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## Freedom and Christology according to "Theologiae Benedictae" : Two Concepts, Two Anthropologies, One Logos

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Freedom and Christology according to  
*Theologiae Benedictae*  
Two Concepts, Two Anthropologies,  
One Logos/Son

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“Jesus’ message is the Gospel not because we like it without reservation or because it is comfortable and nice, but because it comes from the One who holds the keys to authentic joy. The truth is not always convenient for man, however only the truth sets one free and only freedom gives happiness.”<sup>1</sup> The meaning of life, that is, a genuine joy of life, comes from the bond between the truth and freedom. For the truth sets one free and freedom obtained this way (there is no other way) gives one happiness, which is joy coming from the sense of meaning (other joys happen in life as well, but in comparison to the joy of the meaning, they appear to be superficial). Therefore: from the truth to freedom, from the truth into freedom. Thanks to the truth — freedom.

But there is also a negative side of this interrelation, and more specifically, of the absence thereof, the effect of atrophy of understanding of an internal dependence of the truth and freedom or the effect of life in falsehood and slavery — quite often a mixture of the both, in various proportions. Joseph Ratzinger writes: “[...] anarchistic pseudo-freedom remains active where the relation between the truth and its requirements [...] is

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<sup>1</sup> BENEDYKT XVI/J. RATZINGER: *Formalne zasady chrześcijaństwa. Szkice do teologii fundamentalnej*. Trans. W. SZYMONA. Poznań 2009 (hereafter: FZC), p. 101.

being questioned. These falsified freedoms are quite powerful nowadays, they are a real threat to the real freedom. Clarification [*La chiarificazione*<sup>2</sup>] concerning the notion of freedom is today a decisive task, when it comes to rescue of people and the world.”<sup>3</sup>

And this issue is not restricted to our contemporary times. Regardless of the era and particular questions (as well as the current threats, such as a type of “misstatements of freedom,” etc.), the essence of man always remains the same: freedom suspended between good and evil, between life and death.<sup>4</sup> Freedom — a great gift of God, indelible feature of our similarity to the Creator and our biggest task, makes our fate both wonderful and “Divine” (image and likeness) as well as unsettled and endangered in many ways. Christianity — following God — respects freedom to its ultimate consequences and never offers any cheap, fraudulent, quasi-magical certainty of salvation.<sup>5</sup> This is the essence of Christian thinking and realism in this respect: freedom — with all its unique, irreplaceable beauty and drama — is real. Therefore, in the profundity of the soul that the Bible calls “heart,” the man is always in need of salvation.<sup>6</sup> He needs help, he needs God, and — let us refer to an adage by Benedict XVI, one of his most famous ones — “all the answers that do not reach up to God are too myopic.”<sup>7</sup> Freedom, this crucial space of humanity in which the definitive is decided upon, cannot be deceived. It cannot be filled by things that do not reach up to the definite.

## 1. Logos — Divine source of freedom

“De-falsification” and “enlightenment” regarding the notion of freedom<sup>8</sup> must reach up to the very roots of the origin of freedom and understanding of the notion. And the roots are in God — the Creator of man. Therefore, freedom is so deeply related to love — in God, in the creation;

<sup>2</sup> J. RATZINGER: *Natura e compito della Teologia. Il teologo nella disputa contemporanea. Storia e dogma*. Milano 1993, p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> IDEM: *Prawda w teologii*. Trans. M. MIJALSKA. Kraków 2001 (hereinafter: PwT), p. 46.

<sup>4</sup> BENEDYKT XVI: *Myśli duchowe*. Trans. W. SZYMONA. Poznań 2008 (hereinafter: MD), pp. 202—203.

<sup>5</sup> J. RATZINGER: *Kościół. Pielgrzymująca wspólnota wiary*. Trans. W. SZYMONA. Kraków 2005, p. 94.

<sup>6</sup> MD, p. 203.

<sup>7</sup> MD, p. 167.

<sup>8</sup> PwT, p. 46.

from God comes this inseparable closeness. In the deepest sense freedom cannot be “taken the possession of” (reached, obtained, regained, etc.) neither by violence, courage, deceit, nor by work. Indeed, partly through all these means (and through many other, more or less effective actions), but only partially — as a matter of fact — and not with respect to the heart of freedom reaching its ontic substance: this one is related to love. Because it is the gift of God-Love, who made freedom an indelible mark of purity of his creative act, and therefore the image and likeness. Joseph Ratzinger on the exodus from Egypt, the paradigm of all kinds of liberation of man, nations and mankind, with a clear reference to the Divine “heart of freedom”: freedom can be accomplished only by love that sacrifices itself and binds men together in their own depth, and this because it allows them to maintain the divine dimension.”<sup>9</sup>

This dependence is, which is theologically obvious, mutual. Freedom is the basis of the mystery of love.<sup>10</sup> And this also includes “Divine” (of God). What is important in this relationship is its Divine source: Logos. The Christian faith, containing comprehensive understanding of freedom, sees the foundation of freedom in Logos — within the logic of the all-comprising-reality that it implies, the Christian faith sees the foundation of freedom, justification of its primacy in the structure of creation: “Only relationship with Logos establishes freedom as a structural principle of reality.”<sup>11</sup> How?

Since the logos of all existence, which supports and embraces everything, is consciousness, freedom, and love, it follows that freedom (reasonable, open to love and being a prerequisite of love) is the highest in the world, higher than a cosmic necessity and fate of determination. Freedom is the structure of the world that — for this reason, for reasons of freedom and love — is impossible to comprehend, unpredictable. It cannot be reduced to the mathematical logic.<sup>12</sup> Theology is something more when compared to the logic, but for the price of mystery. Equally to a mystery of its name and unpredictability of a person contrary to banality of a number. True, names in the Bible are given by the indefinitely free God, while numbers are bestowed by someone else, someone held captive by evil. However, the world, thanks to this mystery, as the field of love, is the space open to

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<sup>9</sup> J. RATZINGER: *Kościół — Ekumenizm — Polityka*. Ed. and trans. by L. BALTER and others. Poznań—Warszawa 1990 (hereinafter: KEP), p. 298.

