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Teacher in Scientific Research by Bishop Zygfryd Ignacy Kowalski (1910–1995) (pp. 137–152)

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Abstract

Research aims and problems: The aim of this article is to present the pedeutological views of Bishop Zygfryd Ignacy Kowalski, who lived from 1910 to 1995. He studied pedagogy at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń (UMK). Alongside his pastoral duties, he worked as a religion teacher in schools in Toruń, including at the Pedagogium, and later lectured in pedagogy and didactics at the Seminary for Priests in Pelplin. The main focus of this paper is Fr. Kowalski's pedeutological thought. The article seeks to answer specific questions concerning: his pedagogical studies as a preparation for his pedagogical studies, his research on teachers in both published and unpublished works, and his research methods.

Research methods: This article employs historical research methods. In order to examine the issues outlined above, sources from the Archives of Nicolaus Copernicus University (AUMK), the Archives of the Diocese of Pelplin, as well as published texts on pedeutology, were analyzed.

Structure of the article: The article is organized around two main topics: 1. Fr. Kowalski's pedagogical studies at UMK, which served as his foundation for scientific research. 2. His pedeutological views, which form the core of the discussion. These sections are dedicated to his academic curriculum and

the essence of his pedeutological thought. The article is further structured with an introduction and concluding remarks that summarize the analysis of the sources used.

Research results and their influence on the development of pedagogical sciences: This article is a contribution to the advancement of research on the teaching profession in Poland. Using Fr. Kowalski's writings as a case study, it shows methodological aspects of designing pedeutological research projects, analyzing results, and formulating theories based on those findings.

Conclusions and/or recommendations: The conclusions drawn from the source analysis refer to both pedagogical education and pedeutological theory. They underscore the significance of Fr. Kowalski's research and its continuing relevance to the training of future teachers. A key contribution of his work was identifying the determinants of the teaching profession, with particular emphasis on its religious, moral, and social determinants. These aspects continue to be of relevance today.

Keywords: Zygfryd Kowalski, pedagogical studies, teacher, pedagogue, pedeutological research

Introduction

This article presents Fr. Zygfryd Kowalski's perspective on the role of a teacher, analyzed within the context of his pedagogical education and career, primarily his studies at Nicolaus Copernicus University (UMK). While previous biographical accounts have highlighted his pastoral activities and contributions to the development of catechetics, his pedagogical views, which also merit attention, have largely been overlooked in existing educational historiography.

The first part of this text briefly discusses the pedagogical curriculum at UMK during Fr. Kowalski's time, indicating the outstanding group of academic teachers whose lectures he attended. It is emphasized that, throughout his studies, he received thorough preparation for pedagogical research. The second part concerns Fr. Kowalski's views on teacher's work

and his pedeutological research projects. The sources that were mainly used to examine these topics include documents from the UMK Archives, such as Fr. Kowalski's master's thesis on pedeutology, biographical materials from the Archives of the Pelplin Diocese,¹ and published texts on teaching.

Fr. Zygfryd Kowalski—Student at Nicolaus Copernicus University

Father Zygfryd Kowalski was born in 1910 in Koronowo. He studied at the Seminary for Priests in Pelplin, where he was ordained in 1932 (Student files of Zygfryd Kowalski; Doctoral files of Zygfryd Kowalski; Kasyna, 2001, pp. 449–459; Mross, 2003, pp. 11–112; Nadolny, 2021 p. 325; Nitecki, 1992, p. 111; Prokop, 1998, pp. 71–73). During the interwar period, alongside his pastoral duties, he also taught religion and catechetics at the State Pedagogical College (Pedagogium) and a vocational school in Toruń. Beginning on 1 March 1945, he served as a religion teacher at the 1st Nicolaus Copernicus State Junior High School and Secondary School in Toruń. In 1962, he was consecrated as a bishop (see photo No. 1).

Photo 1. Bishop Z. Kowalski, 1962



Source: Archives of the Pelplin Diocese

¹ A special thanks is owed to Fr. Professor Anastazy Nadolny for granting me access to materials from the Archives of the Diocese of Pelplin, for which I am sincerely grateful.

