

Global Or Universal Morality? The Importance Of Hermeneutics In The Era Of Transformations*

Hans Kung in his work “Weltethik” stated that “ethics is not something super-human and divine, but in its essence very practical and rational. It is simply something that guarantees people’s dignity and survival. It is a set of rules for all people living in the world.”¹ However, this raises the question: is it possible to develop a set of rules and institutions based on these rules, which would guarantee the functioning of moral life on a global scale? Even if such a set of standards could be created, will they be global standards because of their universality, or will they retain their universality regardless of the number of people living according to these standards? The answers to these – as it seems – fundamental questions about the nature of morality and the meaning of hermeneutics in the era of transformations will be sought in this article.

The distinction I made in the title between global and universal morality seems justified because people living by the principles of so-called universal morality (or better – based on universal values) are not always supporters of globalisation processes. In the new global economy system, on the other hand, every person who remains on the side of globalisation processes is shown as defeated in the perspective of development and progress. Does this mean then that the morality that would accompany the processes of globalisation would also have to take over its global character in a necessary way? This is an important question because by assuming the affirmative answer, it should be noted that morality would lose one of its essential characteristics, which is freedom of choice².

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¹ Quote from T. Pyzdek, *W kierunku nowego świata*, HD 72(2002)1, 31-47.

² Cf. *ibid.*

The attempt to define morality built under the pressure of globalisation processes is all the more important because the division into global and universal morality appears to be a very simplified division, dictated more by the need to organise phenomena than by a real understanding of the nature of the problem. An example of a slightly narrow approach to these issues can be the understanding of the world proposed by Samuel P. Huntington in his book *The Clash of Civilizations*. In his opinion, “the world is in a sense divided into two worlds, but it is a division between the West, civilisation that has been dominant so far, and all the others that have little in common. In short, we are dealing with one Western world and many non-Western worlds.”³ The conclusion that can be drawn from this description seems simple: in the process of a specific rivalry of types of morality in the modern world, the best “product” does not have to win.

The rivalry process itself is also worth describing. It is accompanied by a struggle for autonomy, especially of culture and politics. However, this is not so much a struggle for the right to a creative process of defining one’s own areas of activity but rather a process of detraditionalization of culture (this is particularly relevant in the case of European culture). It is precisely the role of tradition in the process of globalisation that is particularly important because it refers to time, very concrete, which is the place where values are revealed. In practice, this would mean that the transmission of values beyond a specific tradition is a message, at most certain imperative forms, which are lacking in concrete content⁴.

The observation of modern society also shows that it is a specific system of cooperation of individual entities and that in order for it to function properly it needs rules that are universally acceptable and exclude coercion in their introduction and implementation. This would mean the evolutionary and empirical way of creating values and on their basis moral norms. Such an approach to morality would have its weak points. Undoubtedly, the vision of the world

³ Cf. R. Czarnecki, *Unifikacja czy pluralizm. Uwagi o globalnej autonomii Wschodu i Zachodu*, “Dziś” (2000) 5, 55-64. T. Pyzdek speaks in a similar spirit and states: “Globalisation is perceived by a large part of the world’s population as a phenomenon of the West.” id., art. cit., 24. In turn, A. Szostek, pointing to the changes in the last decade, draws attention to the change in the significance of the East-West political division in favour of economic division: “bogata Północ – biedne Południe” (“rich North – poor South”) (cf. id., *Kto zyskuje, a kto traci na globalizacji?*, “Ethos” 15(2002)3-4, 165.168.

⁴ Cf. J. Kurczewska, *Przeszłość, tradycja i globalizacja w Europie*, “Studia Polityczne” (2000)1. *Special Issue on the Tenth Anniversary of the ISP PAN*, 97-108.

based on the universal satisfaction of human needs and man's detachment from the enslavements of the past is apparently very appealing. In practice, however, the more ideal this vision is, the more unreal it is, since it also assumes an ideal vision of the nature of man and society, and not an anthropological truth about human beings⁵.

Is there a need for a new morality for a new era, or is there a need for a continuous return to moral action that refers to universal sources of evaluation?⁶ The first possibility, albeit fresh and seemingly more adapted to new phenomena, turns out to be a minimalist and limiting programme, especially when compared to the second proposal contained in the Christian morality system⁷.

This draws a specific path of methodological research, according to which one should first trace those values that can be extracted from the observation of moral life, the plane of which are globalisation processes, and then, analysing the proposals of a certain universalisation of values and norms, try to find a proper hermeneutical key in building a commonly accepted morality at least as far as the way of justifying norms is concerned.