<sup>10</sup> J. RATZINGER/BENEDYKT XVI: *W czas Bożego Narodzenia*. Trans. K. WÓJTOWICZ. Kraków 2001, p. 15.

<sup>11</sup> J. RATZINGER: *Czas przemian w Europie. Miejsce Kościoła i świata*. Trans. M. MIJAŁSKA. Kraków 2001, pp. 99—100.

<sup>12</sup> IDEM: *Wprowadzenie w chrześcijaństwo*. Trans. Z. WŁODKOWA. Kraków 2006<sup>3</sup> (hereinafter: WwCh), p. 161.

freedom. But through this it allows for the risk of evil. “It risks the mystery of darkness with a view to the greater light, which is freedom and love.”<sup>13</sup> It is not possible to love without freedom — this is the decisive argument of the Christian faith.<sup>14</sup> As one concludes from God’s logic, this is a priceless argument. This world (with freedom, love, and the risk of evil) is wanted by God, such a world has been created by Him. Consent to this risk of darkness is probably one of the most theologically difficult issues. The Creator is worthy of His creation’s trust: these are matters of God: freedom and love, “the light bigger than that darkness.” The structure of the world is of Logos, of the divine Word and Wisdom, of God. It is bigger than anything else — it is light that is bigger here: freedom and love as its result.

Along those lines, freedom is something absolutely essential to Christianity, for its very capability. It is the environment of its life — it is water in which the Christian faith flows to its aim, it is the air that it breathes. However, this freedom — with all its greatness and indispensability — includes (by its very nature) the risk which creates the ambiguity and equivocation of its image. It is fragile, susceptible to injuries, but without it we would not be people, children of God. A magnificent hymn in honour of freedom, containing both a description of its greatness and its internal implications, its passionate defense, arguments for its indispensability for human affairs, is presented in the central parts of the encyclical *Spe Salvi*. This is a hymn in honour of freedom as the only warrantor of human hope, against its political instrumentalisation in the name of progress (especially totalitarian structures meant to serve the so-called future of mankind, which always ends up in genocide). Here is a great Christian lesson on freedom, a lesson of Logos — neither happiness nor hope for the price of depravation of freedom exists:

[...] freedom is always new and he must always make his decisions anew. These decisions can never simply be made for us in advance by others — if that were the case, we would no longer be free. Freedom presupposes that in fundamental decisions, every person and every generation is a new beginning. Naturally, new generations can build on the knowledge and experience of those who went before, and they can draw upon the moral treasury of the whole of humanity. But they can also reject it, because it can never be self-evident in the same way as material inventions. The moral treasury of humanity is not readily at hand like tools that we use; it is present as an appeal to freedom and a possibility for it. This, however, means that:

<sup>13</sup> WwCh, p. 162.

<sup>14</sup> J. RATZINGER: *Bóg i świat. Wiara i życie w dzisiejszych czasach* [conversation with P. SEEWALD]. Trans. G. SOWINSKI. Kraków 2001 (hereinafter: BiŚ), pp. 51—53.

a) The right state of human affairs, the moral well-being of the world can never be guaranteed simply through structures alone, however good they are. Such structures are not only important, but necessary; yet they cannot and must not marginalize human freedom. Even the best structures function only when the community is animated by convictions capable of motivating people to assent freely to the social order. Freedom requires conviction; conviction does not exist on its own, but must always be gained anew by the community.

b) Since man always remains free and since his freedom is always fragile, the kingdom of good will never be definitively established in this world. Anyone who promises the better world that is guaranteed to last forever is making a false promise; he is overlooking human freedom. Freedom must constantly be won over for the cause of good. Free assent to the good never exists simply by itself. If there were structures which could irrevocably guarantee a determined — good — state of the world, man's freedom would be denied, and hence they would not be good structures at all.

[...] a hope that does not concern me personally is not a real hope. It has also become clear that this hope is opposed to freedom, since human affairs depend in each generation on the free decisions of those concerned. If this freedom were to be taken away, as a result of certain conditions or structures, then ultimately this world would not be good, since a world without freedom can by no means be a good world.<sup>15</sup>

Careful reading of this section shows us the power of Christian knowledge and why the Church of Christ is the biggest in the history of mankind, real protector of the real freedom (indeed, pseudo-protectors of pseudo-freedom were louder). Even if the followers of Christ, co-creators of the Church, are weak, sinful and did not manage to build a good world... pro-freedom power of Christianity resides in the truth about man and the world, in the purity of intentions, in freedom of naive realism of perception and understanding of human nature. But all this has even deeper source: Logos, the intellect that comes from God. Intellect to

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<sup>15</sup> BENEDICT XVI: Encyclical *Spe Salvi* (30.11.2007), Nos. 24, 30. "Freedom that stems from historical necessities and therefore belongs to man from outside, as it were, is not freedom at all. And on the contrary, within human history there can never be a final, inviolable social order, for man is free, and this freedom allows him to transform good into its denial. If any society would take this freedom away from him definitely, this society would become absolute tyranny, and therefore a society that is disordered.

The myth of a necessary and directable development of history is gradually dispelled. It becomes clear, that its perspective is not a historical one. For the real history denies it constantly. It can be conveyed, however leaving behind the real history." KEP, p. 289.

which faith clings and on which it is nourished. Thanks to this (thanks to Him, because it is Jesus Christ we are talking about) Christianity knows that “His kingdom is not of this world” (J 18:36), that one should abandon “waiting for any internal-historic salvation,” that freedom of man in a temporal order of things is constantly opened both to “yes” and “no”, that the great drama of history of the world is not a puppet show, and freedom is the truth to the very core of humanity and the created reality. The world project is “unfinished” indeed, a both construction and deconstruction are equally possible. Truth sets one free, freedom is real.<sup>16</sup>

And the Christian faith knows that in all this (not outside or beside) Christ is the Lord of history and Saviour of our freedom.

## 2. Two concepts of freedom — two anthropologies

At this point, however, we should finally ask a question that is fundamental for further reflection: What is freedom? How should it be understood? What ideas and theories are hidden behind its particular interpretations (and implementations or at least attempts of implementation)? What vision of reality, what philosophy, anthropology, theology are to be found “underneath”? And the most important question: What is freedom in the light of the Eternal Word of God, *in veritatis splendore*?

