

Paweł Bortkiewicz

Marriage: The Project of Culture or Faith?

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PAWEŁ BORTKIEWICZ

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland

Marriage: The Project of Culture or Faith?

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1. Light and Dark Sides of Today's Family

Among many sociological and political analyses, the type of diagnosis of a special significance for moral theology is, for obvious reasons, theological or, to be more precise, kairological one. It uses the data gathered by exact sciences, in this case psychosocial ones, to make comments based on those data, in a way reaching beyond the empirical dimension. Indeed, this dimension is essential and indispensable to make those comments, hence John Paul II in his enunciations many times reminds us about using exact sciences for defining what he calls Gospel discernment: the call and demands of the Spirit resound in the very events of history, and so the Church can also be guided to a more profound understanding of the inexhaustible mystery of marriage and the family by the circumstances, the questions and the anxieties and hopes of the young people, married couples and parents of today.¹ He himself made such a discernment numerous times in relation to the condition of the marriage and family. The most representative explanation of these comments is delivered by the papal exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*. Yet, it is advisable to first quote a part of the council constitution *Gaudium et Spes* to notice both a continuation of certain phenomena as well as their new faces. The Second

¹ JOHN PAUL II: *Apostolic Exhortation "Familiaris Consortio"*, no. 4.

Vatican Council stated in its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, mentioning some of the hottest issues of modern times:

Yet the excellence of this institution [of marriage — P.B.] is not everywhere reflected with equal brilliance, since polygamy, the plague of divorce, so-called free love and other disfigurements have an obscuring effect. In addition, married love is too often profaned by excessive self-love, the worship of pleasure and illicit practices against human generation. Moreover, serious disturbances are caused in families by modern economic conditions, by influences at once social and psychological, and by the demands of civil society. Finally, in certain parts of the world problems resulting from population growth are generating concern. All these situations have produced anxiety of consciences.²

John Paul II in his exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* clearly at first showed some positive aspects of contemporary reality for the marriage and family as clear signs of the salvation through Christ operating in the world. Among them he mentioned:

- a more lively sense of personal freedom,
- attachment of greater importance to the quality of interpersonal relations in marriage,
- promotion of the woman's dignity,
- focusing on responsible parenthood,
- focusing on the upbringing of children,
- raising awareness of the need for tightening relations with other families with a view to bringing mutual spiritual and material assistance,
- fuller understanding of the Church's mission in the spirit of responsibility for building a more just society.³

At the same time, the Holy Father spoke about negative aspects of this marriage and family life condition, putting them in categories of basic value degradation symptoms. They are the consequences of rejecting God's love by Man. Among such phenomena he found:

- wrong understanding, both in theory and practice, of the spouses' independence in mutual relations,
- degradation of parental authority,
- practical difficulties in passing down values by families,
- ever increasing divorce rate,
- the plague of abortions,
- choosing sterilisation,

² VATICAN II: *Pastoral Constitution on the Church "Gaudium et Spes"*, no. 47

³ Cf. JOHN PAUL II: *Apostolic Exhortation "Familiaris Consortio"*, no. 6.

- actual preservation of a mentality that opposes any conception of new life.⁴

By revealing the layer of negative phenomena, John Paul II, in a manner characteristic for him, indicated their genesis and fundamental cause:

At the root of these negative phenomena there frequently lies a corruption of the idea and the experience of freedom, conceived not as a capacity for realizing the truth of God's plan for marriage and the family, but as an autonomous power of self-affirmation, often against others, for one's own selfish well-being.⁵

The Pope was at the same time fully aware that apart from some internal causes, there are also external phenomena that contribute into promoting attitudes and behaviour which are in opposition to the culture for marital love and against life.

2. The Postmodernist Foundation of Culture

How to define this culture in the most concise and synthetic way? What common denominator of these changes do we find? If we wanted to define in a single word the period in which we are living, we could most probably use the term of "postmodernity." The word to some people may sound outmoded, whereas to others — weird. Yet the postmodernist world exists, disregarding our approval. And a characteristic feature of this world is departing from the uniform, monolithic social order for a new pluralistic one in terms of dissimilarity and diversity.

In such a world it is unimportant what is central or essential, but what becomes praiseworthy is cultural peripherality and alternativeness. Let us notice that what actually catches our attention is truly of marginal, secondary or trivial significance. But this is the point, and the purpose is to deprive the postmodernist Man a goal in life, to make him roam purposelessly in a world of emptiness devoid of any values. The point is to make the Man, instead of a wayfarer or a pilgrim on his way to his destination, a roamer, relishing just any shreds of pleasure.

Depriving the Man of the pilgrim's dimension, focused on the horizon of supernaturality and eternity, makes the same Man, and this may sound paradoxical, give up his responsibility for his temporality.

⁴ Cf. *Ibidem*.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

Of particular interest, where we can see this resignation, is the area of marriage and family. The postmodernist culture (or the postmodern one), for which there are no axioms, thus rejects all that has been incontrovertible, true and certain so far. It rejects, for instance, the concept of human sexuality and as a consequence its sense.⁶ It rejects the very concept of marriage.

Challenging the purpose of sexuality is currently accomplished within the so-called idea of “gender.” We can claim that it expresses itself in a thesis in which nothing results from nature but is a social-cultural product. Sex is then, a matter of choice. On the grounds of thus selected sex, one can build any combined configurations and relationships which one strives to attribute the role of marriage to. The idea or the ideology of “gender” arises then as a sign of objection to the hitherto, traditional culture recognizing biological sex and its natural roles and functions. The traditional model, in the opinion of followers of “gender” ideology and feminism, is the source of violence in the family, or in other words, the source of oppression. The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, signed in December 2012 by the Polish government, contains an article mentioning that it is compulsory to fight tradition: “Parties shall take the necessary measures to promote changes in the social and cultural patterns of behaviour of women and men with a view to eradicating prejudices, customs, traditions and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority of women or on stereotyped roles for women and men.”⁷

⁶ John Paul II in his *Evangelium Vitae* encyclical pointed at a phenomenon that lies at the foundation of the current chaos and confusion created by various ideologies — homosexual, transsexual and the ideology of gender: “Within this same cultural climate, the body is no longer perceived as a properly personal reality, a sign and place of relations with others, with God and with the world. It is reduced to pure materiality: it is simply a complex of organs, functions and energies to be used according to the sole criteria of pleasure and efficiency. Consequently, sexuality too is depersonalized and exploited: from being the sign, place and language of love, that is, of the gift of self and acceptance of another, in all the other’s richness as a person, it increasingly becomes the occasion and instrument for self-assertion and the selfish satisfaction of personal desires and instincts. Thus the original import of human sexuality is distorted and falsified, and the two meanings, unitive and procreative, inherent in the very nature of the conjugal act, are artificially separated: in this way the marriage union is betrayed and its fruitfulness is subjected to the caprice of the couple. Procreation then becomes the ‘enemy’ to be avoided in sexual activity: if it is welcomed, this is only because it expresses a desire, or indeed the intention, to have a child ‘at all costs’, and not because it signifies the complete acceptance of the other and therefore an openness to the richness of life which the child represents.” JOHN PAUL II: *Encyclical letter “Evangelium vitae”*, no. 23.