The intuitive pre-assumptions that accompany this reflection can be reduced to three points. It seems that in the modern world there are processes of special changes of ethical paradigms on two planes. The first is the socio-cultural and economic dimension of globalisation, the second concerns the revolution in biotechnology. The first questions the essence of freedom (by the specific necessitous nature of the proposed changes). The second, referring to the technical imperative, questions what constitutes the essence of humanity itself – its combination of two irreducible levels: structure and mystery. It seems therefore particularly important to analyse the contemporary vision of man, who is the subject of all morality, and therefore also of the one we ask about in this reflection. It seems that it is not in the observation of social life, but above all in man himself, that one can discover what can be the basis of universal morality. This leads to the need to adopt a hermeneutical and dialectic

⁵ Cf. A. Walicki, *Moralność polityczna liberalizmu, narodowa moralistyka i idee kolektywistycznej prawicy*, "Znak" 49(1997)7, 21-37; L. Ostasz, *Ku etyce uniwersalistycznej i zarys teorii wartości*, Kraków 1994, 199; A. Grzegorzczak, *Racjonalizm europejski jako sposób myślenia*, "Wspólnotowość i postawa uniwersalistyczna" (2000-2001)2, 5-8.

⁶ It is worth mentioning that some authors completely exempt themselves from such questions, recognising that the "novelty" of globalisation processes is in fact an old myth, not only in the moral but also in the economic dimension – cf.: P. Hirst, G. Thompson, *Globalization in Questions: the International Economy and Possibilities of Governance*, Cambridge 1996.

⁷ Cf. I. Bokwa, *Czy chrześcijaństwo ma przyszłość?*, "Wrocławski Przegląd Teologiczny" 9(2001)2, 19-27.

pathway expressed in a sequence: “negation, negation of negation, primary affirmation,” which can be described as follows: if so-called modernity of its form of morality is taken as the plane of negation, and postmodern morality as the negation of negation, what type of morality would be born at the level of primary affirmation, as the end of the dialectical path? This dialectic path seems to lead nowhere. Therefore, without abandoning the dual path (global and universal morality), we will ultimately accept as a methodological choice a return to the sources of affirmation of being, since morality is sought for a particular type of being, which is man⁸.

Global Morality

The remarks made above suggest that the core of the reflection will be focused on human issues. The question can be asked whether this is not an excessive narrowing down of the problematic aspects? In support of my choice I will recall the words of John Paul II, spoken to the participants of the Fifth Symposium of the Conference of Bishops of Europe in October 1982. He said, “Today in Europe there are currents, ideologies and ambitions that are considered alien to faith, if not in direct opposition to Christianity. However, it is interesting to show how, starting with the systems and choices intended to absolutize man and his earthly achievements, it has today been possible to discuss man himself, his dignity and inner values, his inner certainty and desire for absoluteness.”⁹

Commenting on these words one can say that reducing moral searches to the essence of man is in fact a search for *something more*, because man cannot be closed only in his purely human perspective.¹⁰ The necessity of *something more* does not only refer to the content of the values themselves but presupposes norms of concrete action, thanks to which the good cannot only *be* – in an ontological sense but can *become* – in a moral sense.¹¹

Where, then, lies the particular problem of the specification of global morality? The morality of necessity, combined with the process of globalization,

⁸ Cf. *ibid.*; A. Mirski, *Wkład współczesnej psychologii do badań nad etyką uniwersalną*, in: *Ekologia ducha*, J. Krakowiak (ed.), Warsaw 1999, 127-143; I. Bokwa, *art. cit.*, 19-27.

⁹ Cf. *Europa jutra. Jana Pawła II wizja Europy*, A. Sujka, Kraków 2000, 37. Cf. also W. Panenbergh, *Jak myśleć o sekularyzmie?*, A., P. Łąccy, “W drodze” 357(2003)5, 58.

¹⁰ Cf. M. Rusecki, *Co to są wartości chrześcijańskie?*, in: *Problemy współczesnego Kościoła*, ed. *id.*, Lublin 1997, 517.

¹¹ Cf. L. Ostasz, *op. cit.*, 22-25.65.

is aimed at *wellbeing*¹². The latter, even at the level of pure etymology, means *the good of being, the good-for-existence*. It is not enough to define the good in a subjective sense (to want good); it is also necessary to define the very nature of being. What, then, is the being itself and its goodness within the framework of global morality, lived especially in our cultural circle?

In his book *Europe*, Norman Davis wrote that “what characterises our understanding of goodness and existence is our belief in the particular secular variety of Western civilisation, in which the “Atlantic Community” is the summit of progress and development for humanity. Anglo-Saxon democracy, the rule of law as shaped by the Grand Charter tradition and the capitalist free market economy are considered to be the highest forms of good.”¹³

To the full description of the global morality context, a brief hermeneutical description of the very concept of “globalisation” should be added.

There are some words of admiration that show globalisation. For example: *Never before have people heard or known so much about the rest of the world. For the first time in the history of the world, humanity is united by a common vision of being. [...] And the second example: For the first time in the history of mankind, everything can be produced and sold anywhere in the world.* These two quotations show that on the one hand the phenomenon of globalisation is not a new phenomenon (religious wars, Pax Romana, Proletariat), while on the other hand contemporary processes focus particularly on economics and politics, carefully avoiding the problematic issues of values and morality derived from them¹⁴.