In the mid-1980s two documents of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on the Theology of Liberation were published. Both the documents were signed by the prefect of the congregation (Joseph Ratzinger) and its secretary (Alberto Bovone). The first one is *Instruction on certain aspects of the “Theology of Liberation”* dated 6 August 1984. The second one is *Instruction on Christian freedom and liberation* dated 22 March 1986. Both of the instructions, widely discussed in theology and commentaries of the last decades of the 20th century (even today, to be exact) constitute a compendium of views of the present pope on freedom and liberation in the context of the phenomenon of the so-called Theology of Liberation. But they are first and foremost a peculiar centre around which other, numerous texts concerning the issue of freedom were written (e.g. *Freedom and liberation*<sup>17</sup>; *Eschatology and utopia*<sup>18</sup>; *Freedom and ties in the*

<sup>16</sup> Cf. KEP, pp. 280—281; J. RATZINGER: *Sól ziemi. Chrześcijaństwo i Kościół katolicki na przełomie tysiącleci* [conversation with P. SEEWALD]. Trans. G. SOWINSKI. Kraków 1997, p. 189.

<sup>17</sup> KEP, pp. 287—304.

<sup>18</sup> KEP, pp. 271—286.

*Church*<sup>19</sup>). They include two major answers to a question concerning the nature of freedom and their detailed description and analysis. Two concepts of freedom emerge from the articles of that time. The first one is defined by Ratzinger in one of the texts as “the notion of ‘freedom’ in the modern history of spirit,” the second one as “a modern concept of ‘freedom’ in the life of the Church.”<sup>20</sup> To simplify, in a justifiable way, we may call the former concept the “Enlightenment-liberal” one, while the latter concept can be described as the “Biblical-theological one.”

### 3. The concept of “freedom” in the modern history of spirit

The former concept, in accordance with its name, is derived by Ratzinger from the spirit and the letter of the Enlightenment, from its *sapere aude* (“dare to use reason”), a peculiar focus on reason (that distances itself from the sphere of religious faith) and the self-determination.<sup>21</sup> It has been 200, maybe 300 years (depending on how we date the Enlightenment, disputes of historians are still going on) and the Enlightenment concept of freedom gets extended — over Romanticism, the national awakening of the 19th and 20th century, bloody totalitarian turmoil and the two world wars — into liberal democracy, where the will of the majority will decide upon everything and specify what is reasonable and ethical and therefore shall make law, deciding arbitrarily about the content of the notion of “truth” and, what interests us the most at the moment, the shape, understanding, and the scope of freedom. For the last 22 years (1989—2011) *Gazeta Wyborcza* daily, which undoubtedly is the mass media organ of the Enlightenment-liberal concept of freedom in Poland, at least several times (if not more) mentioned Voltaire’s motto according to which “there is no freedom for the enemies of freedom” (as defined by liberals, of course). There is a reason to be afraid, because Europe is a place where this type of seemingly theoretical theses have been (and still are) painfully put into practice. Not to mention its softer version, that is, deprivation of freedom of thought: academic exclusion, social ostracism.

In any event, on the way to the situation of freedom of the first decades of the 21st century, the Enlightenment Kant was joined by an idealist Hegel. In the latter’s opinion, freedom is served by those who stand on the

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<sup>19</sup> KEP, pp. 224—240.

<sup>20</sup> KEP, pp. 225, 231.

<sup>21</sup> KEP, p. 225.



side of the logic of history<sup>22</sup> (in this concept theo-logic is subordinated, let us be absolutely clear about it). Karl Marx developed this extremely dogmatic concept of freedom (imminent historical necessity is freedom, and therefore, history of freedom is history of the party<sup>23</sup>). Those who are an obstacle to the advance of freedom (religionists, bourgeoisie, kulaks, etc.) must be removed. This conglomerate has been enriched by Sartre: a man deprived of essence, pure existence, is yet to be invented and created.<sup>24</sup> On top of this comes neo-Marxism (who knows, maybe the current king on campuses of European and American universities, especially in the realm of disputes concerning ideas of freedom and its content) and post-modernism in plurality of varieties of its “poor thought,” which makes no claim to define anything (especially positive content of the notion of freedom) and is satisfied with an encroaching deconstruction of all kinds of ideas (especially those which are able to make a living on them). And yet the encroachment has a clearly defined direction: nothingness.

Source and conceptual disorder is rather considerable here:

Evolutionary ideas, Hegelian influence, legacy of Marxist thought, reflections of humanities — all this is mixed with each other in a single, difficult to define, or specify, conceptual aggregate. The entire history is depicted as a process of progressing liberations, the mechanism of which is explained gradually and thanks to this we are able to control it. And here a fascinating promise is made: man is able to be the engineer of his own history. He or she no longer has to count on his or her always uncertain and fragile good will or put his trust in his moral decisions. Now he looks at the very fabric of the process of freedom and is able to create conditions, in which will is good in itself — similarly to the current situation, in which will is evil in itself. Ethical concerns and efforts may become unnecessary, when it is man himself who directs history.<sup>25</sup>

However, the effect of this demiurgical hodgepodge is tragic:

[...] approval of anthropology, which seems to be [...] a consequent completion of the Enlightenment, bringing up a man to specific attitudes based on values seem to be enslavement of his very essence, and indeed, even upbringing itself is as an assault committed by an authority and tradition. Only one pedagogy seems to be right as the real pedagogy of freedom: upbringing to rebellion against any existing values, unlimited liberation of man who is in the process of “creative” self-definition. [...] It has not been decided, what is man and what he should be.

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<sup>22</sup> KEP, p. 229.

<sup>23</sup> KEP, p. 229.

<sup>24</sup> KEP, p. 230.

<sup>25</sup> KEP, p. 288.

