

Educational ideals of the founders of Christian Schools in Poland and its application

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The article elaborates on the fundamental educational ideals of Christian schools founders, as well as its applications in the context of non-state schooling. It is based on the research material gathered in the interviews and content analysis of schools documents. Researched schools are directly or indirectly connected with Protestantism in Poland and UK. Comprehensive and wide-ranging results are shown, reflecting inconsistent environment of Christian schooling in Poland after 1989.

Key words: educational ideals; Christian schools; Poland after 1989; Protestantism; upbringing; non-state schools; biblical integration; educational alternatives

Do not build a church building. Build a school!

Pastor E. Pawłowski

The presence of Christian schools in the country, where nearly 90% of the population claim to be Christians,¹ is fairly obvious. Most of Catholic schools are run by religious congregations (Salesians, Jesuits, Ursulines, Piarists)² and Catholic organisations, such as Caritas (for ex. Caritas Catholic Primary School of the Świdnica Diocese by the name of John Paul II, Caritas Catholic Educational Centre of the Cracow Archdiocese)³

¹ *Ludność. Stan i struktura demograficzno-społeczna. Narodowy Spis Powszechny Ludności i Mieszkań 2011*. Warszawa: Zakład Wydawnictw Statystycznych 2013, p. 99.

² Catholic schools are associated in Catholic Schools in Poland Council. Only in the area of Lower Silesia there are twenty six institutions like this (data from: http://rsk.edu.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=131&Itemid=184 accessed: 04. 11. 2013).

³ Council of Catholic Schools in Poland website: http://www.rsk.edu.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=98&Itemid=162 accessed: 04. 11. 2013.

or Opus Dei (Schools of the Association for Education and Family Support "STERNIK").⁴

In the area of my interest were educational institutions directly or indirectly related to the Protestant environment, all except for one of which declare as their purpose to conduct Christian education. In my research I did not take into account the typical Catholic schools for several reasons. One of them is a clear continuity in existence and presence of education related to this tradition on the Polish lands, which is not the case of schools associated with Protestant community. In the People's Republic of Poland period, some Catholic schools existed, but Christian schools run by churches or Christian communities of other confessions (or non-denominational) did not have such a possibility.⁵

In Polish academic literature many studies which appeared, and still appear, are related to the history of Catholic schools, their educational activities, and the specific forms, which are present in those places.⁶ Thus, I decided not to duplicate this topic and I focused on Christian schools, or schools rooted in this tradition, which are not directly related to the dominant Roman Catholic confession.

Additionally, the argument for me was the dichotomy of discourses – a majority discourse, which is clear, present, and audible, and a minority discourse that is vague, marginal, unnoticed. On the one hand, it is a natural phenomenon that the majority will always be more visible and understood; on the other hand, it is worth acknowledging what is outside the mainstream, located somewhere on the edge of Polish educational system.

Educational reform from 1991 resulted in, among other things, a pluralisation of educational offerings in the range of non-state elementary and secondary schools.⁷ As a result, many Christian environments, under the influence of enthusiasm that appeared over the changes in 89, made efforts to establish a school.⁸ The Reform encouraged the establishment

⁴ Association for Education and Family Support „STERNIK” website: *Wychowanie w wierze* <http://www.sternik.edu.pl/nasze-abc/9-wychowanie-w-wierze> accessed: 04. 11. 2013; Opus Dei website: *Szkola: przedłużenie rodziny. Wywiad z Katarzyną i Rafałem Waszkiewiczami, rodzicami ze szkoły Sternik* accessed: 04. 11. 2013.

⁵ Find more: Mezglewski, A. (2004). *Szkolnictwo wyznaniowe w Polsce w latach 1944–1980*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL.

⁶ For example: Kostkiewicz, J. – Misiaszek, K. (2012). *Pedagogie katolickich zgromadzeń zakonnych*. Tom 1. Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza Impuls i tom 2 Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza Impuls, 2013.

⁷ Śliwerski, B. (1999). Remanent reformowania oświaty w III RP. In: *Edukacja i dialog*.