Globalisation in this sense is undoubtedly a sign of the times¹⁵. It takes place on three planes. The first is characterised by moral neutrality, the second is positive, the third is negative. Regardless of these divisions, globalisation raises some difficult questions about the very essence of the phenomenon, namely whether it is an expression of a global crisis and collapse or just a cultural change; whether it is a diffusion of values or a changing role of culture; whether it is a fluid combination of economics with human rights and fundamental freedoms; or are these two hermetic worlds, the latter of which have no greater

¹² Z. Zdybicka describes globalisation as the latest ideology and the latest form of the modern way of “making humanity happy.” Cf. Z. Zdybicka, *Globalizm i religia*, “Roczniki Filozoficzne” 50(2002)2, 25.

¹³ Cf. R. Czarnecki, art. cit., 59.

¹⁴ Cf. M. Michalik, *Globalizacja etyki – wyzwanie czy paradoks*, “Wspólnotowość i postawa uniwersalistyczna” (2000-2001)2, 33. Cf. also Z. Zdybicka, art. cit., 23.

¹⁵ Globalisation is a sign of the times, especially in terms of form, not the very essence. For the essence is no longer alien to biblical culture – cf. P. de Benedetti, *Globalizzazione al negativo e al positivo nel pensiero biblico*, RTM 34(2002)135, 335-338.

significance, apart from a purely declaratory one?¹⁶ Not only ambivalent but also directly negative aspects can be pointed out in this process. These include the excessive unification of manifestations of social life expressed in extreme standardisation¹⁷, the manifestation of those forces that are particularly damaging to the weakest¹⁸, the pursuit of domination and subjugation, certain mechanisms that result in numerous conflicts of interest and social conflicts¹⁹.

The other side of globalisation covers certain centrifugal tendencies which are becoming increasingly more noticeable. This is reflected in the intensification of ethnic and religious conflicts²⁰. It is also accompanied by stratification and marginalisation. All this raises the question of the role and place of the individual in a world which is undergoing globalisation²¹. Modern transformations are undoubtedly conducive to strong individuals, deprived of fear for the future, not showing features of external steerability²². As Zygmunt Bauman notes, openness to these individuals is expressed in relativism, pragmatism and privatisation. However, the individual assumes a very fragmented vision of the world. This, in turn, demands pragmatism. In such a vicious circle where the privileges of the individual are still followed it is very easy to accentuate an individual who does not necessarily have to meet the necessary criteria of the subject of moral life. It also gives rise to a life not so much in the key of *being together* but rather in the key of *separation* and *isolation*²³.

¹⁶ Cf. P. Nguyen Thai Hop, *Globalizacja: perspektywy i ryzyko*, "Społeczeństwo" 8(1998)1, 59-75; cf. also M. Ripinsky-Naxon, *Ekologia globalna i transformacja świadomości*, in: *Ekologia ducha*, J. Krakowiak (ed.), op. cit., 87-91; M. Kempny, G. Woroniecka, *Wprowadzenie. Globalizacja kulturowa i religia dziś*, in: *Religia i kultura w globalizującym się świecie*, M. Kempny, G. Woroniecka (ed.), Kraków 1999, 7-24; T. Pyzdek, art. cit., 31-47.

¹⁷ Cf. H. Skorowski, *Znaczenie wartości chrześcijańskich w dobie współczesnych przemian cywilizacyjnych*, "Saeculum Christianum" 9(2002)2, 262.

¹⁸ A special role for the Church in this – cf. H. Sanks, *Globalization and the Church's Social Mission*, "Theological Studies" 60 (1999), 625f.

¹⁹ Cf. M. Michalik, art. cit., 34; A. Szostek, art. cit., 168-169.

²⁰ Cf. John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europe*, 8.

²¹ Cf. J.A. Sobkowiak, *Globalizm gospodarczy i polityczny – szansa czy zagrożenie dla pokoju?*, in: *Pacem in tenis. Dar Boga powierzony ludziom. Materiały z sympozjum teologicznego*, Stoczek Warmiński, 31 V 2003, J. Kumała (ed.), Licheń 2003, 47f; see also A. Cramp, *Economic Ethics*, in: *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology*, D. Atkinson, D. Field (ed.), Leicester and Downers Grove 1995, 115-121.

²² Cf. A. Szostek, art. cit., 171.

²³ Cf. Cz. Porębski, *Co nam po wartościach?*, Kraków 2001, 186; cf. also P. Starosta, *Społeczne skutki globalizacji*, in: *Globalizacja*, J. Klicha (ed.), Cracow 2001, 41-64; Z. Bauman, *Globalizacja. I co z tego dla ludzi wynika?*, Warsaw 2000, 57.

The relationship between culture and politics is also characteristic. The fundamental problem of culture is that globalisation leads on the one hand to cultural diversity and on the other hand to the universalisation of certain cultural patterns²⁴. A particularly dangerous phenomenon is the introduction of certain standards, which, thanks to dissemination, gain recognition for values and rules that are universally binding but which have no roots in the “here and now.” The function of shaping reality is increasingly being taken over by politics, becoming the widespread and most common dimension of social life. In the field of universalisation, it is noted that the already mentioned standardisation, on the one hand perfectly organising life, and on the other hand, devoid of any real references to reality, makes the person, when looking for references to values, refer not so much to the values themselves as to their standards and imagination²⁵.

