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### African spiritual and religious values as the basis for interreligious dialogue

The Second Vatican Council in a few documents, especially in the declaration *Nostra aetate* clearly expressed a positive attitude of the Church to non-Christian religions. The subject of the dialogue between Christianity and non-Christian religions was undertaken and deepened in some post-Council documents of the Catholic Church. Among them three are dedicated to the dialogue with African traditional religions, namely the message of Paul VI *Africae terrarium* (29 October 1967), the letter of Cardinal Francis Arinze entitled *Pastoral attention to African traditional religion* (25 March 1988), and post-synodal apostolic exhortation of John Paul II *Ecclesia in Africa* (14 September 1995). These three documents show respect to the spiritual and religious values of the African peoples. They have a meaning in themselves as the germs of the Word (*semina Verbi*) and they constitute the providential preparation for evangelisation. A study of these values is advisable and necessary since they are the basis for a dialogue with the cultures and traditional religions of Africa and they are important in the process of inculturation of Christianity in the cultural and religious context of the African peoples.

However, it should be added that these values, like each culture, has to be complemented and elevated (improved) in the light of the Gospel and the teaching of the Church. Cardinal Francis Arinze in the mentioned letter states, that the African traditional religions should not be idealized and the studies also have to show the negative elements in religion and culture such as inadequate ideas on the objects of worship, objectionable moral practices, degrading rites, polygamy, discrimination against women, human sacrifice, rejection of twins (where these are practised). An objective study will allow the heralds of the Gospel to learn about both the positive and negative elements of culture and religion of the Africans (No. 14).<sup>1</sup>

In the apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* John Paul II thinks that a serene and prudent dialogue with African traditional religions will protect Catholics from negative influences which condition the way of life of many of them and foster the assimilation of positive values such as belief in a Supreme Being, Creator and Judge; “values which – as the Pope states – are readily harmonized with the content of faith”.<sup>2</sup>

According to theologians, a dialogue with the spiritual and religious values of the peoples of Africa can contribute both to mutual enrichment and to facilitating and deepening of the missionary activity in Africa.<sup>3</sup> A theological evaluation of the African spiritual and religious values has to be based on deepened ethnological and religiological studies on the cultures and religions of particular peoples of Africa.

A characteristic feature of the religions of African peoples is lack of a distinct border between the natural and supernatural worlds, the visible present world and the other, invisible and eternal one, between the matter and the spirit, between the secular sphere (*profanum*) and the religious one (*sacrum*). The Africans view life in a holistic way. The African cultures are of religious character.<sup>4</sup>

One of the significant elements of the African tradition is a spiritual vision of life and the world, according to which all beings of the visible nature are connected with the invisible spiritual world. The philosophy of life among the African peoples is based on the unity of the cosmos, where – through its structures and symbols – *sacrum* is perceived and experienced. All supernatural beings (Supreme Being, deities, spirits and ancestors), people and the nature participate in the continuity and unity of cosmos.<sup>5</sup>

The cultural and religious values of the African peoples include sacredness of life and respect for life, community life, fundamental importance of the family, respect for the role and authority of the father of the family, sacredness of power, faithfulness, solidarity, care of the elderly and the relatives in the family, the Supreme Being, sacredness of the Earth, ancestor spirits, afterlife, prayer, sacrifice, rituals (e.g., rituals of passage, annual rituals, crisis rituals), symbolism of worship practices and objects, respect for the dignity of a human person, morality, consciousness of sin in the individual and social dimensions, a need for purification and redress.<sup>6</sup>

The subject of the lecture is a brief and synthetic presentation of only certain selected spiritual and religious values of the African peoples, namely sacredness of life, community life, the notion of the Supreme Being, sacredness of the Earth, ancestor spirits, morality.

### 1. Sacredness of life

Life, which is considered sacred, is the fundamental value of the African peoples. Life is also the central notion in African cosmology. Each community is above all oriented at life and its maintenance. The birth of a child is a great event both for the parents and the community. This follows from the faith that life ultimately comes from God, who is its source and giver. Hence, it is the greatest gift and good that God can grant to man. The Africans enjoy life, respect it and consider long life to be a blessing of supernatural beings. Any kind of behaviour aimed against life is a sin in the social and moral sense. In rituals life is continually made sacred, restored and multiplied. For the Africans, multiplying life is the greatest happiness, while weakening it – the greatest unhappiness. Crisis rituals (like healing, purifying, anti-witchcraft and rainmaking ones) enjoy great popularity, since they attempt to settle critical situations and problems threatening the life of an individual and a social group.