[...] the idea of freedom is brought here to the extreme radicalism, it is understood not as an emancipation from tradition and authority, but as an emancipation from the idea of creation, which took a shape of man, emancipation from its own essence, total indeterminism, open to everything. However this is a kind of freedom that becomes hell at the same time, to be free is to be doomed.<sup>26</sup>

What does a supporter of the Enlightenment-liberal concept of freedom expect? Probably he or she expects more or less things that Karl Marx “defined as a full vision of freedom,” the results of liberation, revolution, and a new social awareness: “...hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon... criticism after dinner, just as I have a mind...”<sup>27</sup> Can it be that banal according to the major ideologist of freedom? To shed an ocean of bourgeois and proletarian blood to be able to go fishing? Freedom as an opportunity to do everything that one wishes to do, but only things that one wishes alone? This is only willfulness, nothing more, and its destination is only anarchy...<sup>28</sup> Is it possible that ideas reached to the cobbles and the essence of the Enlightenment-liberal freedom in Europe is “to have vacation” and that “freedom smells of petrol”? In August 2011 protests against economic austerity measures came to a halt in Athens, Madrid saw beginning of protests against the pope coming to the World Youth Days, there were riots on the streets of London accompanied by destruction of the city caused by greed and anarchic sense of power over good and evil, lust to destroy, type of “freedom,” which loves destruction. But the columnist of *Gazeta Wyborcza* defends his Enlightenment-liberal point of view:

I do not believe in simple explanations that seek reasons of riots either in multiculturalism or atheisation [anything but the latter! — J. Sz.]. Young people like the thrill of emotions provided by robbery of shops and setting buildings on fire, due to the same reasons for which they like extreme

<sup>26</sup> KEP, p. 230. For the purpose of illustration: In *Wysokie obcasy*, a Saturday addition to *Gazeta Wyborcza* an advertisement and enthusiastic review of a book by a German psychologist and therapist Ute Ehrhardt entitled *Good girls go to heaven, bad girls go everywhere* (Warsaw 2010) was published. Once again: “Freedom becomes hell at the same time, to be free is to be doomed.”

<sup>27</sup> *Marx-Engels-Werke*. Berlin-Ost 1967—1974, III, p. 33; cf. K. Löw: *Warum fasziert der Kommunismus?* Köln 1980, pp. 64 ff. (quotation: after: KEP, p. 290).

<sup>28</sup> K. Löw: *Warum...*, after KEP, p. 290: “A German town, second half of the 80s, Autumn, Sunday, I am going for a walk. Suddenly I can see a guy, 60 years old, long grey hair, skating down the street and smiling at me. I thought: my goodness, this is freedom. I wish I could be like this, too. When we won the elections, this first trip abroad came to my mind, maybe a little bit naively. A few years later, it was me who was skating down the road.”

sports. Their bodies produce such hormones, as easy as that. If we do not want them to satisfy these hormonal needs on the streets — we need to have real policemen on the streets [not only cameras — J. Sz.].<sup>29</sup>

Is that it? Is it really so? Guilty are the hormones and the entire concept of freedom implemented this way, from Immanuel Kant to Rorty and Sloterdijk is indisputably correct? In the same August 2011, parallel to the mentioned events, the World Youth Day with Benedict XVI takes place in Madrid. A million and a half people participated in the Holy Mass on Sunday, August 21st, at Cuatro Vientos airport. Prayer, joy, hope. Peace. Do not their bodies produce hormones, too?

And for sure atheisation is not responsible for any sickness of human freedom? Atheisation is too simple an explanation?

#### 4. The modern concept of “freedom” in the life of the Church

The second concept, the biblical-theological one, is based on the conviction that the Christian faith is a genuine liberation of man.<sup>30</sup> The key concept of Greek philosophy is the word *eleutheria* (freedom), which, irrespective of the so-called freedom of choice (because it is the result, not the essence of freedom), is the opposite of slavish since it refers to affiliation, to a sense of “being at home,” to co-responsibility and satisfaction: “free is the one who is at his/her place, at home.”<sup>31</sup> The Bible reinforces the entire issue even further: free is the one, who is born of Sarah, not of Hagar, he shall have a right of inheritance (cf. Galatians 4:21—31). So the difference between freedom and slavery is understood here “most of all on the status, the type of belonging that defines the right of inheritance, the right of residence and ownership. To be free means to be an heir, that is, to be the owner, freedom is identical with the sonhood (Galatians 4:5).<sup>32</sup> The heir is the Son. And with Him all his brethren and sisters.

Here is the essence of the matter: to be free means to participate in the status of existence of Jesus Christ, the status of the Son of God — with all the responsibility on the heir and the dignity of the child of God. The biblical-theological concept of freedom would be the following:

<sup>29</sup> W. ORLIŃSKI: “Cyberkulturowo o zamieszkach, czyli fiasko społeczeństwa inwigilacji.” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, dated 18.08.2011 — *Duży Format*, no. 31(939), p. 13.

<sup>30</sup> KEP, p. 234.

<sup>31</sup> KEP, p. 235.

<sup>32</sup> KEP, p. 235.

[...] freedom is something else than indeterminism. It is a participation, not a participation in a specific social structure, but a participation in the being itself. This means that one is the owner of one's being, not its subject. Only on this basis one is able to describe God as the Personified Freedom, since He possesses his being completely. We can also say that freedom is identical with the highlands of being, which however makes sense only when these highlights of being are indeed "the highest": the gift of love and — giving oneself in love. Therefore, the pedagogy of freedom is about leading to the highlights of being, upbringing to being, upbringing to love, and therefore leading toward *θειωσις*, toward deification. This "being like God" is undoubtedly also the objective of radical, emancipation pedagogues who postulate unlimited, divine freedom and fullness of disposition. The objective is valid here, only the image of God is incorrect.<sup>33</sup>

Yet another longer quotation seems to be necessary here:

[...] in anarchic sense of freedom man would like to become God, who as a matter of fact does not exist outside himself. Does realism of Christian concept of freedom mean that man gives himself up, comes back to his own definiteness and wants to remain only a man? Not at all. In the light of the Christian experience of God it becomes clear that the unlimited freedom of omni-knowledge and omnipotence is modelled upon an idol, not God. True God is a self-bonding in a three-dimensional love and therefore a pure freedom. The vocation of the man is to be an image of this God, to become like Him. Man has not been invincibly closed in his finitude. First of all, he must for sure learn to acknowledge this finitude. For he should acknowledge, that he is not self-contained or autonomous. He must renounce falsehood, lack of references and discretion. He must accept his shortage, the others, their presence, the creation, limitation and direction of his own existence. Whoever is able to choose only between preferences, is not free yet. An individual is free when, along his actions, he draws solely from his interior and does not need to subdue to any external pressure any more. And an individual is free, because he became as one with his nature, one with the truth itself. For he who is one with the truth, no longer operates according to external requirements and necessities; in him the essence, desire and deed become one. In this way man is able to reach the indefinite in the finite, unite with him and — acknowledging the boundaries — be infinite himself. So finally it becomes clear again that the Christian doctrine of freedom is not a meticulous moralisation. It is accompanied by an all-embracing vision of man.<sup>34</sup>