⁷ COUNCIL OF EUROPE: Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, Art. 12, 1 — <http://www.conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/210.htm>.

We should uproot prejudices stemming from traditions, religions, hitherto culture, based on stereotypical roles of women and men. Such a basic stereotypical role for a woman is her motherhood, for a man, fatherhood. The struggle of the European Council perfectly fits here for the struggle idea of another European, Frederic Engels. The advocate of Marxist classicism said in 1884: “The first class opposition that appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamous marriage, and the first class oppression coincides with that of the female sex by the male.”⁸

As a consequence, “gender,” a new class struggle of a sort, challenges maternity. After all, the essence of the oppression of women lies in maternity and raising children, as Nancy Chodorow wrote in her book entitled *The Reproduction of Mothering*.⁹

One can remark, using common sense, and thus in a modernist way, that such thinking sounds like something absurd and abnormal. The point is, though, that we are living in times in which there is an ongoing destruction of terms, such as “normality,” “abnormality” or “pathology.” The new design of “normality” creates many new opportunities of defining the family. They are dominated by an open approach and instead of an institutional definition of the family, a private, voluntary social group bound with special ties, is defined as “normal.” This state of affairs does not exclusively belong to an idea or ideology, but it translates into legal and political structures, the result of which is the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union issued in the year 2000. The destabilization of the term is accompanied by alternative forms of marriage or family life. And it is not just homosexual relations receiving so much publicity and aspiring to a fictitious right to the privilege of being defined as marriage; what is meant here is sanctioning divorces as normal, sanctioning “successive polygamy,” voluntary childlessness (“childfreeness”) of heterosexual couples (DINK — “double income, no kids yet”), of “mono parenting,” “free relationships,” “trial marriages,” or the so-called LAT — “living apart together” (partnership in which the individuals regard each other as life partners but live apart).

Such a culturally-expressed marriage signifies today a random relationship of selfish individuals whose goals are to satisfy their own desires. Such is the detached-from-nature picture of the cultural marriage, which in fact is not and cannot be a foundation for starting a family.

⁸ F. ENGELS: *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. II, 4: *The Monogamous Family*. <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1884/origin-family/ch02d.htm>.

⁹ N.J. CHODOROW: *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. Berkeley 1978.

3. Marriage in the Perspective of Faith

Such an image is opposed by the faith. The faith, let us remember, is a faith in something because of someone. This shows recognition of something as absolutely true, trustworthy, a recognition based on trust — in this case, trust in God.

The trust in God, in His word, reveals the truth about Man. And Blessed John Paul II tirelessly reminded us about it. Writing about Man, he meant that the Male and Female are the image of God. This simple statement gains significance as one makes an attempt at analysing the description of the Creation of Man — in biblical tradition, in both the descriptions of the Creation of Man. Despite stylistic differences, from both the descriptions we can gather a fundamental thesis about exceptional dignity of Man resulting from the fact of having been created “in the image of God,” as well as, which is essential, about the aspect of gift. The other fact allows us to notice that the man and woman are the image of God, not only in their individual existence but in their mutual, personal relationship. This is why in the words of the marital oath, this truth about the gift, mutual gift for each other, has been fundamentally confirmed.

The act of marital oath in the Catholic liturgy begins with a confession-declaration assuming the form of a dialogue: “I... (groom’s name) take you... (bride’s name) as my wife.” Subsequently, and almost symmetrically are uttered the words: “I... (bride’s name) take you... (groom’s name) as my husband.” In this dialogue we find a very deep and crucial anthropological truth that taking someone as a gift requires receiving the gift. A gift would not truly be a gift if the one who takes it did not, in a way, simultaneously offer himself/herself as a gift to the receiving person.

The problem is not trivial at all. This rhythmic of gift giving, of taking and giving oneself, as a gift makes the words of the marital oath meaningful and also justifies them. Without the logic of the gift, the words: “I take you...” would be very difficult to accept. An individual by taking another person makes him/her, in a way, an object of taking. This, however radically opposes the truth of human subjectivity and non-reducibility of the Man — a human person. Here, however, we are dealing with the fact that a human person: man/woman takes a woman/man, simultaneously giving himself/herself in exchange. This, in turn, univocally excludes the risk of perceiving a person as an object. On the contrary, it emphasizes, in a radical and unambiguous way, the subjectivity of the person.

Such a relationship contradicts the desire to exclusively exhaust oneself in pursuing sexual pleasures, desire to give up being open to the gift

of new life. The spouses who, owing to their faith, perceive their relationship as a mutual gift of themselves to each other, certainly discover the mystery of procreation, and this means the mystery of their participation in the creative work of God.

Blessed John Paul II ingeniously wrote: “the genealogy of the person is inscribed in the very biology of generation.”¹⁰ Marriage is certainly about the element of sexuality, the element of instincts, physiology and anatomy of coition, but the conception of Man is not only about fertilization, not about a mere insemination. The genealogy of a person becomes part of this domain of biology. Unusual here is the word of genealogy, which comes from the word *genesis* and this signifies a creative act, the coming of God through human biology with a creative act. It plays a decisive role in perceiving a marital act as holy and simultaneously outlines the foundation for the holiness of Matrimony.

The perspective of faith very consistently guides an intelligent as well as faithful man towards the One who is a personal Giver of the gift of the spouses' existence as well as the gift of new life. This is exactly why we can find in the last words of the marital oath the following message: “So help me Almighty God, the Only One in the Holy Trinity and all the Saints.” This is, in a way, synthetic for the deliberations of the human soul and intellect about the dignity and temporariness of human existence. It is also an expression of a desire for everlasting love, an expression of awareness of human insufficiency seeking support from God. The essential purpose and need to appeal for God's love was best rendered by Karol Wojtyła in his drama entitled *The Jeweler's Shop*:

9. Love — love pulsating in brows,
in man becomes thought
and will:
the will of Teresa being Andrew,
the will of Andrew being Teresa.
[...]
11. How can it be done, Teresa,
for you to stay in Andrew forever?
How can it be done, Andrew,
for you to stay in Teresa forever?
Since man will not endure in man
and man will not suffice.
12. Body — thought passes through it,
is not satisfied in the body —
and love passes through it.