In the traditional African society, contraceptives and abortion were used very seldom. Murdering a member of the same clan is a serious offence and suicide is considered as so-called bad death.<sup>7</sup>

## 2. Community life

The Africans live in a community. Instead of the Cartesian adagium *Cogito ergo sum* (“I think, therefore I exist”), an African could say *Cognatus ergo sum* (“I am related by blood, therefore I exist”).<sup>8</sup> Father in the understanding of the Africans is not only a biological parent, and mother is not only a woman who gave birth. According to the classificatory system of kinship, a man calls all men of his generation within a lineage “brothers”, and all men of one generation higher or lower – “fathers” or “sons”, respectively. Therefore, in the social meaning, an African can have a number of “fathers”, “brothers” and “sons” as well as many “mothers”, “sisters”, and “daughters”. The family where an African lives is a compound or joint family. It is composed of more than one (basic, nuclear) family appearing in a monogamous or polygynous form (where a man has more than one wife), which includes the husband with one or many wives and their offspring. For example, the Konkomba live in homesteads consisting of a number of round huts joined by a one-metre-high wall, in this way forming a closed unity in the shape of a circle. Each such homestead is inhabited by about 20-30 people (sometimes more), who belong to a few small families of brothers or sons. The inhabitants of the homesteads are joined in so-called minor or major lineages. A few minor and major lineages make a clan. A joint family, a lineage or a clan include the living, those that have not been born yet and those that have died. The social structure, the sense of community spirit and the sense of solidarity among the Africans favour the creation of a large family in the Christian sense.<sup>9</sup>

## 3. Supreme Being

The African peoples consider God to be the supreme among all the supranatural beings. According to a Kenyan theologian and religiologist John Samuel Mbiti, this is “the most general and fundamental idea of God in all African communities”.<sup>10</sup> The African knowledge about God is expressed in names, myths, prayers, rituals, songs and proverbs. For the peoples of Africa, God is inseparably connected with everyday life, which is well expressed in the proverb known among the Ashanti people (Ghana): “Nobody shows the Supreme Being to a child”. It means that each African, even a child, knows God almost instinctively and naturally.<sup>11</sup>

The notion of Supreme Being is probably familiar to all peoples of sub-Saharan Africa. This being is a real, spiritual, transcendent and immanent one,

therefore, both distant and close as well as active. In the theory, God is transcendent to the Africans, while in practise He is immanent.<sup>12</sup> As the first and ultimate cause, God is the creator of all things, the giver of life and the one who keeps it. God is the ultimate source of power, authority and moral order. Although many African peoples worship the Supreme Being in individual prayers, especially in case of great need, danger and crisis, it is relatively seldom that this cult is extended, regular, all-important and of community character. Sacrifice of animals are seldom made to the Supreme Being. Shrines and altars devoted to God and the priests worshipping Him can be met only among some peoples (Dogon, Ashanti, Kikuyu, Shona and Venda). The Supreme Being is not presented in the material form, either, for example as statues, figures, masks or pictures.<sup>13</sup>

According to the beliefs of the Konkomba people from northern Ghana, Uwumbor is the Supreme Being, the creator of earth, sky, spirits, people and all things. Uwumbor is the ruler (etymologically, the name Uwumbor comes from the word *ubor* – ruler), the source and giver of life and the moral law-maker. The Konkomba are also acquainted with the images concerning the cosmic binomial, which is the cosmic pair of sky – earth. Uwumbor is the son of the Earth deity Kiting and the atmospheric sky god Kitalangban, who fertilises the earth with rain. The heavenly god Kitalangban was probably the Supreme Being and his place has been now taken by god Uwumbor. Contrary to the assertions of the Konkomba that god Uwumbor should be called at the very beginning of all rituals, it turns out that actually they refer much more often to the beings of a lower order, who are closer to them. Therefore, they firstly refer to the Earth spirits, the clan’s protective spirits and ancestor spirits, and only secondly then also to the protective spirits of the homestead, the spirits of particular persons (*nwiin*), the spirits of the bush and the twin spirits. These spirits are the servants and messengers of god Uwumbor as well as mediators between him and people.<sup>14</sup>

Among the Kerebe people from the island of Bukerebe (Tanzania, in Swahili Ukerewe), Namuhanga (etymologically, from the word *kuhanga* – to create) is the Supreme Being, sovereign (ruler) and creator. God Namuhanga is associated with the sun and that is why he is called Izoba (the sun) or Kalyoba (etymologically, this name probably comes from the Bantu stem *\*yúba* or *\*júba* = the sun).<sup>15</sup> During the prayers and offerings, the ritual specialist sometimes turns towards the sun. While studying the rainmaking rituals among this people, I was able to find out that their prayers referred to the ancestors (*abakuru*, *abagurusi*) more frequently than to the Supreme Being Namuhanga, although it is just Namuhanga who is the ultimate cause of rain.<sup>16</sup>

