLUENCE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL ON THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO DIALOGUE*



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Abstract

Background: Paul's writings as a source of teaching and means of raising good and faithful young people, despite their vastness and complexity, are useful in shaping young people's character and personality. Therefore, the basic knowledge of this apostle should be included in the family educational system and in the basic religious knowledge of the believer. Suitably, in the family education, this apostle can be made visible and worshipped for his liturgical feasts, or, for example, by various quotations from his letters, which may be present in the family home and thus offered for reflection and formation. His writings are cited in the documents of the Church, Popes, and in the theological books, articles, scripts, or other Christian-oriented literature. St. Paul's personality speaks to us in its depth also nowadays. His personality is exceptional, almost inimitable, but still very stimulating. The objective of the article is therefore to describe St. Paul as a possible example for contemporary educators and teachers. The article will also point at some of the relevant aspects of Paul's teachings in the context of updating his impact on education of children and youth and the contribution to dialogue.

Conclusion: From the viewpoint of the implications for further research the article suggests the preparation of studies individually analysing the teachings of St. Paul that could be beneficial for both the educational process and Christian education. In this context, it is also necessary to undertake a more in-depth analysis of his teaching in such a way as to enable us to understand comprehensively how the Apostle Paul loves the Church and brings his people closer to God and to each other through his explanations and considerations. And then to apply this understanding through dialogue, expert discussions and reflections in practice and also in Christian pedagogy and education.

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Keywords: The teachings of St. Paul – Influence on education – Role model – New generations – Pedagogy.

Introduction

Children and young people need role models they could follow. St. Paul can be such role model for Christian youth and children. Although he lived in the first century, i.e. in a completely different time than we live today, his ideas and values are still relevant to the contemporary world of youth education. This world offers upbringing through computers, games and technology, which can be thin ice that breaks easily when one steps on it and finds dirty water beneath it. Christian education, also with the help of the Apostle of Nations in this complex world, wants to help avoid the thin ice on which today's children and youth often play. Underneath there is the danger of bad society, drugs, alcohol, spoiled and ruined lives.

One does not become a teacher or educator for nothing; it is a profession that must be performed with love. He/she can then successfully pass on to others the knowledge necessary for their lives and thus shape future generations. The relationship between a teacher and a pupil can be very similar to the relationship between a parent and a child. Just as the father sees himself in his son, the teacher can see himself in his pupil. Paul is the teacher of the nations because he preached the gospel to various people of different cultures. For the Church communities he visited and to whom he addressed his letters, he appears as a teacher who leads, forms and educates, as he saw himself in them. The objective of the article is to describe St. Paul as a possible model of a teacher for contemporary educators and teachers.

The role of educators following Paul's example

The role of educators following Paul's example already in the ancient antiquity, in addition to philosophy as a science that seeks the truth, loves the truth, the interest in education, they called *paideia*, comes to the forefront. "Paideia is an expression that cannot be translated but only interpreted. (...) It is a process of the sensation of the soul, of metanoia, of transformation, which is carried out in the process of education so that the educated knows himself, his opportunities and can realize them meaningfully. (...) *Paideia* is a form of "soul care", a basic educational activity that aims to awaken and mobilize mental powers to develop being in the sense of "being human"."⁴³⁵

The educator tries to influence the character of the educated and to shape his behaviour. The educator can be an individual, but also a group or a community that has certain opinions and rules that create a certain educational environment. The most important role is played by those who spend the most time with the educated. They are not only educators, but also the government with its collection of laws and, last but not least, the Church, religious communities, groups of various interests, friends, classmates, and especially parents. "It has been proven by a number of researches that we adopt the basic rules of how and what to think, feel and do based on early family experiences. What thoughts, feelings, and actions are acceptable, how and under what circumstances the generally valid ways of interaction and basic attitudes are to be expressed - all of this is stored in our early and recurring transactions with parents."⁴³⁶ To some extent, every person can influence the lives, the attitudes,

435 M. Mráz, "Antické inšpirácie výchovného procesu", in *O výchove v rodine : Zborník referátov z konferencie*, (Bratislava: Slovenská spoločnosť pre rodinu a zodpovedné rodičovstvo, 2001). 49 – 50.