¹⁰ JOHN PAUL II: *Letter to Families “Gratissimam Sane”*, no. 9.

Teresa, Andrew, seek
 a harbor for thought in your bodies
 while they last,
 seek the harbor for love.¹¹

Words of the marital oath in Catholic liturgy are, in a large measure, a deep reflection on personal love. They show the meaning of love as a mutual gift that protects human subjectivity. They also show the dynamism of love inscribed in human hopes confronted with life's reality as well as uncertainty of human fortunes. Therefore, the gift of love striving to survive different life trails, should seek a "haven for love." Finding it in the Sacrament of Matrimony, which introduces the One who is Love into human love, is the most sensible and justifiable choice for human love.¹²

Struggle for the family is the subject of contention about the future of Man and mankind. It is a distinctive contention between contemporary culture and faith. Today, the truth about marriage, and the family growing from it, requires special protection and special promotion.

4. The Biblical Paradigm of Truth about Marriage and Family

It is meaningful, then, with this aim, to find in our faith a special strengthening. We still retain within our memories and emotional domain the time of the birth of Christ. Christ came into this world, into a family, a family of its own era, living in its own culture, in times of political pressures. This was a marriage inscribed into the culture and cultural tradition of its time. A patriarchal marriage, where, to a large extent, the husband decided on the life of his wife. This is a marriage of two people, where about one of them, there is a suspicion of marital unfaithfulness (as Mary found herself expectant and Joseph did not want to expose her to public disgrace).¹³

¹¹ K. WOJTYŁA: *The Jeweler's Shop: a meditation on the sacrament of matrimony, passing on occasion into a drama*. [Original title: *Przed sklepem jubitera: medytacja o sakramencie małżeństwa przechodząca chwilami w dramat*]. Trans. B. TABORSKI. New York 1980. Available online: <http://web1.desales.edu/assets/salesian/PDF/JewelersShopsriptact1.pdf>.

¹² Cf. P. BORTKIEWICZ: "Analiza etyczna przysięgi małżeńskiej" [article in print].

¹³ Cf. A. PACIOREK: *Ewangelia według świętego Mateusza. Rozdziały 1—13. Wstęp, przekład z oryginatu, komentarz*. T. 1. Część 1. [Nowy Komentarz Biblijny. Nowy Testament]. Częstochowa 2005, pp. 91—96.

The Gospel author writes: “Joseph planned to send her away secretly.”¹⁴ Then, he goes on to say that: “But after he had considered this,”¹⁵ which suggests that the decision matured in Joseph’s soul, he resolved to put it into effect. The decision resulted from the fact that Joseph did not want to give his name to a Child who was not his own and at the same time wanted to avoid exposing Mary to public disgrace. A solution that appears here is that he planned to send her away secretly as he was a righteous man.

The sentence: “Joseph [...] was a righteous man,”¹⁶ remains a key to the whole drama. The biblical righteousness is not only a clear abidance by the Law, but also finding God’s plan being put into effect in different events. Joseph, as a righteous man, was determined to do the will of God. Thus, not so much did he want to get rid of Mary as a troublesome burden, as he recognized that he could not “appropriate” a woman God decided to lay His hands on and who, therefore, should not be touched. He decided not to get involved in a mystery beyond his comprehension. He did not seek people’s advice and not being able to find a solution, he desired to humbly retreat and wait for God’s decisions in silence.¹⁷

It is worth taking a look at this crisis situation, at this young spouses’ drama from the perspective of a range of different opportunities to solve it. The first opportunity is the one provided by the culture. The Old Testament culture held the husband’s position as a privileged one. It is worth mentioning here that a man committed adultery only when he violated the property law of another man having sexual relations with an engaged girl or a married woman and also his female slave.¹⁸ The woman’s position was always different as her unfaithfulness was always considered a violation of the property rights of her husband. Thus, in the light of the culture and current law, a husband suspecting his wife of marital unfaithfulness had a right to a decisive reaction. Another opportunity to solve the problem was offered by common sense enriched with sensitivity. It is here that Joseph’s decision comes a decision to send her away. Yet there was a third opportunity which became a fact: to help Joseph’s embarrassment, the Angel intervened, thus removing the doubts. Joseph trusted God in this crisis situation. Therefore, it was not the culture, or common sense, but faith that saved the marriage.

The trust in God revealed its saving power also in other critical situations in the Holy Family’s life. This was a marriage that went through

¹⁴ Mt 1:19.

¹⁵ Mt 1:20.

¹⁶ Mt 1:19.

¹⁷ Cf. A. PACIOREK: *Ewangelia według świętego Mateusza...*, p. 97.

¹⁸ Cf. Leviticus 19, 20—22.

problems at the time of their Baby's delivery, encountering unimaginable indifference. This was a marriage destined to forced immigration. This was simultaneously a married couple that was with each other and for each other, at difficult moments in everyday home life, in the temple.

In this way the Holy Family reminds us the truth about marriage perceived as love, that being subjected to trials, survives and expresses itself through the mutual being for each other, being a selfless gift, an ethos of personalism, giving testimony about the truth of Man in marriage. In this manner it reminds us that the fulfillment of love is eternity and holiness.

* * *

Blessed John Paul II wrote in his encyclical on life: "In seeking the deepest roots of the struggle between the 'culture of life' and the 'culture of death', we cannot restrict ourselves to the perverse idea of freedom mentioned above. We have to go to the heart of the tragedy being experienced by modern man: the eclipse of the sense of God and of Man, typical of a social and cultural climate dominated by secularism, which, with its ubiquitous tentacles, succeeds at times in putting Christian communities themselves to the test. Those who allow themselves to be influenced by this climate easily fall into a sad vicious circle: when the sense of God is lost, there is also a tendency to lose the sense of Man, of his dignity and his life; in turn, the systematic violation of the moral law, especially in the serious matter of respect for human life and its dignity, produces a kind of progressive darkening of the capacity to discern God's living and saving presence."¹⁹

The above-quoted words refer to the whole area of contention between the culture of life and culture of death. A special focal point of the contention yet, was and has been the family growing from the institutional marriage of the man and woman. The modern culture featuring hedonism and moral permissiveness, supported by chaotic and destructive political activities seems to contradict the chance to save the traditional truth about marriage. Words of the blessed Pope let us, however, discover the unusually distinctive conjunction and dependence: sensitivity to God and sensitivity to another human being.

