

ФИЛОСОФИЯ НА РЕЛИГИЯТА

PERSONALISTIC CHRISTOLOGY OF CZESLAW STANISLAW BARTNIK

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Анотация

Горбан Р. А. Персоналистичната христология на Чеслав Станислав Бартник. В статията се анализират особеностите на персоналистичната христология, създадена от полския католически философ и теолог Ч.С.Бартник, който възприема учението за Исус Христос не като затворена, веднъж завинаги сформирала се система, а като постоянно открита за по-дълбоко разбиране богословска теория, затова и го разглежда във философски ключ от позицията на съвременния персонализъм. Разглеждат се възгледите на полския мислител за образа на Христос като особена Божия субсистенция, пълнотата на битието на която се разкрива само с помощта на категорията “личност”, доколкото да се разбере синтеза на човешката и Божествената природа, станал в личността на Христа, може изключително посредством личностните отношения от тринитарен характер (*relatio*), благодарение на които в едно същество са се обединили в неразривно цяло две противоположни начала – Божието и човешкото. От автора се отбелязва, че в интерпретацията на Ч.С.Бартник именно феноменът на личността по най-добър начин разкрива същността на Исус Христос, неговата природа и структура, затова персоналистичният подход в христологията се явява един от най-продуктивните в контекста на съвременната антропологическа преориентация на християнското богословие, декларирана на Втория Ватикански Събор в качеството на най-важна препоръка на курса на католическото обновление (*aggiornamento*).

Ключови думи: Христос; личност; христология; персонализъм; отношения (*relatio*)

Анотація

Горбань Р. А. Персоналістична христологія Чеслава Станіслава Бартніка. У статті аналізуються особливості персоналістичної христології, розбудованої польським католицьким філософом і теологом Ч. С. Бартніком, який вчення про Ісуса Христа сприймає не як замкнену, раз і назавжди сформовану систему, а як завжди відкриту до глибшого опанування богословську теорію, тому тлумачить його у філософському ключі з позиції сучасного персоналізму. Висвітлюється погляд польського мислителя на постать Христа як на особливу Божу субсистенцію, повнота буття якої розкривається лише посередництвом категорії «особи», оскільки зрозуміти синтез людської і Божої природи, котрий відбувся в особі Христа, можливо тільки через особові відношення-зв'язки тринітарного характеру (*relatio*), завдяки яким в одній істоті з'єдналися у нерозривне ціле два протилежних начала – Боже і людське. Автором зазначено, що в інтерпретації Ч. С. Бартніка саме феномен особи найкраще виявляє сутність Ісуса Христа, його природи, істоти та структури, тому персоналістичний підхід у христології є одним з найбільш продуктивних у контексті сучасної антропологічної переорієнтації християнського богослов'я, яка була задекларована на Другому Ватиканському Соборі як надважливе завдання курсу католицького оновлення (*aggiornamento*).

Ключові слова: Христос; особа; христологія; персоналізм; відношення (*relatio*)

Abstract

Richard Gorban. Personalistic Christology of Czeslaw Stanislaw Bartnik. In this article, the author gives analysis of peculiarities of the Personalistic Christology, advocated by Czeslaw Stanislaw Bartnik, a Polish Catholic philosopher and theologian, who believes that the doctrine about Jesus Christ is not a complete and finally settled system, but a theological theory that is always open for deeper study. Thus, he interprets it in the philosophical sense, from the perspective of modern Personalism. The author proves that a Polish thinker considers the Personality of Christ a particular God's subsistence, the fullness of existence of which can only be revealed through the personality category, since the sole way to understand the synthesis of a human and God's nature, as a result of fusion in the personality of Christ, is possible through personal relations-bonds of the Trinitarian character (*relatio*), due to which one sentient combines into a single entity two different natures: divine and human. The author marks that, according to Czeslaw Bartnik, it is the phenomenon of a personality that best explains the essence of Jesus Christ, his nature, being and structure. That is why a personalistic approach in Christology is one of the most fruitful ones within the context of modern anthropologic refocusing of Christian Theology that was declared at the Second Vatican Conference as the most significant task of the course of Catholic renewal (*aggiornamento*).