This is a fundamental shift in the centre of gravity in the answer to the question on the essence of freedom, let us emphasise it once again:

<sup>33</sup> KEP, p. 236

<sup>34</sup> KEP, pp. 303—304.

the biblical-theological concept of freedom differs radically from the Enlightenment-liberal one, because it assumes the essence of what it is, *eleutheria* not in (ethical) freedom of choice, but in (ontic) freedom of (man's) being. This goes in line with the paradigm of derivation of all the theo-logical processes: *logos* precedes *ethos*. In other words: I am able to express freedom only when I am free, its expression itself, with the status of a slave, is pretending, self-deception, a tragic farce, an empty gesture, a road to nowhere, if you like.<sup>35</sup>

## 5. Good — a measure and matter of freedom

The differences between these two concepts of freedom bear, which is obvious when it comes to such an existential issue, enormous and far-reaching practical consequences. Some of them had already been mentioned above, directly and indirectly, while presenting a theoretical background of the issue. One has to clearly emphasise one of the consequences of the Enlightenment-liberal concept, namely anarchy and its consequences — the issue articulated clearly and repeatedly in the writing of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI. Anarchy (a notion originating from Greek, meaning literally “a lack of authority or its negation”)<sup>36</sup> is understood by him as boundless lawlessness of an individual, who

<sup>35</sup> BENEDYKT XVI: *Święto wiary. O teologii mszy świętej*. Trans. J. MERECKI. Kraków 2006, p. 62. Lack of the truth, a split between “a fact” and “an act,” is a source of confusion, aberration, tragedy: “I can express joy only when the world and being a man indeed give reasons to be joyful. Is it really so? If these questions are not asked, a party — an attempt to find a feast in a non-religious world — shall quickly become a tragic masquerade. Therefore it is no coincidence that where people were searching for their ‘deliverance,’ that is experiencing liberation in self-realisation from the burdens of everyday life, as well as experiencing community than transgresses the ‘I,’ the party soon had to blow up the borders of a small-minded entertainment, transforming it into bachanalia. Drugs taken not individually, but in groups are to generate a trip to something totally different, a trip experienced as a truly liberating journey from everyday life to the world of freedom and beauty. In the background there is the question of all questions, namely a question concerning the power of suffering and death, which cannot be defied by any freedom. A person who does not ask such questions, dwells in the world of fiction [...]. The truth sets one free. Christian freedom is not freedom of ‘thinking something out’ (which does not exist), but releasing the world and ourselves from death, and it is only this freedom that may enable us to receive the truth and love one another in the truth.” Ibidem, pp. 62—65.

<sup>36</sup> J. RATZINGER, H. MAIER: *Demokracja w Kościele. Możliwości i ograniczenia*. Trans. M. LABIŚ. Kraków 2004 (hereinafter: DwK), p. 11.

in an extreme version rejects all bonds — religious, moral, social and family ones — understanding them as ties that restrict freedom.<sup>37</sup> Where man is being “detached” from God (in all possible ways: ontic, intellectual, moral, symbolic one, etc.), where man is “thought of” without God, where anthropology disassociates itself from theology — automatically a relation between freedom and the truth and its requirements is questioned. This is the soil on which “fake freedoms” are grown, and (amongst them) today the “anarchic pseudo-freedom” is on the top.<sup>38</sup> Possibilities to strive for any vision of good that seems attractive to us are boundless,<sup>39</sup> and validity of choice is impossible to verify (the truth does not exist or is beyond our reach). If we were to refer to fashionable clichés, in the modern Polish we would say *grunt to bunt* (rebellion is what really counts)<sup>40</sup> or, even stronger, in the form of a disparaged motto *róbta, co chceta* (do whatever you want to do).

Of course, criticism of anarchic counterfeits of freedom is by no means questioning a “holy and inviolable”<sup>41</sup> rule of individual and personal freedom of every man. In this area, according to the pope, the “only absolutely necessary and indisputable value, which can even become a verification tool for other rights, is the right to individual freedom, which has to be implemented without any orders, provided that this does not affect the right of a/the neighbour”<sup>42</sup> — so it is defined, according to the pope, by “the rationalism of the Enlightenment.” This principle, legitimate in its core and with a strong Christian root, is dangerous in its pursuit of its own absolutisation. For individual freedom “is impossible” (literally, in its essence and effects) in isolation from God and, therefore, the truth. Sooner or later it shall transform in this disconnection (rather sooner than later) into dictatorship of *ego* and a centre of building tyranny<sup>43</sup>; into verbosity, and a tragic one, too. This shall be an anti-family tyranny (a family shall be announced an environment of enslavement and oppression),<sup>44</sup> anti-educational (education is manipulation; child should be given only “pure” information to decide freely),<sup>45</sup> etc.

<sup>37</sup> KEP, p. 291.

<sup>38</sup> J. RATZINGER: *Wykłady bawarskie z lat 1963—2004*. Trans. A. CZARNOCKI. Warszawa 2009 (hereinafter: WB).

<sup>39</sup> T. ROWLAND: *Wiarą Ratzingera. Teologia Benedykta XVI*. Trans. A. GOMOLA. Kraków 2010, p. 184.

<sup>40</sup> G.K. WITKOWSKI: *Grunt to bunt. Rozmowy o Jarocinie*. Poznań 2011.

<sup>41</sup> M. PERA: “Wprowadzenie. Propozycja.” In: J. RATZINGER: *Europa Benedykta w kryzysie kultur*. Trans. W. DZIEŹA. Częstochowa 2005 (hereinafter: EB), p. 30.

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>43</sup> KEP, p. 293.

<sup>44</sup> KEP, p. 292.

<sup>45</sup> KEP, p. 85.