Any attempts at constructing a humanistic culture in separation from God, in activities denying His existence, mean creating a destructive culture. In its deepest sense, an anti-humanistic culture and, as such, doomed to self-destruction.

¹⁹ JOHN PAUL II: *Encyclical letter "Evangelium vitae"*, no. 21.

PAWEŁ BORTKIEWICZ

Małżeństwo — projekt kultury czy wiary?

Streszczenie

Kościół katolicki od wielu lat analizuje i prognozuje sytuację małżeństwa i rodziny w świecie współczesnym. Wyrazem tego były zwłaszcza wypowiedzi Soboru Watykańskiego II i bł. Jana Pawła II. Ukazują one blaski i cienie tej podstawowej wspólnoty życia społecznego. Cechą charakterystyczną owej analizy jest krytyczne zwrócenie uwagi na presję kultury na sposób rozumienia małżeństwa i rodziny. Kultura, naznaczona charakterystycznymi cechami postmodernizmu (oderwania od prawdy obiektywnej i normatywności) próbuje zrelatywizować samą koncepcję małżeństwa jako dowolnego związku. Wyrazem tego jest presja kultury (ideologii) *gender*. Kościół katolicki w swoim nauczaniu przypomina dobitnie prawdę o małżeństwie kobiety i mężczyzny, odczytywaną w perspektywie teologii stworzenia. Odsłania w ten sposób wielkość i niewystarczalność miłości ludzkiej, odwołując ją do absolutu miłości w Bogu. W dialogu z Bogiem, który wyznacza ramy humanizmu chrześcijańskiego, można odnaleźć niezmienną wielkość małżeństwa kobiety i mężczyzny.

Słowa kluczowe: małżeństwo, kultura, kultura postmodernistyczna, teologia małżeństwa

PAWEŁ BORTKIEWICZ

Le mariage — projet de culture ou de croyance?

Résumé

L'Église catholique analyse et pronostique depuis de nombreuses années la situation du mariage et de la famille dans le monde moderne. Le IIe concile oecuménique du Vatican et Jean-Paul II le transmettaient dans leurs messages. Ils démontrent les lumières et les ombres de cette communauté primordiale de la vie sociale. Le trait caractéristique de cette analyse est l'attention portée sur la pression de la culture sur la façon de comprendre le mariage et la famille. La culture, marquée par des traits typiques pour le postmodernisme (détachage de la vérité absolue et la normativité) tend à relativiser la conception même du mariage comme une liaison quelconque. Cela se reflète dans la pression de la culture (idéologie) *gender*. L'Église catholique dans son enseignement rappelle catégoriquement la vérité sur le mariage de la femme et de l'homme, interprétée dans la perspective de la théologie de la création. Elle dévoile ainsi la grandeur et l'insuffisance de l'amour humain, en se référant à l'absolu de l'amour divin. Dans le dialogue avec Dieu, qui détermine le cadre de l'humanisme chrétien, on peut trouver la grandeur inchangeable du mariage de la femme et de l'homme.

Mots-clés: mariage, culture, culture postmoderne, théologie du mariage

PAWEŁ BORTKIEWICZ

Il matrimonio — progetto della cultura o della fede?

Sommario

Da molti anni la Chiesa cattolica analizza e pronostica la situazione del matrimonio e della famiglia nel mondo contemporaneo. Ciò è stato particolarmente manifestato specialmente con le dichiarazioni del Concilio Vaticano II e del Beato Giovanni Paolo II che rilevano luci e ombre di questa comunità fondamentale della vita sociale. Tale analisi in particolar modo dimostra che la cultura incide su come vengono percepiti il matrimonio e la famiglia. La cultura, segnata dai tratti caratteristici del postmodernismo (allontanamento dalla verità oggettiva e dalla normatività), cerca di relativizzare lo stesso concetto del matrimonio come un legame qualunque. Ciò si manifesta con la pressione della cultura (ideologia *gender*). La Chiesa cattolica nel suo insegnamento ricorda esplicitamente la verità del matrimonio tra l'uomo e la donna, interpretata nella prospettiva della teologia della creazione. In tal modo la Chiesa rivela la grandezza e l'insufficienza dell'amore umano, rapportandolo all'assoluto amore di Dio. Nel dialogo con Dio che definisce il quadro dell'umanesimo cristiano si può ritrovare la grandezza immutabile del matrimonio tra l'uomo e la donna.

Parole chiave: matrimonio, cultura, cultura postmoderna, teologia del matrimonio

TADEUSZ KAŁUŻNY

The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Cracow, Poland

Indissolubility of Marriage from Lutheran Perspective

Keywords: marriage, Lutherans, ecumenism, Catholic-Lutheran ecumenical dialogue

When comparing the Catholic and the Lutheran tradition, it is easy to notice the differences in both the theology and the practice of marriage. Among the numerous issues constituting the specifically Lutheran view of marriage, the issue of its indissolubility has particular significance.

Obviously, within a single article, it is not possible to offer a comprehensive presentation of this important and complex problem as met with in various churches and communities cultivating the Lutheran tradition. Therefore, we must resort to certain simplifications and concentrate on the main trend of the Lutheran tradition, considering especially the views of Martin Luther (1483—1546) himself and skipping the divergences in this matter among the Lutheran faithful.¹

Taking into account the difficulties mentioned, I will start this reflection with showing the basic elements of the Lutheran conception of marriage (1). Next, I will present the Lutheran view of the indissolubility of marriage (2). Finally, I will point out to the presence of this issue in the ecumenical Catholic-Lutheran dialogue (3).

¹ As a matter of fact, the churches following the Lutheran tradition differ in some moral and marital issues. Besides the majority of Lutheran churches associated in the Lutheran World Federation, there are also conservative churches of this tradition like, e.g., the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod in the USA. Cf. P. JASKÓŁA: *Podstawy ekumenizmu*. Opole 2010, p. 117; T. TERLIKOWSKI: “Mężczyzną i niewiastą stworzył ich. Etyka seksualna Kościoła Luterńskiego Synodu Missouri.” *Przegląd Powszechny* 10 (2004): pp. 14—25.