436 P. Šulák, "Rozvoj osobnosti a socializácia detí," in *Nová evanjelizácia: Zborník sympózia s medzinárodnou účasťou*. (Bratislava: Teologický inštitút sv. Alojza Spoločnosti Ježišovej na Slovensku, 1994). 131.

behaviour and the lives of people in his vicinity. It can include transfer of information, knowledge, but also experience, different models of behaviour, life attitudes or values.

The task of the educator and teacher firstly is to pass on knowledge or act as behavioural example. Other factors are also needed to succeed. It is the overall personality of the educator or teacher, his particular charm by which he can get attention of the pupils and win them. The teacher must possess necessary knowledge, skills and talents who cannot pass on to others because he cannot pass what he does not have himself. It is not only his preparation, which can be long-term or short-term, but it is also a certain natural dimension – the ability of the educator, which cannot be learned, as it is the gift, the talent with which he was born. It is the ability to lead and have a natural authority. An important part of his success is his ability to motivate others. "Motivation comes from the Latin word "*motivus*" – inducing movement. Indicates a set of processes that are involved in the intensity, direction and way in which proceedings are conducted. In its essence, it is an internal force that energizes the body. Motivation is also defined as the strength in an organism that activates or directs behaviour towards certain goals. It can be an object or a result that the motivated behaviour is focused on."⁴³⁷

Methods of raising children must be changed as they grow up.

In particular, Christian upbringing must contain the dimension of love. It is not only about passing on knowledge, but also about passing on yourself-your life. *So we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well (1Thes 2:8)*. Without the emotional upbringing that children and adolescents need to feel, they could grow into insensitive people, unable to embrace or caress their own children. This love must be unconditional. "If we love unconditionally, we demonstrate our love for the child no matter what is happening. We show him that we love him no matter what he looks like; regardless of its positive characteristics, shortcomings or limitations; no matter what we want it to be; and - what is the most difficult thing – no matter how he behaves."⁴³⁸ Every child is unique and therefore needs a special approach, especially from parents, where this is more possible than in a school where there are many children or students. "For a child to feel love, we must learn to speak his unique language of love. Every child perceives love in his own special way. There are basically five languages in which children (and indeed all people) express and understand emotional love. These are: physical contact, words of assurance, attention, gifts and deeds of service."⁴³⁹

At the same time, educators must not forget their own example, which the children follow very closely. For example, they may ask: "Our daddy forbids us from eating chocolate and he can smoke?" In children, naturally, the authority of parents, which many times has an imperative character, works, but in the case of young people it is different. Young people "listen to everything carefully, learn everything, but cannot accept it when our words are in conflict with our actions."⁴⁴⁰ On following the example of a teacher St. Paul writes to his disciple Timothy: *You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings (2 Tim 3:10)*.

The advantage of Christian education is that educators can rely not only on their own strength but also on God's help. The Christian educator should try to make the child or young

437 Jozef Daniel, *Prehľad všeobecnej psychológie* (Nitra: Enigma, 2003). 116.

438 Gary Chapman and Ross Campbell, *Deti a pět jazyků lásky* (Praha: Návrat domů, 2007). 14.

439 Gary Chapman and Ross Campbell, *Deti a pět jazyků lásky*, 13.

440 Guy Gilbert, *O dětech a výchově* (Praha: Portál, 2009). 44.

person resemble Christ. "The very and immediate aim of Christian education is to work with the grace of God to create a true and perfect Christian, i.e. Christ himself in the people newly born during baptism according to the stunning expression of the Apostle: My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you" (Gal 4:19). (See *Divini Illius Magistri*). Theology has the following thesis – grace follows nature, so no one can be a good Christian unless he is a good man first. The true Christian, the fruit of Christian education, is therefore a supernatural man who thinks, judges and acts persistently and consistently according to the principles of common sense, illuminated by the supernatural light of the example and teaching of Christ, or according to today's common expression: he is perfect, noble person. (See *Divini Illius Magistri*).