⁸ One of the first non- state schools in Poland established after 1989 was high school led by Mikołaj Rej Schooling Association in Bielsko-Biała. Więcej niż tylko szkoły. In: *Zwiastun* 11/2012, p. 25–26.

of non-state schools, however this category is not specified clearly until today. A non-state school should be considered an institution which is not a state school, which does not provide open access for students and which does not guarantee an education, upbringing or care free of charge.⁹ Schools of that type may be run by individuals and legal entities,¹⁰ but in the Polish context, non-state schools are mainly established by associations and foundations. After registration, they become authorized to conduct a certain kind of school. Institutions in my research are non-state schools holding the rights of state schools, which mean meeting standards concerning curriculum, examination procedures, the amount of hours, qualifications of employed teaching staff.¹¹

One of first initiatives of that type was an elementary school in Wrocław, founded by Christians Educational Association ARKA in 1993. At the same time, some high schools were founded by nongovernmental organisations connected with Lutheran environment (Bielsko-Biala, Cieszyn, Cracow, Gliwice). Representatives of different Christian environments all over the Poland had similar dreams. 1989 and early 90. encouraged changes and releasing of social capital of Christian education, which was hidden through post-war period.

During my research, I visited six schools whose foundation was related to the efforts of people from Protestant environments or cooperation with such environments.

These are schools in Tomaszów Mazowiecki, Gliwice, Gdańsk, Warsaw and two institutions in Cracow. The selection of the group was purposeful, the initial aim was to show a wide range of forms in which these schools appeared in Poland. The above-mentioned schools are in a different places on a continuum: from those in which the presence of religious elements in organisational culture is very clear, to those which consider themselves as neutral. Except one school (the most specific in the group), all institutions studied cooperate with the Educational Association Integration (Polish: Stowarzyszenie Edukacyjne Integracja, SEI),¹² and four of them are connected with the international organisation, Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI).¹³ Research was based on conducting qualitative interviews¹⁴ with principals and with

⁹ Pyter, M. (2010). Procedura zakładania szkoły niepublicznej. In *Szkoła, edukacja, wychowanie*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, p. 128.

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 129–130.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 133–134.

¹² SEI website: <http://www.sei.org.pl/menu/osiagniecia> accessed: 04. 11. 2013.

¹³ ACSI website: <http://www.acsiglobal.org/> accessed: 04. 11. 2013.

¹⁴ According to Kvale, S. (2011). *Prowadzenie wywiadów*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

school founders, content analysis of documents associated with the establishment of an institution (registration, changes in the register, another registrations connected with changing places, establishing schools of lower and higher levels), and literature query on the topic of Christian schooling in Poland after 1989.

Each of examined schools has its unique context, history of establishment and ideas of its founders. According to philosophical assumption of phenomenology, it is impossible to set up generalizations based on this kind of research.¹⁵ Thereby, I will limit myself to different beginnings and realizations taking advantage of simultaneous source – desires of different schools, which are based on Christian values.

Most direct reference to the traditions of Protestant education in Poland are to be found in Mikołaj Rej VII. Private High School and Private Secondary School nr 8 in Cracow.¹⁶ The School was established simultaneously with the St. Martin Church by the Evangelical Lutheran parish on Grodzka Street in the 1st half of the 19th century. A brick building had been built at the beginning of the 20th century. In the period of the Free City of Cracow, Austrian partition and the interwar period the building was being used as faith-based, Evangelical (Lutheran) school. As present Principle Piotr Machowski said: „It was typical that a Lutheran school had such an equal composition. It means that 30% of youths were Lutherans, 30% Catholics, and 30% Jews”.¹⁷ After II World War, the building was taken by the state. Following its return to the Lutehran Church in the early 90's, plans were made to establish a school, which succeeded in 1993.¹⁸ The founder of the Albert Schweitzer Evangelical Educational Society Schools in Gliwice,¹⁹ Maria Czudek referred directly to the Protestant heritage, including the Reformation ideals of Martin Luther: „We refer all the time to the tradition, which Luther introduced in the 16th century, where it was said, that a congregation would not develop, if people were not educated. Sometimes a school was built before a church or a church and a school were built simultaneously, because we are aware that an educated person is a person who understand God, will be able to read the Bible, God's Word, and his life

¹⁵ Pilch, T. – Bauman, T. (2001). *Zasady badań pedagogicznych: strategie ilościowe i jakościowe*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie Żak, p. 270–277.

¹⁶ Mikołaj Rej VII. Private High School and Private Secondary School nr 8 website <http://szkolyreja.pl/> accessed: 04. 11. 2013.

¹⁷ Interview with Piotr Machowski, Principle of Mikołaj Rej VII. Private High School and Private Secondary School nr 8 in Cracow. Conducted by the author on 21. 10. 2013.

¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁹ Evangelical Educational Society Schools in Gliwice website: <http://www.szkolyete.pl/> accessed: 05. 11. 2013.

can also be wise".²⁰ The school in Gliwice was established in September 1995 as a high school by efforts of a group of people from Gliwice Evangelical Lutheran Parish, including an experienced teacher of biology, who remains in the position of Principle until now, and a priest Jerzy Samiec.²¹ In 1991 the Gliwice municipality gave back a building on Franciszkańska street, which before the war belonged to the Parish, and which by the efforts of many people was renovated and adapted to the role of a school. Before the war, the Association of Evangelic Women led a workhouse in this building, helping people to gain an occupation and find a job.²²

Those two schools are connected with the largest religious minority in Poland, the Evangelical Lutheran Church.²³ In the case of schools from Cracow, this connection is more of a organisational and administrative status, however in the case of schools from Gliwice there are relations directly influencing their Christian character.

Other Christian environments, mainly representatives of evangelical churches and Catholic communities remaining outside of the mainstream Roman Catholic Church in Poland also took an initiative connected with establishing schools.

At the initial stage of thinking about those institutions, their founders relied on Anglo-Saxon models and were supported by missionaries from the UK. Beside the above-mentioned school in Wroclaw, the Christian Schools Samuel in Warsaw was also established.²⁴ In this case, it was initially a primary school, established in 2004 by Jacek Weigl, a leader of "Chefsiba" community, which is a part of Apostolic Faith Movement.²⁵ The conducting authority of the schools is SEI, which currently helps to establish similar schools in whole Poland.²⁶ The President of the Association, seeking for models of Christian schools, visited King's School,²⁷ near Oxford in England, led by an evangelical community of churches, Oxfordshire Community Churches.²⁸ Mary Dunlop, who still

²⁰ Interview with Maria Czudek, Principle of A. Schweizer ETE Secondary School and High School in Gliwice. Conducted by the author on 13. 09. 2013.

²¹ Ibidem.

²² Interview with Maria Czudek, op. cit.

²³ Ludniść: op. cit., s. 101.

²⁴ Christian Nursery, Primary and Secondary Schools Samuel website: <http://www.samuel.pl/> accessed: 05. 11. 2013.

²⁵ „Chefsiba” is a Catholic community, officially recognized by Cardinal Kazimierz Nycz, Archbishop of Warsaw: <http://www.chefsiba.pl/index.html> accessed: 04. 11. 2013.

²⁶ SEI website: <http://www.sei.org.pl/menu/kim-jestesmy> accessed: 05. 11. 2013.

²⁷ King's School website: <http://www.occ.org.uk/tks> accessed: 05. 11. 2013.

²⁸ Oxfordshire Community Churches website: <http://www.occ.org.uk/> accessed: 05. 11. 2013.

works in Samuel Schools as Christian Education Advisor, was helping while the Warsaw's school concept was being created and at the very beginnings of its activity.²⁹

Three schools supported by SEI, which I visited, are First Christian School Tomek in Tomaszów Mazowiecki,³⁰ Christian Montessori School in Gdańsk³¹ and Christian Schools Uczeń in Cracow.³² All of them were established later, Uczeń in 2006, Tomek in 2007, and a school in Gdańsk in 2011 (at that time it was in Sopot). In case of those schools (Warsaw, Tomaszów Mazowiecki, Gdańsk, Uczeń in Cracow), the founders were parents who had school age children, people involved in working with children at churches, and teachers working in state schools. State schools did not meet their expectations or provide the education which they wanted for their children, mostly in the area of the upbringing as well as the quality of education. As Beata Szulc, Principle of Christian Montessori School in Gdańsk, said: "With my friend we started to get interested in Christian education, mainly thinking about our children, we thought of homeschooling,³³ we did not want them go to state schools".³⁴ At the beginning, the idea of establishing a school was remote, if not impossible. A huge role had been played by ACSI, SEI and Jacek Weigl, who helped to organise formal issues related to the establishment of a school, and who were an inspiration to pursue a vision of Christian education in Poland, inviting those interested to visit Samuel Schools and Nursery.³⁵

The visited institutions are examples of educational alternatives as described by Bogusław Śliwerski. According to the concept of this author

²⁹ Interview with Mary Dunlop, Christian Education Advisor in Samuel schools conducted by an author on 15. 10. 2013; Christian Nursery, Primary and Secondary School Samuel website: <http://www.samuel.pl/szkola-podstawowa/dyrekcja#sc=300> accessed: 05. 11. 2013.