1. The Elements of the Lutheran Conception of Marriage

The basic difference between the Lutheran and Catholic theology of marriage is in the fact that for Luther and the Lutheran tradition, marriage is not a sacrament in the strict sense, that is, it is not a sign bestowing grace but a “secular thing,” meaning some natural reality concerning all people.² Luther admits that the Fathers of the Church conceived of matrimony as of a sacrament. Initially, the reformer himself seemed to see it in the same way.³ In the course of time, however, his views of justification led him to rejection of the sacramental character of marriage. Indeed, in his polemical work *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520), he questioned the sacramental character of marriage and the competences of the Pope and Church concerning it.⁴

On the one hand, this followed from the fact that, according to Luther, marriage was neither established by Christ nor given a promise of grace (the New Testament does not contain any clear confirmation of this truth), but it was established by God in the act of creating man and woman who are called to multiply the human race (cf. Gen 1:27). At the same time, Luther emphasized that there were two essential elements constituting every sacrament: the word of God, that is, being established by Christ, and including His promise of grace, and the visible sign — like water in the sacrament of baptism or bread and wine in the Eucharist. This ruled out some of the so-called sacraments, including marriage.⁵ Thus, the words of the marriage vows, according to Luther, do not contain any matter that could testify to sacramental character of marriage. To be true, marriage was established by God, but in itself, according to the reformer, it does not bestow God’s grace to the human as the latter

² Luther did not write any systematic study on matrimony and family life. He formulated his views on these matters in the following writings: *A Sermon on the Estate of Marriage* (1519), *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520), *The Estate of Marriage* (1522), *Commentary on 1 Corinthians 7* (1523), *Wedding Book* (1529), *Large Catechism* (1530), *On Marriage Matters* (1530), *A Marriage Sermon on Hebrews 13:4* (1531). They are quoted here after the critical Weimar Edition: *Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. Weimar 1883—1948, the so-called Weimarer Ausgabe (this edition is usually referred to as WA). Cf. J. MOTYKA: “Luter o rodzinie i w rodzinie.” W: *Z problemów reformacji*, t. 6. Red. E. OETARZEWSKA-WIEJA. Bielsko-Biała 1993, p. 88; C. MARUCCI: *Matrimonio e divorzio nella teologia di Martin Lutero*. In: G. LORIZIO, V. SCIPPA (eds.), *Ecclesiae sacramentum. Studi in onore di P. Alfredo Marranzini S.J.* Napoli 1986, pp. 38—40.

³ Cf. M. LUTHER: *A Sermon on the Estate of Marriage*. WA 2, p. 168; C. MARUCCI: *Matrimonio e divorzio...*, p. 44.

⁴ Cf. M. LUTHER: *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*. WA 6, pp. 550, 553.

⁵ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 560; J. PELIKAN: *Tradycja chrześcijańska. Historia rozwoju doktryny*, t. 4: *Reformacja Kościoła i dogmatów 1300—1700*. Kraków 2010, p. 216.

receives it only owing to his or her faith in Jesus Christ. Religious faith, according to Luther, fulfills the same functions as the sacramentality of marriage.⁶ Commenting on the Letter to Ephesians (5:32), Luther holds that the bond of Christ and the Church is a “mystery” while the marital bond is not.⁷

Therefore, his rejection of the sacramental character of marriage follows from Luther’s view of marriage as a “secular thing” or “secular state.” This does not mean at all that the reformer excluded marriage from God’s plan of salvation altogether, but that it was not established within the order of the New Testament. Thus, marriage belongs to the order of creation, not redemption. This view has its foundations in Luther’s teaching on the two kingdoms: the spiritual and the secular one. Both the realms (kingdoms) are spheres of God’s activity: in the secular one, He is the Lord of creation; in the spiritual one, He is the Lord of salvation. The spiritual kingdom is ruled only by Christ, the Saviour of mankind. Christ’s salvific activity aims at the “inner” man. The “outer” or “secular” sphere of life belongs to the kingdom of God as the Creator of the world. Keeping this sphere of life in order has been committed by God to secular rule. Institution of marriage also belongs to the latter order.⁸ The secular character of marriage then does not by any means signify godlessness to Luther, but it means submitting it to the secular regiment of God. Essentially, due to its origin, marriage is “the work of God” which enjoys His care and blessing.⁹

When we confront the words of Luther concerning the marital bond and Christ’s covenant with the Church with the ideas of contemporary Evangelical theologians (e.g. K. Barth, J. von Allmen, O. Piper), we can

⁶ Luther writes: “One cannot read anywhere that one who marries a woman receives grace.” M. LUTHER: *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*. WA 6, p. 550. Cf. W. PABIASZ: *Małżeństwo i etyka seksualna w teologicznej refleksji Marcina Lutra*. Częstochowa 1993, p. 133.

⁷ Cf. M. LUTHER: *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*. WA 6, pp. 551—557; W. PABIASZ: *Małżeństwo...*, p. 133.

⁸ Cf. A. SKOWRONEK: “Dwie teologie małżeństwa.” *Więź* 2 (1975), pp. 70—71; C. MARUCCI: *Matrimonio e divorzio...*, pp. 48—49; M. HINTZ: “Poglądy etyczne Lutra.” *Studia i Dokumenty Ekumeniczne* 1 (1997): 24.

⁹ Cf. M. LUTER: *Duży Katechizm. Szóste przykazanie*. In: *Księgi Wyznaniowe Kościoła Luterskiego*. Bielsko-Biała 2003, p. 82; A. SKOWRONEK: “Dwie teologie...,” pp. 70—71. For the sake of the especial dignity of marriage, Luther criticizes all attempts at holding marriage in contempt which are based on the conviction that the state of virginity is superior to the state of marriage. Cf. *Wyznanie Augsburgskie*, XXVII. In: *Księgi Wyznaniowe...*, pp. 15—158; P. HOLC: “Małżeństwo w ‘Księgach Symbolicznych’ luteranizmu.” In: *Sakramentalność małżeństwa*. Red. Z. KIJAS, J. KRZYWDA. Kraków 2002, pp. 75—77. Luther himself entered marriage with an ex-Cistercian, Katherine von Bora (June 13, 1525). Cf. J. MOTYKA: “Luter o rodzinie...,” pp. 88, 99—102.

notice a remarkable development of the Lutheran doctrine concerning the matter. K. Barth, for example, sees marriage as a living sign of the covenant with God although he does not consider it as a salvific event — he only perceives its image in it.¹⁰ At the same time, J. von Allmen is inclined to believe that, in the light of the classical text of Eph 5:21—32, one can regard marriage as *mysterium* and sacrament in a similar way as one can regard Christ and Church as sacrament.¹¹ Although such attempts at reinterpreting the Paulinian text which are undertaken by contemporary Protestant theologians do not mean clear acknowledgement of the sacramental character of marital bond, one can consider them as an attempt at including this reality in the dynamism of the history of salvation.¹²

At the end of the day, the contemporary Evangelical theology, though rejecting the sacramental character of matrimony, does not deny that it has certain “sacramental structure.” So, marriage is not a “secular thing” strictly speaking. Some theologians are even prone to acknowledge its sacramental character provided, however, that one accepts the scholastic distinction between the major sacraments (*sacramenta maiora*), entailing baptism and the Eucharist, and minor sacraments (*sacramenta minora*), entailing the rest of the Catholic sacraments.¹³

However, the fact that Luther regards marriage as a part of the order of creation, and not of grace and salvation, has definite implications.