The very discussion of values is also a threat to globalisation. In the context of European integration, it was possible to find evidence of this, for example, in the discussion on the religious and spiritual heritage that arose around the preamble to the Charter of Fundamental Rights. This has shown that, on the one hand, in conditions of such serious transformation, there is a need for what could be called “common values,” while, on the other hand, only what is common to a certain minimum degree can be common²⁶.

Reflections on global morality can be encapsulated by five dilemmas that are most often put forward in relation to the subject matter. According to Paweł Dembiński²⁷, they can be presented as follows: Efficiency or dignity? Efficiency is the slogan of the market, the dignity of the person’s constitutive element; law or trust? For some time now, a lack of efficiency in the law has been encouraging widespread trust. On the other hand, during a conversation with students, creating a new decalogue for new times, it turned out that trust is a value which in everyday relations is in the background; Flexibility or fidelity? Flexibility is undoubtedly sufficient for the functioning and survival of the market. But it is not enough for the survival of civilisation; The common good or the general

²⁴ Cf. A. Szostek, art. cit., 166f.

²⁵ Cf. P. Starosta, art. cit., 41; cf. also J. Balicki, *Marginalizacja społeczeństw krajów rozwijających się w epoce globalizacji*, “Roczniki Naukowe Caritas” 3 (1999), 95-114; Cf. M. Michalik, art. cit., 36; cf. also M. Klecel, *Moralny epilog wieku*, “Przegląd Powszechny” 116(1999)7-8, 120-130.

²⁶ J. Czaja, *Europa wartości – pytania o tożsamość Unii Europejskiej*, „Przegląd Europejski” 3(2001)2, 22-39; cf. also. J.A. Sobkowiak, *Deklaracja moralności europejskiej w Karcie Praw Podstawowych*, STV 39(2002)2, 157-175.

²⁷ Cf. P. Dembiński, *Globalizacja – wyzwanie i szansa*, in: *Globalizacja*, A. Sujka, op. cit., 19-31.

interest? At the level of general interest, we refer to the effects of actions per balance. In the case of the common good, it is not possible to offset losses and profits, especially in relation to individual members of the community; Interdependence or independence? Interdependence is a source of market efficiency and independence is a source of autonomy.

To sum up the issue of global morality, we can recall the five principles of global ethics, which were presented in the report under the title *Our Creative Diversity*²⁸ (1995): universal human rights combined with duties; democracy with elements of civil society; protection of minorities; peaceful conflict resolution and fair negotiation; equality within and between generations.

The above reflections showed that the problem of man, as announced in the introduction, did not have a broad resonance at the level of global morality. It turned out that it is rather man who is subordinated to certain processes, and the discussion about morality and values is typically declarative. An attempt should therefore be made to find certain elements of universalisation that originate in the very nature of man.

Universal Morality

In an attempt to define certain universal foundations within the European community (because it is impossible to confront incomparable or directly unknown cultures on a global scale) one can recall three fundamental ones: Greek philosophy and democracy, Roman law, Christian tradition and values²⁹. Of course, the most problematic is the *Christian* term. This is because there is an official rejection of one tradition³⁰, while on the other hand it is difficult to imagine a coherent system of values for this cultural circle, which, to a greater or lesser degree, would not refer to Christianity. John Paul II often draws attention to this spiritual richness. The second particularly important element seems to be the cultivation of the social sense, which is the foundation of human *ethics*. It is thanks to that sense man can think and act in terms of “we.” Culture is a special plane that opens man to universality. It is rooted in man’s nature and indicates his universal and transcendent dimension³¹.

²⁸ Quote for: M. Ziótkowski, *Przemiany interesów i wartości społeczeństwa polskiego. Teorie, tendencje, interpretacje*, Poznań 2000, 72.

²⁹ Cf. J. Czaja, art. cit., 22-39. Cf. W. Brandmuller, “Społeczeństwo” 13(2003)3-4, 632-635.

³⁰ Cf. John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europe*, no. 7.9.

³¹ Cf. T. Pyzdek, art. cit., 31-47; cf. also *Europa jutra...*, A. Sujka, op. cit., 34.103.

Some researchers (e.g. N. Lobkowicz) point out that *Europe is an independent reality only as a culturally united whole. Only as a creation of history [...] it has something cohesive*. It should be noted that by culture he understands everything that inspires man in his personal individuality. A particular form of such a culture is a culture of freedom, both of individuals and of nations, lived in a spirit of solidarity and responsibility³². However, culture cannot be a substitute for religion. Martin Heidegger made this danger clear. He wrote that a place of worship can easily replace “admiration for the creative abilities of culture and enthusiasm for the spread of civilisation.”³³

Here we come to the first point coinciding with the anthropological thesis put forward at the beginning. It seems that in order to discover certain elements of universal morality, it would first be necessary to realise that features such as *commonness* and *universality* do not overlap. The universal assumes anchoring in anthropology. Another important element of universality is the recognition of one’s own identity. Without it, the communication process is impossible³⁴.