Keywords: Christ; personality; Christology; Personalism; relations (*relatio*)

Introduction. In post-industrial world, humanitarian thought develops various theoretical models, dealt with the formation of the concept of a man, treating many-sidedness of human nature based on science. The Catholic Church appropriately reacts, declaring the renovation course (*aggiornamento*) at the Second Vatican Conference, aimed at the development of the philosophy of an integral man. It made Christian Theology focus on mastering the latest tools of Phenomenology, Existential Hermeneutics, Philosophical Anthropology and Personalism. Today the personalistic conception of a man is considered one of the most fruitful ones within the development aspect of theology as the field crossing both science and philosophy. Development of modern theological Personalism by K. Wojtyla becomes relevant in modern Ukrainian Religious Studies. However, Lublin School in whole and the philosophical-theological heritage of Czeslaw Stanislaw Bartnik in particular prevail by a large margin. This theologian and philosopher-personalist, well known in Poland and little known in Ukraine, drawing on philosophical ideas of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, J. Newman, M. Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, M. Berdiaev, K. Wojtyla and Thomism, Augustinism, theology of Leo the Great, developed his own personalistic concept of theology, in which the doctrine of the Personality of Jesus Christ is central. Thus, our goal is to reveal the principles and peculiarities of Personalistic Christology of Bartnik.

The main material. Disputes and disagreements, that arose in the first millennium of Christianity regarding the nature and personality of the Son of God, tell us that the term *personality* in Christology as the doctrine, centered on the essence of Jesus Christ, is the focal one. Within this context, Czeslaw Bartnik not only highlights anthropological understanding of the personality of Christ but also asserts that everything that defines the manly essence of Jesus is a *personality*. The Catholic philosopher believes that the fact that Christ was a man like any human being determines the truth of his manly nature.

The two natures, divine and human, combine in Christ in a mysterious way. E. Ozorovskyi (2003, s. 361), a Polish theologian, researching into the issue, states, "If we acknowledge the truth, that the Son of God became a man still being God, we must admit that the Personality of the Son of God became the Personality of Jesus Christ still being his self". Since ancient times the Christian Church has set a series of teachings: 1) God, taking a human nature, accepted it like his own, ridding it of nothing; 2) Likewise, a man, owing to its bond with God, gets the fullness of being a

human; 3) Jesus became the most perfect one among people, due to the fullest merge with God; 4) The definition *personality* is the bearer of this unity. Developing Personalistic Christology, Czeslaw Bartnik set himself the task, which is to not only explain the stated entity, but also define the depth of its meaning and understanding.

Czeslaw Bartnik writes in his two-volume treatise (Bartnik, 1999) that the personality itself determines the human nature of Christ; otherwise, the Son of God would not be a true man. That is why the Polish thinker emphasizes the aspect of a human personality of Christ, although the fullness of his existence is multi-faceted and has various plans in store. Czeslaw Bartnik believes that existence of a single personality (ontological subject and essence) in Christ is the core of his mystery. This enables one to observe him as a full-fledged man. Along with the man's fullness of Christ, there exists the fullness of Deity. They both are naturally combined in the Son of God and make the fullness of His nature.

Human existence of Jesus, like any common man, is inherently an absolute relation (*relatio*) to the Personality of God. Existence of Christ as Logos, namely a Word, mentioned by John the Baptist, is an important aspect of His. Considering this aspect, in Jesus the Personality of Logos interacts not in a usual (outward) manner, but as if granting a personality an additional sense and another way of realization. Existence of Christ as Logos implements the fullness of His existence as a personality, and this is the act of non-God's nature, but God's Personality of Jesus, who himself realizes His Personality through relationship. Human nature at the stage of its human existence, rooted in God's Personality of Christ, creates a single divine subsistence, and Christ establishes relations (*relatio*) with the Father and the Holy Spirit in this human nature together with God's nature. According to Czeslaw Bartnik, this means even something more, than just personification of Jesus in the Son of God. Christ has taken not only a human nature but also all its fullness including the personality origin. Thus, we should speak about realization of a human nature as a personality in the Son of God as Logos, which became a human's body; moreover, the unity of the human origin of Jesus with the Personality God as Logos is absolute. However, it is a quite different nature (God's), yet it is the same personality (Christ's), the same ontological subject, the same I of Christ, that creates entity of everything within Him. A human nature would only have been a thing, subject, tool or medium of salvation in any other synthesis than the personality oneness. Nevertheless, in Christ it became His essence, His self, as Christ combines two natures: human and divine. In general sense, Jesus Christ is one person that became a subject of existence for God and human's natures. The analytical thesaurus explains that the two natures are eternal inseparable realizations of the same personality. There is a certain autonomy, voluntariness, identity and hierarchy between the reality of God's nature and that of human's, which becomes possible due to the rooting in the subject and the personality's world. There are no two personalities in Christ. There is one personality of God, which expresses the before-mentioned whole.