While the Catholic theology recognizes marriage itself as a sacrament, that is, an effective sign bestowing grace, the Evangelical tradition perceives marriage as an earthly community of persons oriented to God’s word and sacrament which sanctify people.¹⁴ According to Luther, marriage as a life’s relationship and institution does not mediate in sanctification and salvation. Husband and wife obtain grace and life, first of all,

¹⁰ Cf. K. BARTH: *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik*, Vol. III/4. Zürich, 1945, p. 241; L. SCHEFFCZYK: “La dottrina del matrimonio di Karl Barth sotto l’aspetto ecumenico.” In: IDEM: *Ecumenismo. La rapida via della verità*. Roma 2007, pp. 193—225.

¹¹ Cf. J. VON ALLMEN: “Maris et femmes d’après saint Paul.” *Cahiers théologiques* 29 (1951): 61.

¹² Cf. C. RYCHLICKI: *Sakramentalny charakter przymierza małżeńskiego. Studium teologiczno-dogmatyczne*. Płock 1997, pp. 278—280.

¹³ Cf. J. DUSS-VON WERDT: “Teologia del matrimonio. Il carattere sacramentale del matrimonio.” In: J. FEINER, M. LÖHRER (eds.): *Mysterium Salutis*, Vol. VIII. Brescia 1975, p. 575; P. HOLC: “Małżeństwo...,” p. 81; F. COURTH: *I sacramenti. Un trattato per lo studio e per la prassi*. Brescia 1999, p. 466.

¹⁴ “A Catholic believes — writes Fr. Alfons Skowronek — that it is through marriage that one is granted grace and becomes sanctified together with one’s spouse whereas an Evangelical believes that it is through word and sacrament that one receives grace — not through but in marriage.” A. SKOWRONEK: “Dwie teologie...,” p. 71.

due to the mediation of the proclaimed Gospel. Sanctification of marriage as a state comes only in the course of common life when realizing the two basic aims of marriage: marital intercourse and breeding children.¹⁵ As a result, while, according to the Catholic doctrine, sanctity of marriage follows from its sacramental character, that is, its objective element — the sanctity of marriage, according to Luther, can only follow from subjective elements, that is, from a personal act of faith in God's word on marriage in the Scripture.¹⁶

Rejection of the sacramentality of marriage by Luther and regarding it as a part of the "secular" or "outer" order also leads, as a consequence, to making it independent of the Church law and dependent on the Civil Code. At the foundation of this position of Luther and the Lutheran tradition, there is a conviction that, as a result of original sin, marriage has lost its direct dependence on the Creator. Original sin makes it impossible for the human to come to know God's law. Therefore, there must be an appropriate authority, established by God, which shall interpret that law properly. This authority belongs to the state whose head is also a "minister of God" who should look after it that God's commandments are observed in the world. Consequently, marriage as a "secular thing" becomes subordinated to the secular rule, and not that of the Church.¹⁷

This doctrine was grounded by Luther elaborating his notion of the Church as an invisible spiritual community of the faithful. According to this conception, marriage cannot be "part" of the Church or be subject to her competence because, by its nature, it concerns the outer order. Only the very life in marriage belongs to Church management. Luther did not make a clear distinction between the range of competence in the secular and in the Church rule, but, in any case, he did not grant the state a complete and exclusive rule over marriage. On the one hand, he was absolutely opposed to the Church interfering in married couples' issues; on the other hand, however, he realized that their possible moral conflicts, which definitely belong to the inner range, can be solved only within the Church community. In this way, the Church should look after the salvation of the married couples. Marriage should also be established

¹⁵ Cf. K. KARSKI: *Symbolika. Zarys wiedzy o Kościołach i wspólnotach chrześcijańskich*. Warszawa 1994, p. 138; S. JANKOWSKI: "Kwestia nierozzerwalności małżeństwa w kontekście ekumenicznym." *Ateneum Kapłańskie* 139 (2002), B. 1: 132; J. MOTYKA: "Luter o rodzinie..." pp. 93—96.

¹⁶ Cf. W.B. ZUBERT: "K. Suppan, *Die Ehelehre Martin Luthers (...)* (review)." *Prawo Kanoniczne* 17, nos. 3—4 (1974), p. 315.

¹⁷ Cf. IDEM: "Prawno-historyczne przesłanki nowej wykładni kan. 1082 KPK." *Śląskie Studia Historyczno-Teologiczne* 10 (1977), p. 266.

in the presence of the community of the faithful. The ecclesiastic form of marriage, however, has no strict legal character, but its task is to stimulate the faith in the spouses as it is only owing to faith that married life can contribute to their sanctification.¹⁸

Following this general brief presentation of the Evangelical concept of marriage, we can set the question: What — having the above as the background — can we say about the dissolubility of marriage and acceptability of it being dissolved in the Lutheran tradition?

2. Indissolubility versus Acceptability of Marriage Dissolution

The Evangelical Lutheran Church teaches firmly that matrimony is a permanent bond established for a lifetime in accordance with Jesus' words: "What God has joined together, man must not separate" (Mt 19:6). This was also the stand of Martin Luther who considered marriage to be indissoluble by nature.¹⁹ In this case, indissolubility of the bond follows from the essential value pertaining, in the light of the Bible, to God's faithful love. It is His love that the love of husband and wife blessed by God should become witness of. Thus, marriage appears as a whole life's community — however, not in legal but in existential categories: as a fulfillment of the plan of God the Creator.²⁰

Divorce is abandonment of God's will and order. It is a great evil, and therefore it is accepted only as the final solution when the conjugal union breaks down for some important reasons.²¹ In such a situation, the Evangelical Lutheran Church does not forbid the procedure of divorce but it leaves it to the civil court. She emphasizes at the same time that a human

¹⁸ Cf. IDEM: "Prawno-historyczne przesłanki...", p. 265; A. SKOWRONEK: "Dwie teologie małżeństwa...", p. 71.