A space left by God shall not be empty: it shall be taken by an egoist, free of bonds/relationships, who shall wish “to be like God.” And this shall be false (since deprived of the truth) vision of deification, an attempt to take up a throne of an unreal god, just an idol — a monstrous egoist who makes the world his subject, a perfect contradiction of God-Love.

Lack of the truth is not going to defend the border of “respecting the rights of a neighbour” and his individual freedom. Lack of the truth shall infringe upon this border, indeed, it shall contribute to its destruction. For a friendly to everyone and everything symbiosis of nice egoists does not exist. Anarchistic philosophy of life focused on “I” shall inevitably show its terrible face, as well as fangs and claws. And from under the icing, from behind the facade of “unlimited freedom” an ugly gob of enslavement and misery shall emerge.<sup>46</sup> First for the other,<sup>47</sup> and in the end for the very “navel of the world.” First it shall enslave the others and make them unhappy, in the end the boundlessly free “navel of the world” itself shall become enslaved and unhappy.

The idea of freedom that seems to be unlimited, turns out to have a limit, which at the same time is an abyss: it leads to auto-destruction of freedom.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, freedom needs its measure and content. The measure, in order not to become violence toward the others. The content, in order not to become capable of anything out of the internal emptiness.<sup>49</sup> For freedom can annihilate itself, get bored with itself, it happens when it becomes an empty freedom. This emptiness — which is ultimately an emptiness of the soul — gives birth to nihilism. Both Nazism and communism had this type of empty, anarchistic moral freedom in their bloodstream, especially at their beginnings, in their article of incorporation. Joseph Ratzinger referred to the issue, with the power of a prophet, on 7 November 1992 in Paris, when he was awarded a membership in the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences of the Institut de France.

[...] both the Nazi and communist dictatorships did not regard any deed as evil in itself and definitely immoral. Everything that served the objectives of the movement or the party was good, even if it was perceived as inhuman. A moral sense has been trampled upon for decades. One day it shall inevitably lead to a total nihilism, where man shall no longer recognise any of his former aims and when freedom shall become only a possibility of doing anything capable of making empty life more engaging and interesting.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>46</sup> KEP, p. 293; DwK, pp. 11, 14.

<sup>47</sup> KEP, p. 293.

<sup>48</sup> EB, p. 59.

<sup>49</sup> J. RATZINGER: *Prawda, wartości, władza. Kiedy społeczeństwo można uznać za pluralistyczne*. Trans. G. SOWINSKI. Kraków 1999, p. 62.

<sup>50</sup> Ibidem, pp. 17—19.

*Panta moi eksestin*, “I have the right to do anything” (1 Corinthians 6:12) — they said in Corinth. “But not everything beneficial” and “I will not be mastered by anything” — replied St. Paul (1 Corinthians 6:12). For Christian freedom is not anarchy or libertinism. It is neither a release from ethics nor dispensation from doing good.<sup>51</sup> Freedom has a deep meaning and measure, as St. Paul taught the same Corinthians in his second Epistle: “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.” (2 Corinthians 3:17). “The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Corinthians 3:6). But the Spirit is not an anarchic idea, an unlimited justification of lawless interpretations, visions and deeds that do not obey any norms. *Pneuma* (Spirit, wind) “breathes where he will” (J 3.8A), but it is precisely where He wants to; and it is impossible to appropriate Him. Paul makes a discovery: “The Spirit is Christ and Christ is the Lord who shows us the way.”<sup>52</sup> There is (the) freedom.

It is this Christian discovery of the essence of freedom, its biblical-theological content and measure, is the essence of the mission of the Church and her liberating, freedom-oriented vision. A genuine freedom of the man has its source in his creation in the image and likeness of God, in the Sacrifice of Christ, in the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is what the Church reminds us about, this is what she proclaims and brings up to — to the freedom referred to the truth.<sup>53</sup>

Also this (only apparently) theoretical vision of freedom has its deep practical consequences that penetrate through the Christian existence. Freedom, says realism and hard facts of this vision, is protected by the Ten Commandments by orders and prohibitions of the Gospel, the teaching of the Church. They are the means given by the Lord for protection of our freedom, they are “affirmation for development of a genuine freedom.”<sup>54</sup> Because the real threat (literally: derived from the truth about man) to our freedom is evil. Therefore, freedom from evil gives security and courage to act, love and life give the courage to act, love, and live.<sup>55</sup> Because liberation from evil is necessary to implement the most vital purpose of freedom: the good. This is how Ratzinger explains the issue in his conversation with Seewald:

Freedom means that I accept willingly the possibilities of my own being. However it is not so that I can say only “yes” or “no”. Beyond negation

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<sup>51</sup> BENEDYKT XVI: *Katechezy o św. Pawle*. Ed. and trans. *L'Osservatore Romano*. Kraków 2009, p. 120.

<sup>52</sup> IDEM: Apostolic adhortation *Verbum Domini* (30.09.2010), No. 39, p. 46.

<sup>53</sup> MD, p. 153.

<sup>54</sup> MD, p. 103.

<sup>55</sup> WB, pp. 212—214.



there is a boundless space of creative possibilities of good. Essentially, we are of the opinion that if a person does not say “no” to the evil, he/she is already deprived of freedom, that this is the case of distortion of freedom. For freedom finds its vast creative space in the sphere of good. Love is creative, the truth is creative — only in this sphere our eyes open up, only there I can learn about so many matters.<sup>56</sup>

## 6. The Prayer of the Son — laboratory of freedom

Theo-logic of freedom reaches its peak — the biggest depth and fullness of content — in Chistology. This is a privileged synthesis of the truth and freedom, a reflection of the Event, in which freedom of God is shared by man and the other way round.