³⁰ First Christian School Tomek in Tomaszów Mazowiecki website: <http://www.tomy.edu.pl/index.php/szkola> accessed: 05. 11. 2013.

³¹ Christian Montessori School in Gdańsk website: <http://www.montessori.gda.pl/> accessed: 05. 11. 2013.

³² Christian Primary and Secondary Schools Uczeń in Cracow website: <http://www.uczen.org.pl/> accessed: 05. 11. 2013

³³ The idea of teaching led by parents at home. Commonly supported by Christian schools.

³⁴ Interview with Beata Szulc, Principle of Christian Montessori School in Gdańsk. Conducted by author on 26. 09. 2013.

³⁵ Interviews with: Beata Szulc, op. cit., Agnieszka Crozier, the co-founder of the First Christian School Tomek and Principle of the Nursery Tomaszek from 03. 09. 2013 and Agata Rysiewicz, the co-founder and teacher at Christian Schools Uczeń from 23. 10. 2013. All interviews conducted by the author.

it is: "at least two-variant education, which led to unequivocal educational antinomies, creating a "or-or" distinction, "this or that", or an education of choices between different, but not mutually exclusive, offers."³⁶ It is associated with experimental schools and different counter-propositions to traditional school, like for instance homeschooling. With certainty such educational alternatives occur as forms, which Śliwerski described as, "islands", "trace", "marginal", "borderline". Christian schools, which arise from a search for "something more", and for getting out of state school-frame and its offer, are an alternative in that sense.³⁷

In establishing a school for their children, founders claimed that secular, mass, state schools will not meet their expectations concerning attitudes towards an individual, possibilities of potential development, and what is most important coherence in upbringing with the parents' systems of values as well as the presence of spirituality in the whole process of education and upbringing. This disagreement to the secularisation of everyday life is very typical for the Protestant community and, to a lesser extent, for some Catholic communities. *Sacrum* and *profanum* are not that clearly divided, *sacrum* goes through all life spheres, making them sanctified by presence and activity of God in a believer. Thereby, separation of schools and education from *sacrum* is a constrained action, sometimes even perceived as harmful, while a presence of God, prayer and the Bible are often perceived as something natural, present in all of the other life spheres.

A model of upbringing, which I heard about in all of those four institutions, is a triangle in which three aspects coexist: family, church and school.³⁸ Coherent vision concerning upbringing, harmony in the axiological sphere of these environments, are meant to assure a strong foundation for the child's moral development.

There is a similar concept, which focuses on two, mutually complementary environments – family and school (in this exact order).³⁹ Family environment is primary to all subsequent upbringing environments,⁴⁰ as a result "school upbringing cannot clash with what the

³⁶ Śliwerski, B. (1992). *Edukacja alternatywna. Dylematy teorii i praktyki*. Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza Impuls, p. 3.

³⁷ Ibidem, p. 8–9.

³⁸ Interviews with: Adam Moskała, Director of Cracow Educational Association Bureau (Uczeń Schools) from 23. 10. 2013; Beata Szulc, op. cit.; Elżbieta Bednarz, Didactics Principle at Christian Primary and Secondary Schools Samuel in Warsaw from 15. 10. 2013. All interviews conducted by the author.

³⁹ Błasiak, A. (2000). Dom rodzinny i szkoła – środowiska współkształtujące osobowość dziecka. In *Rodzina, szkoła, Kościół*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, p. 7–29.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, p. 13.

child appreciates in its family home. If the school is trying to enforce in the child some other moral principles, or attempts to shatter and change the basics learned in the family upbringing, this constitutes an abuse, against which children are basically defenceless".⁴¹

In the context of my research, family, school and church are the three basic upbringing environments of the child.⁴² According to the vision of the school presented to me in the interviews, all of these environments have to cooperate, sharing with each other a similar foundation of aims of upbringing and coherence of the system of values.

This concept clearly corresponds with a holistic concept of the process of education. The School in Gliwice was a response to the spiritual vacuum observed in the state school. A proposition for informal biblical reflection meetings during the school trip met an enormous interest, so the current Principle of Christian schools in Gliwice began to think of some form of Christian education, in which the spiritual elements could be constantly present and approved.⁴³ The idea of holistic education refers to the whole person, not only intellect, but also emotions and in this case spirituality.⁴⁴ Therefore, the school is not limited in its role to the place of acquiring knowledge and perfection in its transmission or comprehension. It is also a place to build relationships with other people and relationship with God, as it is written in the Greatest Commandment in the Gospel of Matthew: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. (...) And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself".⁴⁵

Religious elements are present in the schedule not only for a certain time. To introduce such content in teaching in schools affiliated to ACSI, the method called biblical integration is being used. It consists of combining content from the curriculum with a particular Bible verse, message or truth coming from a passage of Scripture. The Polish educational system allows for the creation of authorial teaching programs and Christian schools took advantage of this possibility. In Samuel schools the formal way of biblical integration is implementation of

⁴¹ Ibidem, p. 29.