The role of politics in shaping universality should be looked at further for a moment. Policy is the lowest level of implementation of ethical principles. The political project should aim not to go in the direction of pressure but in the direction of the formation of a common spirit³⁵. In a similar sense John Paul II addressed the presidents of seven European countries in Gniezno in 1997. He said, “the sublimity of political leaders lies in the fact that they must act in such a way that the dignity of every human being is always respected; create favourable conditions for the awakening of a sacrificial solidarity that leaves no fellow citizen on the margins of life; enable everyone to have access to cultural goods; recognise and implement the highest humanistic and spiritual values; express their religious beliefs and demonstrate their value to others. In so doing, the European continent will strengthen its unity, its fidelity to those who have laid the foundations of its culture, and will fulfil its temporal vocation in the world.”³⁶

Looking further, one can ask what other syndromes of universal morality can be found in the modern world. These are undoubtedly, on the one hand, increasing respect and tolerance, and, on the other hand, ethical indifference

³² Cf. J. Krucina, *Solidarność czynnikiem integrującym Europy*, “Społeczeństwo” 9(1999)1, 81-92; cf. also *Europa jutra...*, A. Sujka, op. cit., 201. Cf. L. Ostasz, op. cit., 101.

³³ M. Heidegger, *Holzwege*, Frankfurt 1950, 203. *Quelle identité pour l’Europe? Le multiculturalisme à l’épreuve*, R. Kastoryano (ed.), Mayenne 1998, 32.

³⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 20; cf. also L. Ostasz, op. cit.

³⁵ A. Sujka, op. cit., 102.

³⁶ Cf. *Europa jutra...*, A. Sujka, op. cit., 100f.

and scepticism. There has also been a certain universal shift in primacy. Until recently, it was observed that morality is increasingly dominated by politics. Today, in turn, politics itself is dominated by economics. This is what is called turbo-capitalism³⁷. There is also a growing tendency towards the absolutisation of society at the expense of the individual³⁸.

So, what are the characteristics of universal morality? First of all, even if postmodernism did not negate all values, it undoubtedly liked all forms of deformation of the integral vision of man. The lack of an integral vision of man has simple consequences in accepting an objective hierarchy of values³⁹. A universal civilisation for the average European means above all a free market, human rights and individualism, what is commonly referred to as the "Davos culture."⁴⁰

Universal morality must therefore have many opposing moments in relation to that of globalisation. First of all, universalisation in morality must take account the context. Universalisation, of course, consists in the fact that it is necessary to constantly transcend this context, but transcending does not mean omitting. In practice, universalisation cannot have anything to do with standardisation. It must also take into account the need to come to the truth through compromise and a strong sense of identity. In this case, however, compromise is not a renunciation of the truth, but communication with another form of identity, which also applies to the category of truth. It therefore seems that reason is the best tool for universalisation. It is a condition for progress, but at the same time a condition for the synthesis of values. Universalisation is also a specific set of values. However, new forms of connections and behaviours as well as new cultural patterns are becoming increasingly more visible among them. They are created not on the basis of the nature of man or society, but only in an empirical and evolutionary way. A particular new form of values has become the pace of life and necessity⁴¹.

³⁷ Cf. R. Czarnecki, art. cit., 63; cf. also *Europa jutra...*, A. Sujka, op. cit., 117.

³⁸ Cf. *Europa jutra...*, A. Sujka, op. cit., 183.

³⁹ Cf. J. Bramorski, *Zjawisko zaniku poczucia grzechu w świetle adhortacji apostołskiej Jana Pawła II reconciliatio etpaenitentia*, "Universitas Gedanensis" 23(2001)1, 35-46; cf. also I. Mroczkowski, *Kondycja moralna człowieka ponowoczesnego*, "Roczniki Teologiczne" vol. 47(2001) 3, 21-34.

⁴⁰ Cf. R. Czarnecki, art. cit., 55-64; W. Pannenberg, *Chrześcijaństwo i Zachód – niejasna przeszłość, niepewna przyszłość*, "W drodze" 353(2003)1, 57.

⁴¹ Cf. L. Ostasz, op. cit., 61-63.192.236; cf. also K. Papciak, *Konstruktywne obywatelstwo świata – uczestnictwo przez dialog*, "Wrocławski Przegląd Teologiczny" 9(2001)1, 129-137; J. Czaja, art. cit., 22-39.

When talking about universal morality, it is also necessary to draw attention to a certain danger. Because of the various pressures, sometimes situations are forced where typically particular values, under the influence of pressure, might gain the characteristics of universal values. This type of action undoubtedly leads to the weakening of truly universal values⁴². The role of awareness should also be recognised. Most of the values that we live by are commonly not given indefinitely in their final form. This is particularly true of the level of values, which is reflected in human rights in practice. In itself, they gain in universality only when they are respected and implemented. Values disseminated separately from the being they serve and from their awareness quickly become declarative values. Therefore, an active awareness of existence is needed for their full life⁴³.

It also seems important to recall the relationship between the common and universal nature of values. Universal values should become common, while common values, which are not universal, should not be treated as such. Commonness is something secondary to universality⁴⁴. On the other hand, further distinction (universal and objective values) brings us closer to understanding Christian values. The objectivity of values is linked either to the adoption of certain assumptions or to their existence focused on their own objectivity⁴⁵. So what are Christian values, do they have an independent object, a plane? It seems that the fundamental role of Christian values is the assimilation of all-humanitarian universals, especially in some sort of ordering and prioritising, especially in the perspective of the purpose and meaning of life. In addition, they can inspire many areas of life⁴⁶. They also ultimately relate the existence and sense of universal values to the person and his or her superior value in a certain universal axiological order⁴⁷.