Existence of a personality in Christ gives Him the highest level of reality and entity with the Creation, which finds its realization and fulfilment in Him. The Personality of Jesus by its essence is the center of the Universe, a thing-in-itself, which in its turn correlates with the whole humankind and each single person based on a personal realization of humanity and being a human in the Personality of God, Personality of the Son of God. Consequently, there arises the dialectics of a personality: it exists in itself for itself, its world and its comprehension of fullness, but at the same time it is aimed at others: exists for others, in relations with others and for their realization, and, according to Czeslaw Bartnik (1999, s. 793), "It is absolute relativity and relative absoluteness".

Christ marks the beginning of the potential process, relevant to the whole reality being realized to its full, rooting in God's Word and the tri-personality of God, in particular. This process affects not just every man and the whole humanity, but all the times and space and is passed from the Father through Christ to each human being in the Holy Spirit, as well as in reverse order:

from a man through the Personality of Christ to the Personality of Father under the mediation of the Personality of Spirit. Therefore, paternity of God, with His pre-beginning, pre-source and pre-existence, is behind all existence. In the Personality of Christ, all existence and reality find unity with God and oneness of everything in God, the subject's rooting, as if merging with Christ into a single entity. Thus, reality and existence gain their particular features.

Existence as such becomes personal to some extent, following the models of the Personality of Christ and a human person. All reality rests on personal relationship (*relatio*) with Jesus Christ in four ways: 1) at the level of a subject, where a human person unites with the Personality of God by means of personification, embodiment of God; 2) structural, where the structure of every existence itself is aimed at the person, the Personality of Christ, in particular, finding its fullness in Him; 3) functional, where God treats the existence, following the actions and functions of Christ; 4) transformation, where existence, aspiring to its fullness, turns from the state of limitation and completeness into the state of infinity.

Christ is associated with the principle and basis of history and its key event. He is the co-mystery of the world, and the world, in its turn, is the co-mystery of Christ. Everything is aimed at and moves towards the fullness of Christ. Humanity is heading for the fullness in a commune — community of the Personalities of God.

Personalistic Christology of Czeslaw Bartnik is based on the assertion that Christ is an individual and specific personality in His aspirations and relation (*relatio*) towards all existence. Christ is the personification of a human being in God and the God-man, who embraces everything and each man in His fullness. He is a universal human and universal God in His relation to himself, other personalities (divine and human) and the Universe. The doctrine emphasizes not only omnitude, but also reality of this peculiar existence of the human being and God in history and reality, which, in its turn, gives omnitude and reality to history and the world. The whole reality of God is concentrated in the appearance of Christ (as a historical event), in whom God goes out to the man and the whole world. The process of this descend and approaching takes place in Christ and through Him. By the mediation of his Son God enters a real history and reality. Czeslaw Bartnik traces a certain scheme of personalization of existence: God-man-existence. God changes and improves the man through relationship and interaction. Therefore, the man influences the existence and develops it according to his personal existence through interaction. Thus, the man reflects God's personality, shining the light of personal structure overall existence. The world becomes the environment for personalization of the human being and fulfilment in the personalities of God. From the perspective of Personalistic Christology, this process can be named a personal realization with the help of Christ and in Christ. Consequently, Christology is regarded as a kind of personal realization of both Christ and every human being in His Personality. Personalization of the man develops in such a way.

Czeslaw Bartnik writes in his work *Christ as the Sense of History* (Bartnik, 1987) that in case of Christ, we have the utmost kindness and the greatest love, objectified in a special gift to the selfless and open ones. Therefore, Christ is associated with the personality and Love. Such identity does not exist in the earthly dimension, as love expresses the category and structure of the person. Christ as the embodiment of Love influences all people equally, though the degree of this action depends on perception, response and relationship (*relatio*) of the other person (man).

Christ is also the event in history that had absolute consequences and caused major changes and transformation of the world. Czeslaw Bartnik asserts that He can be named an Accomplished Act, as He is the one, Who Is in his divine essence. Christ is characterized by a passive action — He is, this is determined by the nature of God and Reality. Instead, Christ identifies and realizes himself as a man all alone in the active area, herewith changing existence. Thus, the personality planes of the man and God meet in Christ, bringing everything into action. The planes of human and divine Personality of Christ co-exist and cooperate. Any human action, deed, creation

is of imperfect, incomplete character and waits for its approval in the supernatural, God's, absolute panel. Therefore, any human action is aimed at infinity, perfection and fullness, becoming means of the fullest expression and realization of the human personality within the aspect of assertion of its existence. The action gains transcendent dimension in Christ, becomes means of the person's return to its self, taking-the-inward-turn, extracting from within its personal essence ideas, conceptions, forms and implementing them outwards.