Because this “the other way round,” this to be (free) “like God,” desire to become like God — this is a thought on which all the attempts to liberate man has always been focused.<sup>57</sup> Since the desire of freedom is a substance of humanity, people look for ways to be free “like God”: this desire shall not be satisfied by finiteness. A lot of observations (and comments) made above on the contemporary shapes of anarchic and libertarian freedom, confirm this desire — a cry for total, demiurgical, “divine” freedom can be heard from all directions. How to reach this aim, become free “as God,” gain “deification”?<sup>58</sup>

Christology brings the answer. Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI sees its centre (following Maximus the Confessor) in a deliberating genius of the

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<sup>56</sup> BiŚ, p. 87. “When we look at lives of great men, at lives of saints, we can see that in the course of the ages they exhibit totally new human possibilities, that have never been seen by internally blind or dumb. In other words: freedom indeed manifests its action, when in the enormous sphere of good something undiscovered develops and expands our capacities. While it is wasting itself, when it believes, that its will can be confirmed only by negation. In such a situation I am using my freedom, but at the same time I am distorting it.” Ibidem

“Genuine freedom is expressed in responsibility, in action marked by taking responsibility for the world, for ourselves and for others [...] [The Holy Spirit] teaches us to look at the world, at the others and ourselves through the eyes of God. We do not do good as slaves, who being deprived of freedom, may not proceed otherwise; but we do it because we are personally responsible for the world; because we love the truth and good, because we love God himself, and therefore also His creation.” BENEDYKT XVI: *Homilia w wigilię Uroczystości Zesłania Ducha Świętego*, 3 June 2006. In: MD, pp. 139–140.

<sup>57</sup> J. RATZINGER: *Chrystus i Jego Kościół*. Trans. W. SZYMONA. Kraków 2005<sup>2</sup> (hereinafter: CijK), p. 40.

<sup>58</sup> CijK, p. 41.

Prayer of the Son in Gethsemane: “Yet not what I will, but what you will” (Mark 14:36).<sup>59</sup> And he explains the issue in the following way:

*Logos* humbles himself to accept the man’s will as his own and turns to the Father in his human *I*, transmitting, as it were, his *I* to this man, and in this way he converts a word of man into the eternal Word, into his divine: “Yes, Father.” Giving the man his *I*, His own identity, He makes man free, saves him and deifies him. Here we can as it were touch what is the meaning of the sentence: “God became man.” God transforms a deadly fear of man into obedience of the Son, transforms the words of *a servant* into the words of *the Son*. This way [...] a mode of our deliverance, our participation in the freedom of the son becomes comprehensible.<sup>60</sup>

Each prayer that is incorporated in this prayer of Jesus Christ, becomes *laboratory of freedom*<sup>61</sup> — here (in our Lord, in his Work, His prayer) slavery is transformed into freedom, man becomes as free as God.

Commenting upon the issue of Christology of freedom J. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI repeatedly refers to the myth of Prometheus, who fights with gods for divine fire for the Earth and in this way opens a new world. In the homily during Mass on the Pentacost Sunday (Cathedral in Munich, 14 May 1947), he quoted the last seven verses of the a poem *Prometheus* (1773) by Johann Wolfgang Goethe:

Here I sit, forming people  
In my image;  
A race, to be like me,  
To suffer, to weep,  
To enjoy and delight themselves,  
And to mock you —  
As I do!<sup>62</sup>

These pompous words of Prometheus tossed in the face of Zeus became almost a programme of the modern times: to be an image not of God, but of oneself, seize power over the world, to ignore the Divine authority. Not to count on God, not to expect anything from Him. But is not this fire from heaven, won this way, going to burn us and the earth?<sup>63</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Cijk, p. 47.

<sup>60</sup> Cijk, p. 47.

<sup>61</sup> Cijk, p. 48.

<sup>62</sup> J.W. GOETHE: “Prometheus.” Trans. S. LICHANŃSKI. In: J.W. GOETHE: *Dramaty wybrane*. Warszawa 1984, vol. 1, p. 236. I quote an English translation of an anonymous author.

<sup>63</sup> J. RATZINGER/BENEDYKT XVI: *W dzień Pięćdziesiątnicy*. Trans. K. WÓJTOWICZ. Kraków 2006 (hereinafter: WDP).

It seems that one can smell burning and see bloody glows of the world which “mocked him” that no longer heeds God.

Hence Christologic conclusion and most wonderful, Christ-oriented reinterpretation of the ancient myth, during Eucharist, at Pentacost: “Pentacost tells us that the Holy Spirit is the Fire, and Christ is Prometheus, who brought the fire from heaven to the earth.”<sup>64</sup> Man should have fire — be free, be like God. But the fire of deliverance is not brought by a giant who marginalises God — but by the Son.<sup>65</sup> It is Him who baptises “with the Holy Spirit and fire,” it is Him who casts fire on our earth and wishes it was kindled (Matthew 3:11; Luke 12:49). This fire is not going to burn the world, because it comes from a fiery chariot of the cross, because it is the fire of the burning bush, which is on fire but does not burn out.<sup>66</sup> This fire is not going to destroy but to brighten, warm up, feed.

And this is how the eternal yearning of humanity is fulfilled: to have the fire, to be free, to be like God. It is brought by Jesus Christ, the new Prometheus — the only answer to the question concerning liberation of man.<sup>67</sup> In the speech to the General Assembly of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith delivered on 10 February 2006 the thought was expressed as follows:

Light radiating from Jesus is the radiance of the truth. Any other truth is a part of the Truth which is Him, and which refers to Him. Jesus is the leading star of human freedom, without Him freedom loses its direction, because without knowledge of the truth freedom becomes degenerated, isolated and turns into futile lawlessness. With Him freedom finds itself, discovers the fact that it has been created for the purpose of good, and is manifested in deeds and behaviour dictated by love.<sup>68</sup>

Jesus Christ: a prayer to Him and with Him is a laboratory of freedom, while He becomes its pole star. The new Prometheus. This is very important with respect to “the enlightenment concerning the notion of freedom”<sup>69</sup>: it is not Prometheus and it is not Sisyphus. But it is the New Prometheus whose Grace is effective, not Sisyphian.

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<sup>64</sup> WDP, p. 17.

<sup>65</sup> WDP, p. 18.

<sup>66</sup> WDP, p. 51.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. J. RATZINGER: *Eschatologia — śmierć i życie wieczne*. Trans. M. WĘCŁAWSKI. Poznań 1984, pp. 79—82; SP, p. 61; J. RATZINGER: *Studzy waszej radości. Chrześcijaństwo, apostołstwo, kapłaństwo*. Trans. T. JAESCHKE, K. WÓJTOWICZ. Wrocław 1990, pp. 29—31, 36.