The present two examples of the concept of the Supreme Being, documented in my studies among the Konkomba and the Kerebe peoples, sufficiently justify the general conclusion that the notion of the Supreme Being cannot be identified with monotheism in the strict meaning of this word. The beliefs of the African peoples point

to the theistic character of their religion, where both monotheistic and polytheistic elements can occur in different degrees.<sup>17</sup>

#### 4. Sacredness of the Earth

The Earth, as one of nature's elements occupies an exceptional place in beliefs and cult of the Konkomba and many other Voltaic peoples inhabiting the basin of the river Volta and the peoples living in other areas of Western Africa. The African peoples consider the Earth to be the foundation of life and an inexhaustible source of different kinds of existence. The Earth is the mother, feeding everything. The cyclically revived nature and the very mystery of life contributed to the sacralization and mythologization of the Earth and its vital force, which is shown in the beliefs and rituals of many peoples and nations.<sup>18</sup> In the religious meaning, for the African peoples the Earth is the divinity, spirit, the source of life principles, fertility, well-being, and richness. Many of the Voltaic peoples consider the Earth to be Heaven's wife. According to the Konkomba, the Earth Kiting is the god Uwumbor's mother. Kiting is an individual and universal deity for all the Konkomba. Nowadays, the notion of this deity and its cult in the universal sense is not clearly manifested in the beliefs and rituals of the Konkomba from the Saboba region.<sup>19</sup> However, each clan has an Earth shrine, called *litingbala*, which symbolizes and manifests the presence of the local Earth spirit, the guardian of all the inhabitants of a given clan. The local Earth spirits have male or female character.<sup>20</sup> The deity Kiting, which has a universal character, is then manifested in the multitude of Earth spirits, protectors of particular Konkomba clans. The Earth spirit is worshipped in the Earth shrines of individual clans. The Earth priest (*utindaan*) is the guardian of the Earth shrine and he offers sacrifices to the Earth spirit in the name of whole clan.<sup>21</sup>

Among the Voltaic peoples, the Earth is associated with definite commands and prohibitions. For the Konkomba, the Earth spirit is the source of life and the giver of fertility, he guarantees peace and social-moral order. He hates any act of violence and injustice, any instance of breaking the social order and violating specific bans, namely the taboos, which he punishes with shortage of agricultural products, famine, infertility, drought, or illness. The punishment executed by the Earth spirit can be inflicted upon particular clan members, the whole family, or all the inhabitants of the village. Propitiatory offerings have to be made in order to stop the punishment or to repair the consequences. Shedding blood over the soil<sup>22</sup>, murder<sup>23</sup>, adultery and any kind of sexual intercourse outside the house, in the bush, or on cultivated land defile and offend the Earth.<sup>24</sup>

The short analysis of the sacredness of the Earth among the Konkomba<sup>25</sup> clearly points out that the Earth is regarded as the fundament and source of life, and the

giver of fertility. The clan Earth shrine symbolizes and manifests the local Earth spirit, the guardian of all inhabitants of a given clan. The Earth spirit is the warrantor of the social and moral order. The importance of the local Earth spirits in the social and religious life of the Konkomba follows from the fact, that they links the members of a given clan with a given territory, in this way justifying their heritable right to inhabit and use the land they occupy.

#### 4. Ancestor spirits

Although the spirits of dead ancestors occupy the lowest place in the ontological hierarchy of supranatural beings, they still perform an extremely important role in the religious and social life of African peoples. The importance of ancestors results from the fact that they are considered to be ever present and alive members of the community although through their death they actually left this community. The worship that they receive results from the position they occupy both in this and the other worlds. The living as well as the dead are members of the African community. The African peoples both recognise and question the destructive work of death. A human being dies but he still lives; he is "a living dead", using the term introduced by Mbiti.<sup>26</sup> Ancestors, as mediators between the Supreme Being and the living, take an active part in the community life and they affect the fate of the living. They create the strongest bond linking people with the spiritual world. It is just through them the spiritual, invisible world becomes close and personal to people. Ancestors accompany their living relatives in all more important moments of individual and social life. They interfere into the existence of an individual, a family and a lineage, a tribe and a people (ancestors of rulers). Ancestors are guardians of family matters and the clan-tribe tradition. They also guarantee respecting and observing ethic norms and the rules of customary law. Ancestors symbolize continuity of the social structure. Among the Konkomba they make sacred the patrilineal social order based on the principle of kinship and primogeniture.<sup>27</sup>