Christology, developed by Czeslaw Bartnik, considers the aspect of personal, personalistic existence of the Personality of Jesus for the other personality and all personalities together: an individual person, community of human persons and Personalities of God. The Catholic philosopher states in his theological treatise *Word and Action* (Bartnik, 2006) that the existence, mentioned in Logos, is the essence of Christ and exists from time immemorial (like He himself) and is of free, conscious, task-oriented, that is, of absolutely personalistic character. This is revealed in the fact the Personality of Christ gives his personal world as a sacrifice, a single act of the whole sphere of His functioning in another person, as an altruistic gift urged by the unconditional love, and directs the entire reality for the good of other personalities, an individual or community. The Personality of Christ creates a new reality of the human being. The structure of the Personality of the Son of God itself and the fact of his embodiment that forms an alliance of the two natures (human and divine) in one personality, though maintaining their difference, serve as the basis for it. God is the center of creation as a man, while remaining God, which indicates the central place of any man in his personal existence and aspiration for his own fullness in Christ. That is why one should not dissociate and consider the realities of Christ separately. He is a harmonious embodiment of the Personality of two natures. The fullness of the synthesis of the divine and human develops in Christ not so much based on nature as following the personality. Christ implements and externalizes everything that he has accomplished in his life or is fulfilling in his existence, by means of his personal essence, mystery of his personality. Salvation that he brought to the humanity bears the stamp of personal character, that is, has to be realized in the plane of the human personality. The Polish thinker notes in his work *Personalistic Christianity* (Bartnik, 2003) that because of this, one should not comprehend the phenomenon of Christ like a principle or way of transformation, but, above all, perceive it as a Personality. As compared with the personal character of realization and salvation, everything else is of minor importance. Therefore, all the aforementioned definitions regarding Christ: *center of the humanity, center of the world, center of history, sense, goal, salvation*, should primarily be understood in a personal key. The Personality of Christ determines existence of the entire being in a certain way, its sense and realization. All reality becomes clear only in the Personality of Christ.

Christianity reveals natural and supernatural depth of the mystery of the human personality from the perspective and in the light of Christ, plain truth of the structural, adequacy of action between Christ and the personality of a Christian and their correlation in the plane of existence. The declared truth of the Holy Scripture denotes the necessity to interpret Christ in relation to the human personality and a man – in relation to the Personality of Christ. The priority and supremacy in everything lie within the phenomenon of Christ. The Son of God discovers the truth about the man when being a human himself; the man is unable to perceive himself completely, his depth, value and nature without Him. The human nature and personal essence of Christ, but not his human existence, are believed to be the guarantee of such balance and explanation of the truth about the man.

A human being becomes a personality for Christ in a special way, and He becomes a personality for a man. This proves that the existence of a personality is based on a close bond-correlation (*relatio*). Christ becomes the Personality-relation for a man, and a human personality becomes a relation *for* and *to* Christ. Relationships and interrelations between personalities, that are significant for the whole existence, filling it with a particular sense, are formed in such a way.

Czeslaw Bartnik shares the idea in his work *To Touch God Alive* (Bartnik, 2004) that the

Personality of Christ reveals the human's mission, the goal of which is to unite with the Trinity, namely, to commune with the Personalities of God. Christ becomes means of realization and fulfillment of this communication. Embodiment and resurrection of Christ make it possible to reach God either individually or jointly, and at the same time open prospects of universal cohesion of personal character. The Personality of God gives a human being a chance to unite with God and fulfill itself as a personality in the personalities of God.

Conclusion. As you can see, Czeslaw Bartnik comprehends Christology, which is a teaching about Christ, not as a closed, finally formed system, but as a theological theory always open for in-depth understanding. That is why he interprets it in a philosophical personalistic key. He believes that it reveals the person of Jesus most convincingly and to the fullest extent. According to the Polish thinker, the fullness of the existence of Christ is rendered through the definition of *personality*. The phenomenon of the personality itself helps reveal the essence of Christ, his nature, being and stricture best of all. That is why the personalistic approach in Christology is one of the most effective means. Czeslaw Bartnik proves that personal relations-bonds (*relatio*) are the only possible way to perceive synthesis of the human and divine natures, which came about in the Personality of Christ. Two counter origins joined into a seamless whole in one creature due to this relationship. This gave the entire existence an opportunity to realize and reach its fullness.

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