Although parents and teachers, as the most important educators, strive to give children and young people the best education, they encounter competition from the environment and the influence of their peers, who can offer completely different values than those required in education. The current trend is that children and young people tend to compare themselves in everything. Especially in what to wear, what food and where they can afford to buy and the like. Educating responsible children and youth "in a culture that encourages selfish consumption of everything the world has to offer and in a culture in which so many people fear losing their status among peers requires considerable courage."⁴⁴¹ The efforts to raise children into good citizens depend first and foremost on us as the citizens, and consequently on whether we have the courage to put high demands on ourselves and on the future young generation. In other words, educators sometimes have hard times resisting the pressure of the environment and the era and not to allow everything to those whom they lovingly lead to the desired educational goal. It was beautifully expressed by St. Paul: *Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear* (2Tim 4:2 – 3).

Paul – teacher of gratitude and diligence

In his writings, Paul not only elaborated the doctrine of the Church, but expressed gratitude to individual church communities, to which he himself leads others by his personal example – by often calling out gratitude to God (cf. Rom 1, 8; 6, 17; 7, 25; 1Kor 1, 4; 15, 57; 2 Cor 2, 14; 8, 16; 9, 11; 9, 15; 2 Thes 1, 3; 2, 13; 1 Tim 1, 12). Gratitude in Latin *gratitudo* is derived from the word *gratia*, grace. Gratitude according to this etymology is a response to grace. Although we must also be grateful for the gifts that others give us because they are obliged to give them to us, i.e. for we are, in fact, according to this meaning, gratitude most applicable to the gift given free of charge. Young children are accustomed at an early age to receive everything from their parents or educators. It is natural for them that others take care of them and give them everything they need for a happy life. Children have no natural instinct of gratitude. As they learn to talk, walk, as they learn hygiene habits, it is necessary to teach them to be grateful for everything they receive. Only then will they realize that they would not even have to, and learn to value the work of other people, and later their own. Children should be grateful to their parents, especially for intangible gifts, by knowing through their experience that their parents would also sacrifice their lives for them. This was also experienced by St. Paul: *They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the*

441 William J. Doherty, *Kdo koho vychovává?* (Praha: Návrat domů, 2006). 132.

Gentiles are grateful to them (Rom 16:4). A person who works can appreciate and be proud of the outcome of his work rather than a person who receives something that is ready. Here comes the gratitude by which one expresses that he did not have to get something, did not have it, but he has (received) it, for which he is grateful.

Paul's gratitude in his writings is directed mainly towards God, to which he encourages, but also gratitude to people (cf. *Flp* 4:9; *Rom* 16:4). We express our gratitude to God especially in the liturgy of the Holy Mass (cf. *KKC* 1148). In the Catechism of the Catholic Church it is written that the fourth commandment: "It request us to show respect, kindness, and gratitude to grandparents and ancestors. Finally, it also applies to the obligations of pupils to teachers, employees to employers, subordinates to their superiors, citizens to their homeland and to those who manage and govern it."⁴⁴²

Another dimension of Paul, which can be appropriately applied to the education of children and adolescents, is diligence.

*Christianity revolutionized the world of crafts and work. It was Christianity that began to proclaim the dignity of work, sanctification and mission. The Christian view of work gave meaning to every occupation, because by working one is perfecting oneself and serving others. (...) If some Christians in Paul's time thought it was no longer worthwhile to work because the day of Christ's coming (the end of the world) was approaching, Paul showed them by both the doctrine and work that they were wrong, and making a living makes sense.*⁴⁴³

Paul is not only the son of a Pharisee, he is not only a proclamer of the word who would live from his missionary proclamation of the Gospel, but he is also a hard-working person who values and calls for work. He made his living by the demanding work of tent manufacturing (cf. *Acts* 18:3; *1 Thes* 2:9; *1 Cor* 4:12). One's work is fulfilling and develops one's personality.

The work of young children is playing. It is important for the father to find time to play with his little baby because it is as important to him as the work is to adult. Gradually, it is necessary to engage the child in common household chores such as cleaning, bedding, waste disposal, washing dishes and the like.