Father Kowalski was among the first students to enroll at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń after its establishment. He received an excellent education in pedagogy there (Student files of Zygfryd Kowalski; Nitecki, 1992, p.111; Prokop, 1998). It should be mentioned that he had dreamt of studying at a university during the interwar period. However, due to the outbreak of the Second World War, he was unable to pursue his planned studies at Jan Kazimierz University in Lviv, where he had enrolled in the Faculty of Theology shortly before the war (as mentioned in his CV) [Enrollment card, Curriculum Vitae] (n.d.). After the war, he obtained permission from the Pelplin Curia for taking up studies at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń.

Beginning on 5 January 1946, Fr. Kowalski studied pedagogy at the university under the supervision of Professor K. Sośnicki (Góra, 2014, pp. 13–15; Kalemka, 2006; Lipowska, 1974, pp. 29–32; Nalaskowski & Szulakiewicz, 2009, pp. 60–63 and 134; Moroz, 1974, pp. 25–28; Pólturzycki, 2003, pp. 19–27; Wołoszyn, 1974, pp. 19–24; Wołoszyn, 1989, pp. 295–301). Prof. Sośnicki served as the supervisor for both his master's thesis and doctoral dissertation.

Details about the curriculum of pedagogical studies at Nicolaus Copernicus University in the post-war years can be gleaned from the exam protocols that Fr. Kowalski had to complete to finish his degree. Between 1948 and 1950, he took these exams at the Faculty of Humanities before the Commission for Master's Degree Examinations. The commission was chaired by Tadeusz Czeżowski, a philosopher and student of Karol Twardowski, who was also the supervisor of Fr. Kowalski's master's thesis (Szulakiewicz, 2010). The then curriculum included exams administered by eminent academic teachers and creators of scientific schools, many of whom had come to Toruń from Stefan Batory University in Vilnius and Jan Kazimierz University in Lviv.

Fr. Kowalski's diploma and exam records (n.d.) list the following subjects: "Outline of the History of Philosophy"; "General Psychology"; "History of Education, Including History of Education in Poland against the Background of Social Development and Ethical Trends"; "Logic with the Methodology and Theory of Cognition"; "Pedagogy and Didactics,

Including a Review of Modern Trends in These Areas of Science, with Particular Emphasis on the Views of a Contemporary Pedagogical Authors.”; “School Law and Organisation”; “Developmental Psychology and Experimental Pedagogy”; and “Outline of Sociology.”

An important aspect of the studies at that time was the examination process, which took place under strict supervision. Each student taking the written exam was presented with three topics and required to select one. Fr. Kowalski chose the topic: “Aspects of the Psychology of Moral Feelings.” He sat for this exam on 26 June 1950. According to the records, the exam lasted from 10:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m., resulting in a 10-page thesis. In his work, Fr. Kowalski discussed the following issues: terminological issues, the formation of moral feelings, the relationship between moral and social feelings, and existing research on the subject. Prof. K. Sośnicki evaluated the thesis positively, noting both its strengths and weaknesses ([Opinion by K. Sośnicki] 1950, 27 June).

Following the written exam, Fr. Kowalski underwent an oral exam (on 28 June 1950) before K. Sośnicki and A. Lewicki. According to the protocols, he answered questions related to the issues discussed in his master’s thesis. One of the significant questions concerned the qualities of a teacher: “The methods and techniques of research on the features of a good teacher; assessment of their value.” Overall, both parts of the examination were deemed successful, and Fr. Kowalski received a very good mark.

Regarding the examinations, it should be emphasized that the academic staff responsible for the pedagogical education of students at UMK were distinguished scholars (Kalembka, 2006). These professors were not only prolific authors of important scientific works but also influential organizers of academic life. K. Sośnicki was a renowned author in the fields of pedagogy, the history of education, and theory of education; T. Czeżowski specialized in philosophy, ethics, and logic; A. Lewicki contributed significantly to developmental, educational, and experimental psychology; H. Elzenberg was an expert in the history of philosophy, aesthetics, and ethics; J. Lechicka dealt with the history of education and the didactics of history; and T. Szczurkiewicz was a respected scholar in the history of sociology and social thought. The publications and knowledge of these

distinguished academics inspired many graduates to pursue further research and earn doctoral degrees. This was also the case for Fr. Zygfryd Kowalski, who, shortly after obtaining his master's degree, initiated the process of obtaining his doctoral degree (Doctoral files of Z. Kowalski).