⁴² Sociology of education traditionally recognizes the basic educational environments: family, neighborhood and peer group. Znaniecki, F. (1973). *Socjologia edukacji*, Vol 1. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN. In the context of Christian education roles of educational environments are played by: family, school (including peer group) and church.

⁴³ Interview with Maria Czudek, op. cit.

⁴⁴ Holistic approach can be found, among others, in the concepts of: J. J. Rousseau, J. Pestalozzi, G. Kerschensteiner, M. Montessori, and many others.

⁴⁵ Matthew 22, 37–39 (King James Version).

educational innovation: "Education with Introduction to the Christian Education", written by the Didactics Principle Elżbieta Bednarz.⁴⁶ More on the topic of the biblical integration can be read in the book: "Walking with God in the Classroom" (original title) by Harro Van Brummelen, in which you can also find the earlier mentioned strands on the topic of the coherence of the upbringing environments influences and the holistic attitude towards the pupil.⁴⁷ An important element in the organization of the work at school is the presence of the biblical teaching. It appears in the form of morning meetings with prayer and a short reflection, and so called biblical hours or lessons. The classes are taught by the teachers employed at the school, the missionaries who cooperate with it, clergy from Christian churches and teachers. Bible classes are compulsory, embracing all pupils. Despite the different organisation, the concept of building the system of values based on the Scripture, to which a school refers in its charter and other documents (for instance upbringing program), is rather coherent. One can clearly see the influence of the Protestant principle – *Sola Scriptura* – only the Scripture meaning a deep rooting in the biblical text, as the only authority in issues of faith and religious practice.⁴⁸ Reading and writing skills were very important for Protestants, individual comprehension of the Bible and its understanding were key issues in the concept of the priesthood of all believers.⁴⁹ In the visited schools the Holy Scripture, common for all Christians, constitutes a perfect platform for the school community consisting of children being brought up both in Protestant and Catholic families.

Some of the schools, at their beginnings, addressed the offer to the parents and children from Protestant environment, but in the Polish demography reality, it is very difficult to fulfil such a postulate. The small and additionally internally divided Protestant environment is not able to provide an adequate target group for such initiatives. The founders of the schools and their current principles underlined the ecumenical character of these places, the values of learning about themselves and teaching the respect for each other. According to constitutional rule – the freedom of conscience and religious faith, we do not know the exact numbers in the

⁴⁶ Bednarz, E. (2013). *Edukacja chrześcijańska w Polsce na przykładzie Chrześcijańskiego Przedszkola, Szkół Podstawowej i Gimnazjum Samuel*. Warszawa: Stowarzyszenie Edukacyjne Integracja, p. 96–99.

⁴⁷ Brummelen, H. V. (1996). *Nauczyciel chrześcijanin. Chrześcijańskie sposoby podejścia do uczenia się i nauczania*. Lublin, pp. 9–11, 45–49, 101–103.

⁴⁸ Pasek, Z. (2003). Protestantyzm. In *Religia. Encyklopedia PWN*, vol. 8. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, p. 275.

⁴⁹ „Recognition of individual responsibility and equal dignity of all people before the God”. Ibidem, p. 278.

proportion of the pupils from two main streams of Christianity – Protestantism and Catholicism, represented at those schools. For sure these are not the same statistics as in state schools. An additional barrier in the access to the Christian education is a pecuniary aspect in the case of schools which have tuition fees. Only one of the described schools does not charge tuition fees and is financed on the basis of the government subvention in conjunction with individual donations by the parents and other donators. The fees in other schools are relatively suited to the conditions for private education and local environments in which the school exists (lowering fees in smaller towns). There are different attempts not to turn the school into a place where social reproduction of elites happens,⁵⁰ but to open up as widely as it can for the children from different social classes, whose parents care for Christian education.