Children need deeds of service rendered by adults. These services should correspond to the age of the children. Parents should do for children what they cannot do for themselves. When they are six, they no longer need to be fed. An eight-year-old can already make a bed. There is no need to wait for them to turn 18 to operate the washing machine. Parents who do not allow children to take care of themselves are crippling them.⁴⁴⁴

Through his work, the child becomes more aware of what others are doing for him and begins to appreciate it more. He is gradually getting rid of childish egoism. "The great mission of parents is to educate their children blissfully with their work and dedication and to teach them to have a positive and joyful attitude towards work and responsibilities."⁴⁴⁵ For adolescents, their situation changes when they have to think about their lifelong profession,

442 *Katechismus Katolickéj cirkvi* (Trnava: SSV, 1999) art. 2199.

443 Štefan Kováč, *Pro sacerdote* (Topoľčany: Prima print, 1999). 255.

444 Gary Chapman and Ross Campbell, *Děti a pět jazyků lásky*, 67 – 68.

445 Štefan Kováč, *Pro sacerdote*, 256.

their future job, before they start high school. Therefore, it is necessary to discover their abilities and talents already in childhood, to develop them as far as possible and not to put excessive demands on children. At present, the demands on education are increasing, and therefore the number of university educated people is increasing, which has an impact on both the economy and the family. People with university education thus fall into the process of individualization. "The almost massive approach to higher education, coupled with a longer period of residence in the education system and hence postponing economic activity, is particularly contributing to the process of individualization. This fact, education and time create favourable conditions for the processes of self-esteem and self-reflection, which almost always result in efforts to break free from the environment and the origin from which they originated."⁴⁴⁶ Paul, as a great educator, is an example of a hard-working person, which is also required of the parents of children – to be a role model. Apart from personal examples of parents in hard work and good interpersonal relationships, it is very important for the child to have enough positive incentives in the family. (...) If a child is humiliated, insulted, and doubts about his abilities, his future, or his participation in society, the child also acts accordingly – begins to suffer from an inferiority complex. His parents have hurt him very and have badly prepared him for life.⁴⁴⁷

The school and education can also be considered as a duty for children and young people, as their work activity. Learning obligations result in that children and young people have responsibility, which is particularly important in the productive age at work. "Successful are those children who are gradually led to independence and self-responsibility for their work. If parents check all their homework, they go through all curricula of their children at home, go to school to be arranged for better grades, arrange for "protection", such parents almost confidently lead children to be irresponsible."⁴⁴⁸

The work is also associated with remuneration in the form of wages, which is the employer's duty towards the employee, as Paul writes: *Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation (Rom 4:4)*. Unfortunately, it sometimes seems that children and young people are already motivated to work, learn and be successful, especially for money and welfare. If parents reward their children with money for their hard work and achievements at school, then they lead them to the greatest dependence, which is the love of money. Then spiritual values are lost and space for hedonism, materialism and egoism is created. *For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs (1 Tim 6:10)*. Guy Gilbert offers the following opinion: "In terms of 'success', it usually refers to money. 'You have money, you're Someone. You have no money, you mean nothing, 'this thesis is constantly repeated to children and young people. I say that the strongest person in the world is the one who can despise money, because he will never want to buy anyone, nor will anyone buy him."⁴⁴⁹ On the other hand, it is impossible to survive without money; money is reward for work done, it can be used in various ways – for good and bad purposes, it can be saved for worse times... Don Bosco, the great educator of the young in the nineteenth century, was able to use them in his educational system. "His desire was for the young to become

446 Peter Ondrejko, *Globalizácia a individualizácia mládeže* (Bratislava: VEDA, 2002), 78.

447 See: Ľudovít Repáň, *Psychológ bez čakárne* (Bratislava: Obzor, 1980).

448 H. Gottweisová, "Hodnoty života ako východisko z civilizačných rizík," in *Dialóg rodičov s dospievajúcimi* (Bratislava: Slovenská spoločnosť pre rodinu a zodpovedné rodičovstvo – Slovenská rada rodičovských združení – Metodické centrum Bratislava II, 1998), 57.