The Teaching Profession in the Research of Fr. Zygfryd Kowalski

Father Zygfryd Kowalski's interest in the teaching profession was already apparent before World War II, which was likely influenced by his role as a member of the pedagogical staff of the State Pedagogical College in Toruń (Pedagogium) and his position as a teacher at the Vocational School (see photograph No. 2).

Photo 2. Vocational School in Toruń, 1938/1939. Fr. Z. Kowalski is pictured with students and teachers. He is the fifth person from the left in the first row.



Source: Archives of the Pelplin Diocese.

During this period, many outstanding teachers worked at the Pedagogium in Toruń, including Jan Schwarz (Szwarc), the school's director and editor of *Pedagogium*, a magazine dedicated to teacher psychology and

pedagogy, published between 1938 and 1939 (Schwarz, 1938, pp. 54–62). Fr. Kowalski's first article on pedeutology was published in this magazine. Titled "Podłoże religijne u kandydatów do stanu nauczycielskiego. Przyczynki ankietowy" [The Religious Background of Candidates for Teachers: A Survey] (Kowalski, 1938, pp. 22–47), this important work examined the religious influences on prospective teachers.

The article presented the results of a survey carried out among students from institutions that trained teachers. All the respondents were graduates of secondary schools and came from various regions of Poland (most of them from the west). The participants, who ranged in age from 18 to 27, included 81 individuals—18 men and 63 women.

The questionnaire was constructed with the guidance of J. Schwarz, the aforementioned director of the Pedagogium, who had also published works on pedeutology during that period (Schwarz, 1935, pp. 1–56). The survey itself was mainly retrospective, and asked participants to answer the following questions:

1. Please recall the first prayer you said in childhood that came from a genuine, inner need.
2. Please specify the periods of your most intense religiousness, including the years, causes, and circumstances.
3. Please describe any periods of religious doubt or indifference, including the causes and the time when they occurred.

The final question referred to the respondents' current situation:

4. Please describe your current attitude towards religion (faith, practices).

The analysis of the collected material yielded a wealth of information about the religiousness of teacher candidates and its importance in their future work. The theoretical reflection was supported by data presented in 13 tables and charts. Given the limitations of this article, it is not possible to present the final results of the study in full detail. Therefore, I will only hint at some key findings. Overall, Fr. Kowalski's analyses

offer insight into the development of religious life, religious awareness, and religious activity, along with their various manifestations. He discussed the origins of young people's religious awareness and engagement, the intensification of their religiousness, and the reasons behind their faith.

He devoted considerable attention to a discussion of religious crises and their causes. Above all, he acknowledged that neglecting the religious dimension contributes to the failure of the educational process. Of particular interest in this study are Fr. Kowalski's reflections on the motives for prayer, as well as its objects and forms. The research showed that the subjects of prayer included health, living conditions, children's motives, and deeper motives. According to the collected material, the factors leading to religiousness and its intensification were (in order of significance): First Holy Communion, life difficulties, retreats, religious instruction, environmental influences, religious associations, pilgrimages, and deeper emotional experiences.

In Fr. Kowalski's view, the intensity of religiousness can fluctuate following psychological patterns. He devoted an exceptional amount of space to the problem of religious crises and indifference. It is worth recalling the causes of these crises, as cited by the respondents in this study: family problems, the existence of evil in the world, life difficulties, environmental influences, books, and inner conflicts. Regarding religious crises, one significant conclusion stands out:

The phenomenon of religious crisis during adolescence is normal, and... it is very important for the formation of the individual's personality. It is beneficial when adolescents are aware of this: then, a crisis of faith will never turn into an apodictic and sinful religious negativism that doubts merely for the sake of doubting (Kowalski, 1938, p. 45).