¹⁹ Cf. K. KARSKI: *Symbolika...*, p. 139. This idea was expressed by Luther in the form of the act of contracting matrimony given in his *Wedding Book* (WA 30, III, pp. 74—80). Cf. W.B. ZUBERT: "Prawno-historyczne przesłanki...", p. 268, note 29.

²⁰ Cf. A. CONCI: "Matrimonio e divorzio nella tradizione protestante." *La Scuola Cattolica* 2009, no. 3: 450—452. Considering this, Evangelical theologians are critical about the views of the Roman Catholic theologians according to whom marriage is more susceptible to dissolution when sacramentality is not recognized. The Evangelicals emphasize that grounding indissolubility of marriage in the faithful love of God is not less obliging than seeking for its grounds in sacramentality of marriage. Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 451.

²¹ Cf. B. TRANDA: "Ewangelicki pogląd na małżeństwo." *Przegląd Powszechny* 1996, no. 1, p. 33.

is personally responsible before God for the dissolving of his or her marriage, and the secular authority only states in public that the marital bond has been dissolved according with the Scriptures. In the Lutheran Church, remarriage is possible after the ruling of the divorce by a civil court.²²

“Lutheranism, then — K. Karski writes — regards marriage as a life-long relationship, but it is not blind to the fact that many people are not able to remain faithful to the partner according with the marriage vows. This experience leads one to the conviction that the state legislation should allow for divorces, and that, generally, a wedding of the divorced in the Church should be possible.”²³

It was exactly these fairly practical reasons that induced Luther to present a theoretical justification of the possibility of divorce. Initially, he based his views of divorce not on biblical arguments but on referring to the principle of lay character of marriage and on rejection of its sacramentality. However, when confronting the Catholic theology, which referred to texts of the New Testament for its doctrine of indissolubility of marriage, also Luther began searching for a theological confirmation of his opinion on this matter in the Holy Scripture.²⁴

As far as understanding of clauses is concerned, Luther and his followers accepted their literal interpretation, that is, as exceptions from the principle of indissolubility. Such an exception and a basis for divorce is — according to the Holy Scripture — found, first of all, in adultery, which thwarts marriage.²⁵ In his works, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520) and *On Married Life* (1522), Luther also added more reasons justifying divorce — which testified to his understanding of human weakness: impotence, being abandoned by one’s spouse, and the spouse’s constant refusal to fulfill the marital duty.²⁶

²² Cf. Ibidem, p. 33; W.B. ZUBERT: “Prawno-historyczne przesłanki...,” p. 268.

²³ Cf. K. KARSKI: *Symbolika...*, p. 139. We can add that Evangelical circles do not consider separation as a satisfactory solution of marital problems. To their mind, it is a partial solution, and one that is practically impossible to put into life because chastity is a unique gift of God received by few people. Cf. W.B. ZUBERT: “Prawno-historyczne przesłanki...,” pp. 266—267; B. TRANDA: “Ewangelicki...,” pp. 32—33.

²⁴ Cf. W.B. ZUBERT: “Prawno-historyczne przesłanki...,” p. 267.

²⁵ Cf. M. LUTHER: *A Sermon for the Sixth Sunday after Easter (Exaudi)* [May 8th, 1524]. WA 15, p. 561. Luther considered adultery as the greatest theft and robbery. Cf. M. HINTZ: “Poglądy...,” pp. 22—23.

²⁶ Cf. W. PABIASZ: *Małżeństwo...*, pp. 80—84; S. JANKOWSKI: “Kwestia nierozzerwalności małżeństwa...,” p. 133; A. BELLINI: “Il matrimonio in Lutero e Calvino.” In: V. MELCHIORRE (ed.), *Amore e matrimonio nel pensiero filosofico e teologico moderno*. Milano 1976, pp. 67—69. According to other reformers, one should count among the reasons justifying a divorce also mistreatment by the spouse, incompatibility, apostasy and heresy. Cf. J. WRÓBEL: “Małżeństwo w dokumentach Soboru Trydenckiego.” *Roczniki Teologiczne* (KUL) 54 (2007), B. 3, pp. 66—67.

Luther believed that the secular authority could inflict the capital punishment on the guilty spouse in all these cases. In this way, he interprets the above mentioned reasons for dissolubility of marriage in terms of civil death: the guilty spouse should be considered as dead. This opinion is part of Luther's general view of marriage as an interpersonal event. Consequently, any serious destruction caused in the relation with the spouse and God should be considered as killing of the marriage.²⁷

It should be noted that the question of the reasons which justify dissolution of marriage is not always clearly presented. On the one hand, they are formulated on the grounds of the Holy Scripture. On the other hand, we can see the tendency to increase the number of the reasons which takes into account the existential factor, that is, the whole sphere of human co-existence. All this leads to the conclusion that Luther and his followers, and also the Orthodox Church, are marked by realism, that is, awareness that not all people can afford to meet the requirements of the Gospel teaching on marriage. This is why the Evangelical Lutheran Church allows for divorce as a lesser evil. It is not without significance for the development of the practice of divorce in Protestantism that sacramentality of marriage has been rejected and marriage has been left under the management of civil law.²⁸

In answer to the reformers' views, the Council of Trent spoke against dissolubility of marriage, even in case of adultery. The Council confirmed the sacramental character of matrimony and the Church's competence in dealing with its issues.²⁹

3. Indissolubility of Marriage from the Ecumenical Perspective

Issues concerning marriage, including its indissolubility, became subject of some of the theological ecumenical dialogues between Catholics and Christians of other denominations in the West. Considering the scope of our topic, we should pay attention especially to the document of

²⁷ Cf. M. LUTHER: *The Estate of Marriage*. WA 10, II, p. 289; W.B. ZUBERT: "Prawno-historyczne przesłanki...", p. 268; A. BELLINI: *Il matrimonio...*, p. 68; A. CONCI: *Matrimonio e divorzio...*, p. 456; C. MARUCCI: *Matrimonio e divorzio...*, pp. 53, 57.

²⁸ Cf. M. HINTZ: "Poglądy...", p. 23; A. BELLINI: *Il matrimonio...*, p. 71; S. JANKOWSKI: "Kwestia nierozzerwalności małżeństwa...", p. 134.