449 Guy Gilbert, *O deťoch a výchove*, 51.

accustomed to behaving as if they were living in the world. Therefore, he taught them to save and handle the money. Every day, in addition to soup for lunch and dinner, he gave 25 centesims, for which they could buy bread and something extra. In any case, education towards responsibility with Don Bosco goes through trust. In 1849 he entrusted all the money to the community at Valdocca Buzzeti. And Giuseppe Buzzeti was only 17 years old."⁴⁵⁰

Many young people now desire to live in prosperity but without work. Modesty and humility seemed to have vanished from them, and were consumed by their spirit of consumer society. This era raises the question of what one must have to be happy. As if we did not even exist if we do not own the latest models of the trading market. Although many obstacles are nowadays in the way of educational activity, parents must firmly and confidently raise children to the basic values of human life. Children are to grow up in the right freedom for material values so that they can accept a simple and sober way of life, believing that 'man is more worthy of what he is than he has'. (See: *Familiaris consortio*). Another serious reason, apart from worsening health and lack of jobs, why young people do not work is their own laziness. Especially the present time creates suitable conditions for laziness of children and youth. Computer games and television are often their main employers. Paul responds to this problem in the *Second Letter to Thessalonians*: *For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat." We hear that some among you are idle and disruptive. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat (2 Thes 3:10 – 12)*.

Updating the influence of the Paul on the education of children and youth and its contribution to dialogue

Out of the wisdom of the Apostle Paul, the Church has drawn throughout her history. He and his spiritual heritage are still up-to-date and provide room for inspiring dialogue⁴⁵¹, therefore we will have a look at some of the relevant aspects of his teaching in updating his impact on child and youth education and its contribution to dialogue.

St. Paul's teachings could have been used by the Church for the good of people and society, but it has also been the subject of individual interpretation and adaptation, which has often been dangerous in the Church. "Augustine's theology is not conceivable without Paul's rediscovery, and even less a breakthrough in the reformist knowledge of Luther and Calvin; nor the John Wesley movement in England a few centuries later. Finally, let us remind you of that the dialectical theology, without which the Church would have been unthinkable opposition to the seduction and delusion of national socialism, announced its arrival with a revolutionary new interpretation of the letter to the Romans by Karl Barth."⁴⁵²

Paul's writings are not to compete with the gospel of Christ, nor does he want to compete for popularity with Jesus in the Church. For he did not come to preach any gospel other than Christ, nor to anyone else but Christ alone. "Paul, of course, is not interested in Christ as a historian, does not collect all the details of Jesus' life, he does not want to describe in detail his life, his habits, and his whole work. He does not want to reconstruct any true historical picture. «If we also knew Christ by flesh, we do not know now,» he writes later. (...) Paul's testimony of historical Christ is all the more valuable because he struggled a long

450 Bruno Ferrero, *Šťastní rodičia* (Bratislava: Don Bosco, 1998), 129.

451 Benedikt XVI. *Myšlenky o svätém Pavlovi* (Praha: Paulínky, 2009), 7.

452 G. Bornkamm, *Apoštol Pavel* (Praha: Kalich, 1998), 20.

way to it.⁴⁵³ It was a struggle for accepting Jesus and his Church as his own. Even this dramatic struggle, first of all the persecutor of the Church and later its loving son, is a living example even today for the education of especially young people who as if were persecuting the Church with their attitudes because they do not understand it and might want to be full of good and holy people.

How can Paul be a role model and educator for contemporary children and youth when the world in which he lived is diametrically different to the present? "The world to which his letters were written was in many ways different from the world of today. But not in everything. In his time, Paul met those who knew Judaism and thought that they could not learn anything new. (...) Even today, the Gospel proclaimer encounters people who think they know Christianity (though it is not so) and do not expect anything new and inspiring for their lives."⁴⁵⁴

Presence of St. Paul in the Church can be witnessed by his liturgical memories during the church year: the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul - 25 January and 29 June, when St. Paul together with St. Peter are celebrated by the whole Church. Clement of Rome wrote about Paul: "Because of jealousy and outrage, Paul was obliged to show us how to earn the reward for patience... After preaching righteousness to the whole world and arriving at the very edge of the West, he undertook martyrdom before the rulers; so he left this world and reached a holy place, and thus became the greatest pattern of perseverance."⁴⁵⁵ His shining example attracts many even today. If his teaching is difficult, his adherence to Christ is a simple enough expression of his person, offering us the basis of his pedagogy, as he writes in a letter to Corinth: *Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. (1Cor 11:1; also cf. 1Cor 4:16; Flp 3:17)*. During the opening of the Year of St. Paul on 28 June 2008 the Pope Benedict XVI said: "Dear brothers and sisters, as in early times, today too Christ needs apostles ready to sacrifice themselves. He needs witnesses and martyrs like St. Paul: a former violent persecutor of Christians, when he fell to the ground dazzled by the divine light on the road to Damascus, did not hesitate to change sides to the Crucified One and followed him without second thoughts. He lived and worked for Christ, for him he suffered and died. How timely is his example today!"⁴⁵⁶