From his analysis of the questionnaire responses, Fr. Kowalski drew conclusions about the respondents' attitudes towards faith, and in particular religious practices, which, according to him, shape what he called a "religious background," which, in turn, has an influence on their professional

work, specifically the work of teachers. Kowalski's conclusion on the importance of the religious dimension in teachers' lives is as follows:

The great ideal of education is to shape a valuable and happy person and a useful citizen. This goal will be met by a teacher who possesses a well-rounded personality: only a harmony between life goals and educational goals can ensure the fruitfulness of this difficult and responsible task. Convinced of the existence and value of the ultimate and highest truth, a teacher will in turn inspire conviction in others (Kowalski, 1938, p. 47).

Fr. Zygfryd Kowalski continued his research on the teaching profession as a student of Prof. Sośnicki, as previously mentioned. The results of this work were documented in his master's thesis, which he completed under the guidance of the founder of academic pedagogy in Toruń. In this thesis, Fr. Kowalski explored the religious and social foundations of the teaching profession and the significance of a teacher's role in social life (Student Files of Zygfryd Kowalski). On June 23, 1950, he submitted his thesis, titled *Analiza socjologiczna wpływu moralnego wychowawcy* [Sociological Analysis of the Teacher's Moral Influence] (Kowalski, 1950), to the Commission of the Faculty of Humanities for Master's Degree Examinations at Nicolaus Copernicus University (UMK). The thesis, consisting of 120 pages, formed the basis for his master's degree and was based on survey analysis.

The bibliography, which provided the theoretical framework for his research consisted of 47 publications spanning psychology, sociology, pedagogy, and ethics. Fr. Kowalski also incorporated data from personal diaries. The empirical material for his thesis was drawn from three questionnaires, two of which were conducted before World War II and one in 1947. The questions posed in these surveys were designed to investigate moral phenomena, which, in Fr. Kowalski's opinion, were connected with religious consciousness in Polish society.

The first survey was carried out in towns such as Brodnica, Gdynia, Grudziądz, Stargard, Tczew, and Działdowo. The second survey, targeting

young people from cities like Nowy Sącz, Kraków, Lviv, Vilnius, Warsaw, Łódź, and Pińsk, was prepared by a charitable institution in Kraków. In 1938, this institution held a competition titled “My Life,” and Fr. Kowalski, as he noted, borrowed material from this source. The questionnaire was addressed to proletarian youth, including orphans and children under the care of the institution. These questionnaires covered religious life, the conditions of moral life and accounts of how respondents celebrated Christmas and Easter. Additional questions addressed social issues, family dynamics and relationships with parents and siblings, all examined in the context of religious life.

The religious dimension was explored through specific questions, such as: What do you do in religious education lessons? What is your relationship with the catechist? What are your teachers like? Do you respect them—if not, why? What is the religious atmosphere in your home? What are your expectations from priests? What does your homeland mean to you? What do you believe you owe it as a citizen? What would you like to do for it? Which political system do you prefer (democracy, communism, dictatorship, liberalism)?

The third survey, conducted in Toruń schools in 1947, was titled “The Influence of the Educator-Teacher on My Inner Life.” However, this survey was primarily concerned with the moral qualities that Fr. Kowalski deemed essential for the teaching profession. He collected 141 responses from students in Toruń, and across all three surveys, he amassed a total of 929 responses.

Overall, the theoretical reflections in Fr. Kowalski’s master’s thesis, supported by extensive survey research, yielded a detailed account of the educator-teacher’s role, particularly regarding the possibilities of education, the teacher’s authority, character, and personal attributes essential to effective teaching. When discussing what he called “moral teacher,” Fr. Kowalski distinguished between lay and clerical moral teachers. He believed that the latter sometimes faced fewer challenges in their work.

It should be emphasized that Fr. Zygfryd Kowalski continued his research on the teaching profession after completing his studies, while working as both a teacher and a lecturer in pedagogical subjects. Of particular

interest is his perspective on the role of the teacher-educator, as presented in *Elementy nauk pedagogicznych* [Elements of Pedagogical Sciences], a handbook on pedagogy based on his lectures at the Seminary for Priests in Pelplin (Kowalski, 1957, pp. 252–263). In this work, Kowalski explores the teacher's personality, concentrating on the qualities of a good educator, the determinants of the personality of a good teacher, and the essential traits that define such a person. He begins by discussing the external attributes of a good teacher (Kowalski, 1957, p. 253) and continues to outline the spiritual dimension, which he views as encompassing both professional expertise and general knowledge. He asserts that knowledge should be accompanied by "active intelligence," mental sharpness, moderate wit, and cheerfulness, where cheerfulness is understood as optimism and natural gaiety. Furthermore, he stresses that calmness and seriousness are important elements of a teacher's proper spiritual disposition.

