

Excerpts from a sermon given by Primate Stefan Wyszyński in 1976

. . . Inspired by the Christian Gospels, our national culture grew. We can say, then, that over the course of our history there have been no significant breaks in the pact between the family, the Nation, and the Church. . . . As the fate of the political community known as the State changed, the Church was always tied above all with the family and with the Nation. Yet, as we know from history, although the very political structure of our State frequently changed, nonetheless it was always to a greater or lesser extent tied to the work of the Church, and benefited from its spirituality. . . .

Poland has never, over its thousand-year history, known wars or disturbances based on religion. We cannot count as Polish the attack of Brzetysław [in the 11th century], which is sometimes called a 'pagan reaction' in the history books—that was an imposition from outside. We also cannot count as a fruit of the Polish spirit the so-called "pseudo-reformation"—that was also an imposition from outside. We cannot take the later russification or germanization—or rather, the effort to force upon us Orthodoxy or Protestantism, as an expression of our cultural development. All these things were plots, imported from abroad.

The Church, possessing the solidity of the Gospel teachings and thus having a certainty of faith and an intellectual foundation, bearing religious peace, also provided moral principles thanks to which the education of the Nation could develop peacefully. That was accomplished above all on the basis of the truth of love, for this is the foundation of all of Christian life. That great value of being guided by love—towards God, who first loved us, and towards the entire Nation (for God loves all his children)—created a moral order thanks to which it is possible to vanquish both oneself and the various difficult situations of life.

The Christian principle of social justice finds its foundation in the law of love. If a person is aware that he is to love his neighbor as himself, that everything—the entire Law and the Prophets—comes down to this, then it is easier to establish the principles of justice. . . .

The history of the Church in the State is varied. There have been periods of persecution and catacombs, there have been periods of dominance by the Church over the State (in the middle ages), or by State over the Church (in later times). The situations have varied. But these relations and arrangements have always changed, and the Church emerged victorious.

At times when the dominance of the Church over the State has been too much of a concern, various theories emerged, such as "a free Church in a free State" or "let's leave the Church in peace and let the Church leave us in peace." However, already at the turn of the 19th century it was observed that the so-called absolute freedom of the Church in the State helped the Church grow too much. So a new slogan was invented, namely the so-called "separation of Church and State."

That slogan—let us call it a program—is still operative in some states to this day. One might ask, is it possible to entirely separate the Church and the State? For as in many nations, so in Poland a program like this involves a person who is a Catholic, a Pole, and a citizen of his state. So this principle breaks up the unity of the person. In that single person there must be some sort of single conscience and behavior. If a person is to be normally educated he must preserve a unity of views, he must be open in both civic work

and in religious life. He cannot behave one way in the four walls of his own home, and differently at work, in the factory, or in the office. If such a divergence existed, it would be necessary to speak about the psychological alienation of the person, and therefore about the worst situation possible in civic education, particularly of the younger generation. . . .

Such a divide is artificial. It is an attempt to separate the unity of the social organism. And everything which goes in this direction creates a variety of amputations and psychological wounds, both in the sphere of personal and family life, and in the sphere of national and political life.

"Naród—Kościół—Państwo," in Stefan Wyszyński, *Kazania Świątokrzeskie: U podstaw ładu życia i współżycia*, trans. Brian Porter. Rzym: Rycerze Niepokalane 1976, 42-63.