Paul's writings as a source of teaching and means of raising good and faithful young people, despite their vastness and complexity, are useful in shaping young people's character and personality. Therefore, the basic knowledge of this apostle should be included in the family educational system and in the basic religious knowledge of the believer. Suitably, in the family education, this apostle can be made visible and worshipped for his liturgical feasts, or, for example, by various quotations from his letters, which may be present in the family home and thus offered for reflection and formation. "The Apostle Paul is an exceptional, almost inimitable, but very stimulating figure for us. He stands before us as an example of total devotion to the Lord and His Church, but also of great openness to humanity and human cultures. So it is right not only to give him a special place in our esteem, but also to try to understand what he wants to tell us – the Christians."⁴⁵⁷

453 Ján Chryzostom Korec, *Ježiš zďaleka a zblízka* (Bratislava: Archa, 1990). 105 – 107.
 454 Aleš Opatrný, *Apoštol Pavel* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2008). 5.
 455 Benedikt XVI. *Apoštol a prví učeníci Ježíša Krista* (Trnava: Dobrá kniha, 2008). 125.
 456 Jozeph Ratzinger – Benedikt XVI. *Pavol, apoštol národov* (Trnava: SSV, 2008). 13.
 457 Benedikt XVI. *Apoštol Ježíše Krista* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2009). 7.

New generations represent the potential strength and hope of humanity's future. It is they who will draw on the wisdom of previous generations and the education they can give them today. Looking at today's hope of the world and the Church we have in young people, many can be fearful because they see many young people without a vision of their future, bored and uninterested, a computer generation of many individuals who are often lazy and egoistic. Some countries, especially developing countries, have more than half the population under twenty-five or thirty years. This means millions and millions of children and young people preparing for their adulthood future. (...) These innumerable young people, though dominated by insecurity and fear, or by escaping into indifference and the drug, even tempting nihilism and violence, are largely a force that wants to build a future civilization in the midst of considerable risks. (See *Catechesi tradendae*).

If the pessimistic view of the future prevails in some general views on young people today, it should be pointed out that this is a mistake that has appeared in all periods of mankind: Contemporary youth is rude, ridiculed by authorities and has no respect for the elderly. It does not stand up when an elderly enters the room, talks back to the parents and has fun instead of work. It is completely spoiled *Socrates (469 - 399 BC)* (...) These young people are bad to the bone. Young people are malicious and lazy. They will never be like young people in the past. Today's generation cannot preserve our culture.⁴⁵⁸ "A clay plate found in the ruins of Babylon, 3000 years old."⁴⁵⁹

However, it is important to realize that "reflections, discussions, and various controversies about the moral state of society, now or in the past, have been and are an integral part of all human history since our ancient ancestors came to a state of self-awareness. Nowadays, when "everything is allowed", one is increasingly asking for a reassessment of the values we have lived with. New values should lead mankind out of a situation in which man is, due to the overestimation of his abilities, but mainly the position of material values on the highest pedestal. One wants values that respect human dignity, and these moral values should become an essential concern of man and the social community."⁴⁶⁰ "Hu-