In his reflections, Kowalski also enumerates several traits that negatively impact an educator's influence on young people. These include a lack of sound knowledge, narrow-mindedness, a gloomy or malicious disposition, impulsiveness and irritability, awkwardness in and lack of determination, weakness of character, negligence and lack of conscientiousness in work, greed, and careerism (Kowalski, 1957, pp. 253–254). He underscores the importance of a teacher-educator's attitude towards young people, which can have either a negative or positive impact. According to Kowalski, in order to have the proper attitude towards young people, it is necessary to get to know them. A good educational attitude manifests itself, he argues, in fairness and impartiality toward students. A teacher must not be coarse, unapproachable, overly demanding, harsh, sarcastic or sneering. On the other hand, excessive leniency, lack of firmness, and over-familiarity are serious faults in some teachers (Kowalski, 1957, p. 254).

Kowalski also touches on the concepts of pedagogical talent and authority in his lectures. He notes that pedagogical talent is not a singular concept but a complex one, which includes qualities such as intuition and tact. He provides several criteria that indicate a teacher's talent:

the ability to organize students' independent work, motivate them to learn and apply effort; to trigger their intellectual curiosity, and inspire a love for learning and knowledge. He also emphasizes the importance of progress of students; and shaping their internal discipline and responsibility.

Regarding authority, Kowalski distinguishes between its liberating and restrictive forms. He asserts that a teacher's personality is an important element in establishing their authority, but also stresses that the student's psyche and life environment, particularly the family and school, significantly shape this dynamic. He believes that these environments should meet certain criteria to have a positive educational influence. Fr. Kowalski further classifies authority into higher and lower orders. Higher-order authority, he claims, is based on artistic, scientific, moral, and religious virtues, whereas lower-order authority relies on physical power. He also discusses factors that can undermine authority, such as a lack of consensus among the teaching staff and the negative influence of political activities on the teacher-educator's role.

In analyzing the content of Kowalski's pedagogical lectures in *Elementy nauk pedagogicznych*, one may view them as a guide on how to work with young people. The text offers practical guidelines for aspiring educators on how to become good teachers.

Final Remarks

Bishop Zygfryd Kowalski devoted a considerable amount of attention in his writings to issues related to the teaching profession. His publications on pedeutology could be collectively titled, *How to Be a Good Teacher-Educator*. In his research, he mainly showed the religious and moral aspects of a teacher's work. For Kowalski, the religious context of the teaching profession was an important determinant of both educational and didactic work. His key categories defining the essence of being an effective teacher included notions such as talent, tact, and authority. He instructed his students and readers on how these categories should be properly understood and embodied, and how they can contribute

to practical actions. For Bishop Kowalski, the religious factor in pedagogical work was linked to moral issues, as well as to social issues. In the social dimension, the religious aspect was connected to the role of a teacher within broader social environments, including family, school, and various associations.

The enduring value of Bishop Kowalski's pedeutological research, both in his time and today, stems from several key factors that allow for a positive assessment of his output in this field. First, the issues he discussed were firmly grounded in the contemporary (then) literature on the subject. Second, his work demonstrated an excellent command of pedagogical research techniques, particularly survey research. The questions in his surveys were closely aligned with the core of his research and the subject matter under analysis. Another strength of his research was the thorough analysis and clear presentation of the collected data, with a substantive discussion of the most significant results. Lastly, an important characteristic of his work was his caution and objectivity in drawing final conclusions from the collected material, a principle likely to have been learned from the scientific methodology of K. Sośnicki.

It is also worth noting that numerous insights on how to be a good teacher and societal educator can be found in studies of his pastoral work, even in those that highlight the repressive actions of the communist Security Service (SB) against him (Rozynekowski, 2012). In SB reports, Bishop Kowalski is depicted as a figure of universal respect who remained impervious to the SB's attempts to compromise him. As a result, despite detailed operational plans, the SB found themselves powerless against his influence and activities.

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