A question arising as a result of the non-confessional character of these schools is teaching religion, especially Roman Catholic. This issue is addressed in many different ways, however, according to the Polish law, the school organises such lessons at school (or, as it is the case with secondary school and high school in Gliwice, at the nearby church) on the request of the specified number of parents.⁵¹ The common and compulsory element is the biblical lesson/hour or Christian ethics, while the religious education, which enhances the religious identity of the pupils, is left in the authority of the church.

What I found interesting was the approach of the founders and the current Principle of the Mikołaj Rej Schools in Cracow. In the secondary school and high school all students have compulsory ethics lessons and the grade appears on their school report card. Moreover, there are lessons of Roman Catholic and Evangelical religion for interested pupils and as the extracurricular activity in high school one can also study religion science. These subjects appear on the school report card as additional classes.

The Mikołaj Rej Schools are an exceptional case among the described institutions. Although they have administrative and historical links to the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the tradition of the historical Protestant movement (including the school name), they are not a Christian school. In

⁵⁰ According to the Pierre Bourdieu concept elaborated by Antonina Kłosowska in the Introduction to Bourdieu, P. – Passeron, J. C. (2012). *Reprodukcja*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, p. 19–32.

⁵¹ The decree by the Ministry of National Education, 14th April 1992. On the conditions and the ways of organising the teaching of religion in public nurseries and schools. (Government Bulletin Issue Nr 36, entry 155, amdt.); Pakulniewicz, W. (2012). Religia w szkole niepublicznej. In *Niepubliczna placówka oświatowa*. Issue 6(19), p. 8–9.

its charter they do not recall Christian values or the dependence on the authority of the Bible⁵² In the school building there are no religious symbols and the school declares being neutral in worldviews; it is also very open to pupils and parents who claim they are atheist. Common prayers connected with the important celebrations and Christian holidays are organised in such way that people who are not interested in participation in this part do not feel excluded. Such values like openness, tolerance and dialogue are very highly estimated.⁵³ The visions of the other five schools where I have conducted my research differ in how they stress the importance of some issues, but they are all in a way tied to two pillars, mentioned by the founder of the First Christian School Tomek and the current Principle of the Christian Nursery Tomaszek, Agnieszka Crozier: "the first thing is to provide children a good quality of education and upbringing (...), the other pillar is equally important, this must be build on the foundation of the moral, ethical laws coming from the Scripture and teaching children who God Our Lord is, that He is a part of our life all the time, constantly, not only on Sunday".⁵⁴

The aims set by those schools are similar to a great degree. It is visible in the principals' words from interviews, in documents, charters, educational programs, informational materials and websites. One of the examples can be statement from Samuel Schools website: "Our aim is to raise the new generation in the awareness of its worth as citizens, who have strong moral fibre. We invest our time, money, talents, energy in young people so that they would build a better future for our country on the foundation of Christian values".⁵⁵

The educational ideal emerging from above deliberations on the research findings can be summarised in a few points. The first one is the role of the school in the child's upbringing, which is to support for the family. The aims of the Christian schools are the best quality of education, assured by the proper selection of teachers as well as a wide array of obligatory and elective courses, and an upbringing based on Christian values in the spirit of love for God and people. Finally, a Christian school graduate is a well educated, responsible citizen, who in his everyday life makes decisions according to the principles of the Bible, has a personal relationship with God and cares for his relationships with other people.

I would describe Christian schools as semi-open. In their essence they are places which attract people with a similar worldviews and shared

⁵² Charter of of Mikotaj Rej VII. Private High School in Cracow.

⁵³ Interview with Piotr Machowski, op. cit.

⁵⁴ Interview with Agnieszka Crozier, op. cit.

⁵⁵ Christian Nursery, Primary and Secondary School Samuel website: <http://samuel.pl/artykul/edukacja-chrzescijanska/co-nas-wyroznia#sc=500> accessed: 06. 11. 201.

educational ideals. One of the possible interpretations could be acceptance of the above-mentioned coherence of the impact of upbringing environments. It happens that those schools are being perceived as a place of complete isolation in a set environment, because children have limited possibilities of encounters with people representing different views. They meet the same group of people at church, at school and when they go on holiday. Without any doubt the Christian schools environment in Poland is neither unambiguous nor homogeneous. It is surprising, provoking one to think outside the box, and redefining traditional ways of thinking about schooling. The founders of those schools share the passion, ideals and vision; they not only believe in God, but also in the possibility of changing the reality around them. Their actions can be a source of inspiration and encouragement for every teacher, who considers his or her profession as a calling.