What values of universal morality should therefore be developed in particular. The first value seems to be the category of the *common good*. Serving the common good ensures fairness and harmonious economic development⁴⁸.

⁴² Cf. Ibid., 269.

⁴³ Cf. Ibid., 221-225. Cf. also: V. Possenti, *Teraźniejszość i przyszłość praw człowieka*, "Społeczeństwo" 13(2003)1, 43-63.

⁴⁴ Cf. Ibid., 225.

⁴⁵ Cf. M. Ziółkowski, *Przemiany interesów i wartości społeczeństwa polskiego. Teorie, tendencje, interpretacje*, op. cit., 71-72.

⁴⁶ ⁴⁷ Cf. John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europe*, no. 25.

⁴⁷ M. Rusecki, art. cit., 517; cf. H. Skorowski, art. cit., 249-252.

⁴⁸ Cf. *Europa jutra...*, A. Sujka, op. cit., 143.

In the long term, it is about universal *solidarity* first within Europe itself and then between Europe and the world⁴⁹. However, the question arises as to what kind of solidarity is it all about? It seems that it is about a sense of commitment, a combined effort, a joint effort to build a certain whole⁵⁰. In this context⁵¹, it is important to realise whether it is necessary to build such a solidarity we are clearly aware and what should make up this whole? What can be a cohesive and unifying force in creative diversity? Finally, how to outline the criteria between unity and diversity?⁵²

It should be remembered that universal morality must also have clearly defined *common values*. Only such values can form the core of a society. So it is all about – speaking the language of John Paul II – certain values of tomorrow. The Pope is particularly *concerned with religious freedom, respect for the personal dimension of development, protection of human rights from conception to natural death, concern for the development and strengthening of the family, appreciation of cultural differences for the mutual enrichment of all people, protection of the balance of the natural environment*⁵³. Also in the perspective of the new evangelisation, we can speak of certain fundamental values, to which Józef Życiński draws attention. These include: *dignity of the individual, deep attachment to justice and freedom, religious freedom, generosity, respect for work, spirit of initiative, love for the family, respect for life, tolerance, striving for cooperation and peace*⁵⁴.

Are there any values in global morality that meet the demands of universal values at the same time? A specific attempt to answer this question was made by the Religious Parliament of the World, which met in Chicago between 28 August and 5 September 1993. Its culmination was the announcement of a document called the *Message on the World Ethos*. The main thesis of this message was that there is no world order without a new world ethos. It highlights four so-called “unchangeable recommendations”: a culture of non-violence and respect for life; solidarity and fair social order; tolerance and living in truth; partnership

⁴⁹ Cf. “*Abyśmy byli świadkami Chrystusa, który nas wyzwolił.*” *Deklaracja końcowa Specjalnego Zgromadzenia Synodu Biskupów poświęconego Europie*, OsRomPol 13(1992)1, 46-53.

⁵⁰ Cf. John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europe*, no. 110-112.

⁵¹ It is impossible to build this whole without a reference to the religious element, without a specific “globalisation of religiosity” – D. Bertrand, *Qui est ton Dieu? Tradition de l’Eglise et mondialisation*, “*Etudes*” 2002, November, no. 3975, 496f.

⁵² Cf. J. Krucina, art. cit., 81.

⁵³ Cf. *Europa jutra...*, A. Sujka, op. cit., 89-90; cf. also A. Mirski, art. cit., 129.

⁵⁴ Cf. J. Życiński, *Kryzys tożsamości chrześcijańskiej a integracja Europy*, in: *Pytania o duszę Europy*, Warsaw 2002, 59.

between women and men. A similar spirit was expressed by other international bodies, such as the International Academy of Humanism, especially through the document “Towards a new global humanism” published in 1999. If one tries to summarise what can be said about the premises of universal morality on the basis of certain trends functioning in the modern world, one can distinguish three outlines of tendencies. The first proclaims the independence of man from the world. This is supported by an example taken from an eastern proverb saying that man should be like a boat on the water, stay on the water, but not get water inside. The second tendency is to adapt to the surrounding world. It is a recognition of a certain direction from the world of objects to the world of subjects. The third tendency proclaims the need to change the world according to the criterion of man’s needs according to his goodness and aspirations⁵⁵.

All this leads to a return to man. Maybe in the changing and globalising world there is a need not so much, or not only to read the changing situations and behaviours, but rather a full integral vision of man, and such a hermeneutical key, which would help this man understand by explaining and explaining understanding?

The Importance of Hermeneutics in the Era of Transformations

This part of reflection may be accompanied by a question about what hermeneutical key can be used to explain the contemporary world and shape the morality of the time of change?