<sup>68</sup> MD, p. 88.

<sup>69</sup> PwT, p. 46.

## 7. The grace of free “yes”

Christology is linked intrinsically with Mariology. Also here in the very heart of the issues related to human freedom. In the life and destiny of Mary, the entire truth of human freedom is embedded. In her history one can see a vast greatness of God (His love, omnipotence, humility, and respect for the creation which is treated as a partner in the work of salvation) and greatness of man (his ontic self-determination and ability of trusting the Creator totally). One can see how far realism of freedom can reach,<sup>70</sup> how man can be “as God” (in Annunciation) and how freedom is the gift of God (through the Immaculate Conception).

God asks for human “yes.” He needs freedom of a free partner to make his Kingdom real — the Kingdom based not on external authority, but on the power of love, which exists precisely from freedom and in freedom. “Yes” of Mary is a complete grace, and a complete freedom. “Everything is grace” (Bernanos?). That is why, because grace does not destroy freedom, but it creates it.<sup>71</sup>

The more grace, the more freedom, the closer to God, the less captivity. This is the light that lightens human freedom. This is the light from the fire that the New Prometheus gave us.

<sup>70</sup> There has been a dispute on realism and the shape of freedom between J. Ratzinger and Karl Rahner. (Cf. FZC, pp. 228—231).

<sup>71</sup> J. RATZINGER: *Eucharystia. Bóg blisko nas*. Ed. S. O. HORN, V. PFENÜR. Trans. M. RODKIEWICZ. Kraków 2005, pp. 18—19. Human history is the history of freedom and does not succumb to unavoidable determinism. The call to repentance is always in its essence the call directed at human freedom: God (often through Mary and other saints) calls us to transform ourselves and thus transform history. (Cf. BiŚ, p. 287).

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JERZY SZYMIK

## Freedom and Christology according to *Theologiae Benedictae* Two Concepts, Two Anthropologies, One Logos/Son

### Summary

The basis for theological reflection about freedom is the truth about creation of man in the image and likeness of God who is absolutely free. Here is the source of human's yearning for freedom, pursued through endless tension between good and evil. Abstracting in the definition of freedom from the religious foundation inevitably leads to replacing the truth about freedom with the ideology of freedom, the example of which may be modern and contemporary liberal world views, converting themselves into totalitarian social and political systems. Though just in itself, the mere desire for freedom leads humans to nothingness and enslaves them, if it takes the form of lawlessness and Promethean struggle with God. Christianity shows that freedom is not a human prey, but a gift of God, grounded in ontology; the man is free because he was created and saved — he is a son in the Son. Christ is a new Prometheus, who "cast fire on the earth," in the gift of the Holy Spirit — the Spirit of freedom. What constitutes the way to man's freedom is not autonomy, but grace, leading to love.

JERZY SZYMIK

## La liberté face à la christologie selon *theologiae benedictae* Deux conceptions, deux anthropologies, Un Logos/Fils

### Résumé

La vérité sur la création de l'homme — complètement libre — à l'image de Dieu et à sa ressemblance est le point de départ de notre réflexion théologique sur la liberté. C'est là que tire son origine la soif humaine de la liberté, à laquelle conduit un chemin marqué par une tension continue entre le bien et le mal. Si, en définissant la notion de liberté, on se détache d'un fondement religieux, cela conduit inévitablement à remplacer la vérité sur la liberté par une idéologie de liberté; ce sont les conceptions libérales contemporaines se transformant en systèmes sociopolitiques totalitaires qui en constituent les exemples. Si le désir de liberté, étant juste en lui-même, adopte les formes d'un comportement arbitraire et d'une usurpation prométhéenne, il conduit l'homme vers le néant et, en fin de compte, il le réduit en esclavage. Le christianisme montre que la liberté n'est pas un butin de l'homme, mais un don de Dieu et se fonde sur l'ontologie. La liberté constitue le principe du monde créé par amour, et l'homme — quant à lui — est libre parce qu'il a été créé et racheté: il est le fils dans Le Fils. C'est grâce au Christ que la liberté de Dieu devient le partage de l'homme. Le Christ est un nouveau Prométhée qui, en offrant le Saint-Esprit (étant Esprit de liberté), « jette un feu sur la terre ». Ce n'est point l'autonomie ou l'usurpation qui sont la voie de liberté de l'homme, mais la grâce qui rapporte l'amour.

**Mots clés :** le Christ, Saint-Esprit, christianisme, christocentrisme, vérité, liberté, libéralisme, modernité, idéologies, dialogue, anthropologie, création

JERZY SZYMIK

La libertà e la cristologia secondo la *theologiae benedictae*  
Due concezioni, due antropologie, Un Logos/Figlio

Sommario

Il punto di partenza della riflessione teologica sulla libertà è la verità sulla creazione dell'uomo ad immagine e somiglianza di Dio — assolutamente libero. Qui ha origine la nostalgia umana per la libertà e l'aspirazione alla stessa si realizza nella tensione incessante tra il bene e il male. Nella definizione del concetto di libertà il prescindere dal fondamento religioso porta immancabilmente a sostituire la verità sulla libertà con l'ideologia della libertà, di cui sono esempio le concezioni liberali moderne e contemporanee che degenerano nei sistemi socio-politici totalitari. Il desiderio di libertà di per sé giusto, se assume la forma dell'arbitrio e dell'usurpazione prometeica, porta l'uomo alla nullità e alla fine lo riduce in schiavitù. Il cristianesimo mostra che la libertà non è un bottino umano, ma un dono di Dio e si basa sull'ontologia; la libertà costituisce il principio del mondo creato per amore, e l'uomo è libero, in quanto è stato creato e redento — è il figlio nel Figlio. Grazie a Cristo l'uomo è partecipe della libertà di Dio. Cristo è il Nuovo Prometeo che nel dono dello Spirito Santo — Spirito della libertà — “getta il fuoco sulla terra”. La strada della libertà dell'uomo non è l'autonomia o l'usurpazione, ma la grazia che porta il frutto dell'amore.

**Parole chiave:** Cristo, Spirito Santo, cristianesimo, cristocentrismo, verità, libertà, liberalismo, modernità, ideologie, dialogo, antropologia, creazione