²⁹ Cf. THE COUNCIL OF TRENT: Session XXIV (1563), Can. 1—12. W: *Breviarium fidei. Wybór doktrynalnych wypowiedzi Kościoła*. Red. S. GŁOWA, I. BIEDA. Poznań 1998, pp. 504—506; L. BRESSAN: *Il canone tridentino sul divorzio per adulterio e l'interpretazione degli autori*. Roma 1973, pp. 193—199; Cf. J. WRÓBEL: "Małżeństwo...", pp. 72—78.

the Scholarly Commission of the Roman Catholic Church, the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches: *Theology of Marriage and the Problems of Mixed Marriages* published in 1976.³⁰

All the authors of the document agreed that marriage is a lifelong obligation. At the same time, an essential difference between Roman Catholics, on the one hand, and the Lutherans and the Reformed Christians on the other, was noticed, for instance, in their view of the “sacramental” character when discussing divorce or remarriage.³¹

If the marriage has been validly contracted and consummated, the Roman Catholic Church considers it as “the sacrament or sign of the union of Christ with the Church, and thus, [...] indissoluble as this union.” “If in the end the continuation of conjugal life seems impossible,” the Catholic Church allows for physical separation. “But if the spouses decide to obtain a divorce, then the Catholic Church considers that it has not the right to view the second marriage which might follow as a Christian marriage or even as a valid one. That is, it denies that this second marriage, following upon a divorce, can represent the union of Christ with the Church, a union which lasts for ever.”³²

As for the Reformation Churches, “even though they hold that marriage is a sign of the Covenant, they do not consider Christian marriage to be a sacrament in the full sense of the word.” To be true, they see the union of Christ and the Church as the prototype of Christian marriage, but this does not imply for them that, in case of a total disruption, a divorce should contradict the mystery of Christ. “That is why when it seems that the marriage cannot continue any longer, the Reformation Churches consider that the bond of marriage has been destroyed, a fact which is ascertainable, like death. Therefore, nothing remains of the first marriage that could prevent remarriage. This does not mean that in this way the Reformation Churches resign themselves to divorce; but once divorce exists, they would not consider themselves bound to hold that a new Christian marriage is always impossible.”³³

³⁰ The Polish translation of the document: “Teologia małżeństwa a problem małżeństw międzywyznaniowych. Sprawozdanie końcowe Komisji Naukowej Kościołów Rzymskokatolickiego, Luterańskiego i Kalwińskiego za rok 1976.” W: *Ekumenia a współczesne wyzwania moralne*. Red. T. KAŁUŻNY, Z. KIJAS. Kraków 2009, pp. 199—241; W. HANC: “Problem małżeństw mieszanych oraz próby rozwiązań na przykładzie międzywyznaniowych dialogów.” *Studia Oecumenica* 3 (2003), pp. 90—91.

³¹ Cf. “Teologia małżeństwa a problem małżeństw międzywyznaniowych...,” nos. 24—25.

³² Ibidem, nos. 26—27.

³³ Ibidem, nos. 29—30. Cf. K. KARSKI: “Kwestie moralne w dokumentach dialogu katolicko-protestanckiego oraz Wspólnej Grupy Roboczej Światowej Rady Kościołów i Kościoła Rzymskokatolickiego.” W: *Ekumenia...*, pp. 108—109.

At the same time, the representatives of the Reformation Churches stated that they perceived certain events in the history of the Roman Catholic Church as confirmation of their convictions. They pointed to the fact that “at the Councils in Florence and Trent, the Catholic Church strengthened her notion of marriage dissolubility, on the one hand, however, on the other, she did not want to evaluate the position of the Orthodox on the issue.”³⁴

We find similar arguments in the document of the official Catholic-Lutheran dialogue conducted at the world forum: *Facing Unity* (1984).³⁵ We read in it: “In the area of ethical decisions, it appears important that the Catholic Church right up to and including the Council of Trent did not condemn the practice of divorced persons remarrying in the Eastern Orthodox churches although it did reject this practice for itself.”³⁶

Certain topics referring to dissolubility of marriage can be also found in local dialogue documents of Catholics and Evangelicals. One document is worth mentioning here first of all — on baptism and marriage (1972) — a result of the dialogue among the Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed Church in France.³⁷ In its last point, the document takes up the issue of indissolubility and divorce, pointing to the differences between Catholics and Protestants in this matter.³⁸

³⁴ “Teologia małżeństwa a problem małżeństw międzywyznaniowych...,” no. 32. Cf. K. KARSKI: *Kwestie moralne...*, p. 109.

³⁵ Cf. “Jedność przed nami. Raport Wspólnej Komisji Rzymskokatolicko-Ewangelicko-luterańskiej” (1984). W: *Blżej wspólnoty. Katolicy i luteranie w dialogu 1965-2000*. Red. K. KARSKI, S.C. NAPIÓRKOWSKI. Lublin 2003, pp. 283—345; K. KARSKI: *Kwestie moralne...*, p. 109.

³⁶ “Jedność przed nami...,” no. 65.

³⁷ Cf. COMITATO MISTO CATTOLICO-LUTERANO-RIFORMATO DI FRANCIA: “Battesimo e matrimonio. Dichiarazione e accordo dottrinale.” *EOe* (1972), vol. 2, pp. 261—268.

³⁸ Cf. *Ibidem*, pp. 267—268. Referring to this, another document is also worth mentioning, namely, the one signed by the Italian Episcopal Conference and the evangelical Churches of Waldenses (Union of the Methodist Church and the Waldenses’ Church) and published in 1993, titled: *Common text of pastoral directions for mixed marriages of Catholics, Methodists and Waldenses in Italy*. Cf. ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELLA CONFERENZA EPISCOPALE ITALIANA — SINODO DELLE CHIESE VALDESI E METODISTE IN ITALIA: “Testo comune per un indirizzo pastorale dei matrimoni misti,” *EOe*, vol. 8, pp. 1000—1023. In 2000, this document was appended with a “Text on application” (“Testo applicativo”), which offers practical indications concerning civil aspects of the issue, celebration of mixed marriages, baptism and religious education of children. Cf. CONFERENZA EPISCOPALE ITALIANA — CHIESA EVANGELICA VALDESE: “Testo applicativo del Testo comune per un indirizzo pastorale dei matrimoni tra cattolici e valdesi o metodisti in Italia.” *EOe*, vol. 8, pp. 1024—1043. The project of the document on mixed marriages which is being prepared in Poland by the Churches assembled in the Polish Ecumenical Council — makes reference to the Italian document. Cf. *Małżeństwo chrześcijańskie o różnej przynależności wyznaniowej* (draft, version of March 9th, 2009, typescript, 4 pp.).