458 Guy Gilbert, *O dětech a výchově*, 64.
 459 Guy Gilbert, *O dětech a výchově*, 64.
 460 Anna Árpová, "Hodnoty člověka v sociální práci," in *Úlohy zdravotnictva a sociální práce v dnešním spoločenstve*. Zborník príspevkov vedeckej konferencie 2018. (Rimavská Sobota: Asociácia pre sociálny rozvoj a podporu občanov SR, 2018), 162.
 With this regard, it is important to ask questions related to structure of such values "which add meaning to life." (Miroslav Maňák, "Je možné viac porozumieť otázke o zmysle ľudského života pomocou konceptu „existenciálneho zážitku?“" *Studia Aloisiana* 10, no. 2, (2019): 36.)
 How can structure of such values be brought closer? One of the alternatives how to come closer to the value system of an individual is to (Miroslav Maňák, "Je možné viac porozumieť otázke o zmysle ľudského života pomocou konceptu „existenciálneho zážitku?“" 35.) "focus on the concept of "existential experience." (Miroslav Maňák, "Je možné viac porozumieť otázke o zmysle ľudského života pomocou konceptu „existenciálneho zážitku?“" 35.) It is "existential experience that should primarily help find answers to the following two questions: (1) "What is the source of values that add meaning to human life?" and (2) "When do we find values that add meaning to life?" If we assume that certain values add meaning to our lives, the first question should reveal the subject of research within the topic of meaning of life. The role of the second question is to find out when man starts to be seriously interested in the issue of meaning of life." (Miroslav Maňák, "Je možné viac porozumieť otázke o zmysle ľudského života pomocou konceptu „existenciálneho zážitku?“" 36.)

manity has come to a situation where its survival requires a re-evaluation of the values we recognize, our needs and desires, behaviour."⁴⁶¹

So if we shape the lives of children and young people according to the life of Jesus Christ, who represents the love sacrificed to the extreme, the love given to all, then there is the hope that such education will raise spiritually healthy people who focus their lives on God's love. *For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone (Rom 14:7)*, is St. Paul's theorem in which he offers us theology of service to others through the person of Jesus Christ. Children and young people not only need 'normal' services out of love from their educators, especially their parents, but we need them to grow up as people of services and sacrifices and therefore they need to perceive and feel this love.⁴⁶² "The ultimate goal of deeds of service is to help children turn into mature adults who are able to give love to others through deeds of service. It is not only to help their dearest, but also to serve people who cannot pay them back in any way. When children see the example of parents who serve the family and the people behind the walls of their homes every day, they also learn to serve."⁴⁶³

Conclusion

It has always been difficult to raise good people from children and adolescents. It requires a self-sacrificing and loving approach to the whole person, who would not only give the educated the information and skills, but also a piece of himself - from his life, time,

461 Anna Árpová, "Hodnotová orientácia človeka vo svete globalizácie," in *Úlohy zdravotníctva a sociálnej práce v dnešnej spoločnosti. Zborník príspevkov vedeckej konferencie 2018* (Rimavská Sobota: Asociácia pre sociálny rozvoj a podporu občanov SR, 2018), 127.

462 Therefore, it is necessary to also consider children and young people with an accent on their human uniqueness (Monika Nová, "Chudoba a sociálny vylúčenie jako spoločenský problém," in *Komunitná starostlivosť v pomáhajúcich profesiách. Recenzovaný zborník z III. Medzinárodnej vedeckej konferencie*. ed. Peter Vansač, Daniela Barkasi and Mária Popovičová, (Warsaw: wyzsza szkola finansow i zarzadzania w warszawie. 2017), 176-177.) in the light of Christian ethics that "anchors the understanding of the human person as a dignified being created in the image of God, emphasizes the commitment of loving one's neighbour, cares for the weak, and fosters compassion and mercy. It does not define conditions under which one can be accepted but rather shows a way towards reconciliation and forgiveness. At the same time, however, it leads back to the right order of things - without any glamorization, seeing the human being as erring and sinful." (Monika Nová, "Chudoba a sociálny vylúčenie jako spoločenský problém," 176.) Such an attitude that is both accepting and realistic is often missing in Christianity in the European context today. (Monika Nová, "Chudoba a sociálny vylúčenie jako spoločenský problém," 176-177.)

One example is the lives of those who suffer the most due to the environmental devastation caused by human negligence and climate change (Beáta Áčová, et al., "Changes and trends of Pope Francis in social teaching in the Catholic Church," in *Zmeny a trendy v medziľudskej komunikácii* (Trnava: Ivona Matúšová, 2017). 14) (...) often live in abject poverty and their nations are globally the most vulnerable. (Beáta Áčová, et al., "Changes and trends of Pope Francis in social teaching in the Catholic Church," 14).