It is obvious that man understands civilisation and the culture in which he lives in the way he perceives himself. In turn, what shaped for centuries the vision of oneself was the concept of man as an image of God. This concept, however, experienced difficult moments, especially in the face of the misfortunes in which the XX century abounded. The special issue of the *Communio* Collection devoted to the martyrs of the twentieth century can testify to this. At one point, *man as an image of God* was separated from *man as an image of suffering God*. It seems that these two forms of the same image cannot be treated separately⁵⁶.

Another problem requiring a solution is the relationship between universal morality and religion. There is a tendency to build a universal morality which,

⁵⁵ Cf. M. Michałik, *Globalizacja etyki – wyzwanie czy paradoks*, art. cit., 41-43.

⁵⁶ Cf. M. Sievernich, *Globalizacja i compasión*, www.mateusz.pl/goscie/da/waj/inne/siev_nauka3.htm.

regardless of its attitude towards religion, would have clearly defined principles⁵⁷. Otherwise, if the only basis for morality is religion, there is a danger that by rejecting a religion, man will also reject the morality built on that religion⁵⁸. This is expressed in the danger highlighted by Christian tradition, namely the danger of separating the ethical order from the salvific order⁵⁹.

Another element of the hermeneutical key shows man as the basis of universality and integration. But also in this case such a form of interpretation in detachment from the religious and moral heritage would be incomplete. Assuming that all civilisations are equal in dignity, one cannot, however, claim that they all have a common vision of man⁶⁰. Remaining at the level of anthropology, it should be emphasised that also the vision of the relationship between man and God is not uniform. It is characterised by at least two orders: Greek, emphasising man as an image of God, and Latin, focused especially on man's way to God – on action. Much therefore depends on the accepted concept of man⁶¹.

Another element of the hermeneutical key concerns the political and social sphere. It is noted that in most countries there is a simplified picture of political divisions between the right and the left, and societies between inclusive and exclusive societies. If we also assumed that the tension in the moral sphere is between the understanding of morality in the global key and the universal key, we could conclude that on the side of universality there is reason. What would then be an interpretative tool for global morality?⁶²

Another element that should be noted is the interplay between minimum ethics and dynamic ethics. It is probably not enough to save certain "common values," which in practice would only be a category of minimum standards. There is rather a need for a dynamic ethic based on the dignity of the person, which, on the one hand, would allow man to open up to culture and, on the other hand, allow cultures to interpenetrate⁶³.

⁵⁷ Pannenberg notes that: The peculiarity of our time is that the subject of morality and ethics is considered to be an important issue for society, while the subject of God is treated as an esoteric issue for theologians (...). Id., *Gdy wszystko jest dozwolone*, "W drodze" 361(2003)9, 37.

⁵⁸ Cf. A. Mirski, art. cit., 141.

⁵⁹ The danger of such a separation is pointed out by John Paul II in the encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*.

⁶⁰ J. Joblin, *Aktualność chrześcijaństwa w procesie globalizacji*, "ComP" 21(2001)4, 74-87.

⁶¹ Cf. R. Czarnecki, art. cit., 56.

⁶² Cf. M. Kempny, *Czy globalizacja kulturowa współdecyduje o dynamice społeczeństw postkomunistycznych?*, "Kultura i społeczeństwo" (2000)1, 5-26.

⁶³ M. Totola, *Ekonomiczno-społeczna problematyka globalizacji*, "Społeczeństwo" 8(1998)1, 77-102.

Another key which, unfortunately, is too often passed on to the social ground is the economic principle of market expansion called the “Pareto principle.” It is based on a specifically impassable ratio of 20 to 80. This means that in each free trade and competition area, 20% is the driving force capable of pulling the remaining 80%. In many publications, warnings against the creation of the so-called “one-fifth” world can be seen today. As noticed at the time R. Ziemkiewicz in *Polityka* in “the coming decades, in the era of free flow of work, information and capital, one fifth of the population is fully sufficient to sustain civilisation development. The question arises – what to do with the rest?”⁶⁴ And this is probably the fundamental moral question posed by the principle that was supposed to shape economic reality.

Another key recalls well known and continuously functioning values such as the common good, solidarity as a *bonum commune* of the modern world, the principle of subsidiarity necessary for the full but also safe development of man and societies, and freedom understood not so much as a limit set by the freedom of another human being, but rather a freedom that derives the framework for its existence from the nature of man.

Consideration brings us to a well-known point, which is man. The question arises as to how globality and universality could be reconciled. As it has been shown, in detachment from being, both the values of global morality and universal morality do not constitute a sufficient way of justifying the moral life of man. They themselves need a justifying authority. Maybe we should look only in the person itself? In order to answer this question it would be necessary to very briefly, due to the thematic scope, trace the use of L. Kohlberg’s theory of building the morality of time of transformation. First, let’s look at the levels and stages that he proposes in his theory^{65 66}.

The aforementioned author emphasises the connection between cognitive development and moral development and believes that thinking is closely related to moral action. L. Kohlberg distinguishes three levels, while in each of them there are two stages. Thus, the pre-conventional level has two stages: the first one is characterised by the morality of punishment and obedience, the second one is characterised by the so-called individualistic point of view. At this level, the unit tries to avoid breaking the rules due to the expected penalty. Standards are

⁶⁴ R. Ziemkiewicz, *Powrót gladiatorów*, “Polityka” (1999)32, 58-60.