"It is Christian ethics that calls for the care of others". (Monika Nová, "Chudoba a sociálny vylúčenie jako spoločenský problém," 176.) "It is, therefore, our duty to responsibly use Earthly goods. This implies acknowledgement of and respect for each human being and all living creatures. The urgent call and challenge to care for the creation are addressed to the whole of humankind that is to strive for sustainable and integral development." (Beáta Áčová, et al., "Changes and trends of Pope Francis in social teaching in the Catholic Church," 14). The interconnection of the education and upbringing of children and young people in the context of the understanding of Christian ethics as described above simultaneously leads to a responsible attitude. (Monika Nová, "Chudoba a sociálny vylúčenie jako spoločenský problém," 176.) Furthermore, it can be viewed as "an invaluable contribution to the discussion on the approaches to poverty." (Monika Nová, "Chudoba a sociálny vylúčenie jako spoločenský problém," 177.)

463 Gary Chapman and Ross Campbell, *Děti a pět jazyků lásky*, 71 - 72.

wisdom and especially the example. At present, upbringing is all the more difficult and demanding, because it is eroded and destroyed by competition in the form of peers, media, modern technology, ads, various computer games and so on. To offer children and young people values and teachings that would outweigh the thrilling action scenes of movies, or the various computer effects that you may not even be able to capture and that pull them out of reality is a Sisyphean job. Through its educators and teachers, Christianity wants to offer an alternative to the meaning of life to this world of inner disorder and chaos, namely lead them to Jesus Christ. Such an educator was and through his work still is St. Paul, who directed all his life, work and doctrine to Christ from the moment he was addressed by Jesus himself. Saul of Tarsus does not bring up the stunning images and sounds of the screen, but the tenacity and perseverance of love for Christ, for whom he wrote a riveting story in his life. Christian parents and educators can draw upon impulses, strength, wisdom and courage of great Christianity, its faith, doctrine and morality for the upbringing of their children and young people and for their family life.

The article from the viewpoint of the implications for further research suggests the preparation of studies that will individually analyse the teachings of St. Paul that could be beneficial for both the educational process and Christian education. In this context, it is also necessary to undertake a more in-depth analysis of his teaching in such a way as to enable us to understand comprehensively how the Apostle Paul loves the Church and brings his people closer to God and to each other through his explanations and considerations. And then to apply this understanding through dialogue, expert discussions and reflections in practice and also in Christian pedagogy and education.

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OPEN SPACE FOR A DIALOGUE ON THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE SECOND DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION ON FAMILY*



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Abstract

Background: Rapid development of the society has an impact on conditions and life of families. The institution of a traditional family has lost its importance over the last decades, and society forms alternatives to the family. This brief study analyses the reasons and impacts of the demographic transition from the sociological perspective.

Conclusion: The combination of traditional and postmodern value attitudes creates for families a frame of continuity but also forms of life that we have not been used to. The issue is so extensive that it offers many interpretative options for social change of families, long-term and current demographic behaviour of population, partnership and family cohabitation. In order to allow for further research, the article proposes to open expert discussions and reflections on these many possibilities for interpretation. These will then provide incentives for the preparation of relevant studies that would examine in more detail the individual areas and new, yet unexplored, correlations within the following topics: social changes in families, long-term and current demographic behaviour of the population, cohabitation of families and couples.

Keywords: Family – Demography – Culture – Natality – Postmodernism.

Introduction

Over the past three decades, we can talk about several socially significant changes in Slovakia: in the politics, the totalitarian state system has been replaced by democracy, in the economy, socialism has replaced capitalism, and, in the culture, the one-colour ideology has changed into the worldview of freedom of thought. Since the fall of the so-called „Iron Curtain“, the world is not easier⁴⁶⁶; we are also witnessing significant changes in the demographic behaviour of Slovak society. These changes are related, and from the perspective of family issues, it is possible to identify impacts such as the overall decline in birth rate, marriages, increase in divorce rate as well as the number of children born outside of marriage. These changes are associated with the weakening of the institution of the family based on the marriage of man and woman, and in

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