⁶⁵ Cf. J. Krucina, art. cit., 86f; cf. also J. Joblin, art. cit., 77; M. Klecel, art. cit., 120-130; K. Wojnowski, *Osoba i globalizm – wspólnotowość a totalizm*, “Wspólnotowość i postawa uniwersalistyczna” (2000-2001)2, 49-55.

⁶⁶ A. Mirski, art. cit., 129.132.

based on short-term interest. In the operation of an individual, hedonism and fear of the legislative power are manifested. Level two, conventional, begins with a stage the criterion of which is to be good in one's own eyes and those of others. At this level, particular attention shall be paid to the feelings and expectations of others. In the fourth stage and the second of this level, the individual notes that he or she is an element of society. A characteristic feature of this stage is the preference for the right over the good of the individual. Finally, at the post-conventional level, the individual is aware that, in addition to the values preferred by the group, there are also general values that need to be respected, and not because of the group. The sixth stage is oriented towards universal ethical principles. At this stage, the law is determined by the decision of conscience.

The first research was carried out by Kohlberg himself in 1984. He hypothesised that the structures of moral reasoning have a universal character. In his opinion, cultural differences reflect only the different pace of reaching the various stages. A year later (1985) Snarey's research conducted on 28 cultural circles as part of 46 attempts aimed to overthrow or confirm Kohlberg's theory. Studies have confirmed that in all cultural areas there are basically all stages of the method described. It can be concluded from this that *the morality of man, at least within the deeper structures, manifests the characteristics of universalism*⁶⁷. That being the case, the following question arises: Can the only source of cultural differences be found in cultural and moral isolationism? It is easy here not only to fall into the trap of ethical intellectualism, but also into the trap of the so-called "Hume's guillotine," called a naturalistic error, which would depend on the fact that something is moving out of his duty.

Global or universal morality? This question returns with varying degrees of intensity in the presented reflection. It seems that the first level of response is the appreciation of Christianity itself, especially in the perspective of hope⁶⁸. It is an essential and credible foundation for moral life⁶⁹. It refers to the nature of man, at the same time teaching the evangelical distance to it. In addition, it teaches that one cannot refer exclusively to one's Christian roots. The future should be built on the Person and the message of Jesus Christ⁷⁰.

What Johann Baptist Metz calls the *compassion* should also be highlighted. This is an attitude of elementary sensitivity to suffering, which Metz calls "a biblical

⁶⁷ Cf. Ibid., 135-138.

⁶⁸ M. Cozzoli, *Da una morale senza speranza a una morale di speranza*, RTM 34(2002)136, 501-506.

⁶⁹ Cf. W. Pannenberg, *Gdy wszystko...*, art. cit., 44.

⁷⁰ Cf. "Abyśmy byli świadkami Chrystusa, który nas wyzwolił"..., art. cit., 46-53; cf. also M. Fédou, *Le christianisme à l'heure de la mondialisation*, "Etudes" 2002, XI, no. 3973, 220-223.

dowry for the European spirit.” The *Compasión* is also the best expression of the “globalisation of Christian responsibility.” This, in turn, may be an important contribution to the work of humanisation and globalisation of the modern world.

Attention should also be paid to manifestations of pseudo-universalisation. It takes place between not allowing exceptions and generalising them. True universality demands communication. However, the question arises as to whether it is about transcultural or intercultural communication. In communication, it is also important to establish the right relationship between culture and politics. During the communist era, culture was a substitute for politics. Now politics is becoming a substitute for culture⁷¹.

So how to reconcile two seemingly different moral visions: global and universal? It seems that we are dealing with two types of consciousness: social consciousness and moral consciousness. What can unite them is human consciousness. It is in it that social and moral consciousness imply and complement each other. The dependence of moral consciousness on the social place is also important. A society is not a simple sum of individuals organised politically, socially or economically. Society has its time, its space, its reality. It is a peculiar form of contract – created by people, but crossing them.

What is the relationship between morality and society? Society finds its source in the process of transferring the whole heritage, but man does not come from society, because the living always comes from the living and lives among the living. Everything that is passed on to man (biological, cultural and moral heritage) presupposes the mediation of a reflexive consciousness; the common consciousness is in the strict sense only a metaphor.

However, we are subject to life and social necessity, which do not correspond to our individual needs and then we interpret them as a duty or responsibility. This is also how we read the phenomenon of globalisation. It shows in a particularly harsh way that a social place becomes at the same time a *par excellence* moral place. All the norms that we use in social life have the reciprocity and a minimum standard character functioning in a key: “I recommend others, others may recommend me.” In other words: moral consciousness is not less social in itself than social – moral consciousness. After all, under one condition, that one and the other express themselves in the human awareness, which in the best manner fulfils the requirements of the hermeneutic circle. For it is at the same time an explanatory understanding and an understanding explanation of the being to which every morality serves, man.

⁷¹ L. Ostasz, op. cit., 62f; Cz. Porębski, op. cit., 188; cf. also *Une nouvelle Europe Centrale*, M. Frybes (ed.), Paris 1998, 36f.