The importance of ancestors is reflected in funeral rituals, which express the bond between the dead and the living and make it possible for the dead to pass to the land of ancestors and to reach the status of ancestors. A distinction should be made between the dead and the ancestors; the cult of the dead, who are not yet the spiritual supranatural beings, and the cult of ancestors, who became spirits, that is the beings belonging to the spiritual world and with whom communication can be established on the spiritual level. Death itself is not a sufficient condition to reach the status of an ancestor. Among many African communities it is necessary to start a family and have children. Among the Konkomba only elderly people (both men and women) – because of their age, social status and offspring – can reach the status of ancestors after death. It

is indispensable to carry out all the necessary rites of the first and second funeral and to raise the dead to the dignity and role of the ancestor in a formal way.<sup>28</sup>

The will of the ancestors can be revealed through the mediums, ritual specialists, diviners or directly during sleep.<sup>29</sup> In their prayers, sacrifice and rituals, the descendants ask ancestors for help or for the absolution from sins and offences against the moral code and ritual obligations. It seems correct to state that the ancestors and the living need each other in order to survive and live. The living are concerned about the existence of ancestors and – likewise – the ancestors want their descendants to live. An African makes offerings to the ancestors, thinking about his own immortality. He is aware that he lives in his descendants and in his ancestors.<sup>30</sup>

Not all descendants can have the same influence on the fate of the living. A significant ancestor is the one who enjoyed a high social status during his life, so he was the chief of a lineage or a clan, a renowned specialist or a ruler. The cult of ancestors is therefore rooted in the relations and institutions of household community, kinship and descent.<sup>31</sup> Relationships towards the ancestors are not the only continuation of social relationships, which – after death – are raised to the level of faith, ritual and symbolism. Besides, some African theologians emphasize the importance of good and sacred life in the moral and social sense, which means the life consistent with the order established by God and ancestors for the sake of reaching a high position in the hierarchy of ancestors after death.<sup>32</sup>

To sum up, it can be stated that the ancestor cult belongs to the religious sphere and has a crucial social importance. The ancestors make the social order sacred, they support the authority of the elders and guarantee the respect and observance of the binding moral norms and rules of the customary law. John Paul II, in the Apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* includes the ancestor cult in the values of the African religion and asks a question whether it is not a foretaste of the faith in the communion of saints.<sup>33</sup>

## 6. Morality

Among all African peoples we encounter a codified system of definite regulations, orders and bans, which regulate the life of an individual and the community. The customary law and the moral norms are also, though not exclusively, sanctioned by religious beliefs. A catalogue of recommended norms of conduct, which means virtues, and bans, that is sins, can vary among particular peoples but it exists everywhere. There is no clear border between a social offence (against the community) and a religious offence (against supranatural beings). They are the ultimate guarantee of the cosmic and social order and the observance of the moral order both in individual and community life.<sup>34</sup>

Among the African peoples a distinction should be made between the ritual aspect of sin and its moral aspect. In the ritual sense, a sin is a conscious or unconscious transgression of definite regulations, orders and bans that have cultic and customary character. It is connected with the notion of ritual impurity and taboo. In the moral sense on the other hand, a sin as moral evil is a thoughtful offence against the universal order of cosmos and against an individual, the community and such supranatural beings as the Supreme Beings, deities, spirits and ancestor spirits.<sup>35</sup>

Among the nonliterate peoples of Africa, the moral orders and their transgression in the form of a sin are sanctioned in different ways. Many peoples of Africa consider the Supreme Being to be the main guardian of law, order and the moral code, but only some of them (for example, the Bambuti Pygmies, Batwa and Bacva Pygmoides, Ruanda, Kikuyu, Nuer, Yoruba, Kimbu and others) notice its direct involvement in keeping the moral order and see a sin as insult of this Being by an individual or a group. On the other hand, a considerable number of African peoples (for instance, Nkole, Azande, Lugbara, Nyakyusa, Dinka, Suazi, Kalabari, LoDagaa, Tallensi, Konkomba) regard deities, spirits, ancestors and their representatives (the elders, rulers, priests) to be the guardians of morality. There is a double responsibility: individual and collective, which arises from the human and cosmic solidarity. Therefore the guilty people and the other members of the community can be punished (for example, among the peoples of Ewe from Togo, Lugbara from Uganda and Nuer from Sudan). However, the social aspect of morality of the African peoples is prominent.<sup>36</sup>

African peoples believe that a human being is punished for his sins principally during his earthly life. What is considered as punishment for sins are great misfortunes, disasters, poverty, disease and death, especially so-called bad death, which means a premature death, suicide, death at delivery, drowning or death by lightening. According to the beliefs of these peoples, a sin brings the state of impurity, contamination, isolation and threat both in the physical and spiritual sense to man and indirectly also to the whole community. In order to do away with the physical and spiritual state caused by sin and with the consequences of sin they use such purifying rites as ablution, shaving off hair on the head, a bath in the river, oil application on the body, ritual sweeping, sprinkling and pouring with water. Besides, the state of physical and spiritual impurity caused by sin is removed with prayers, fasting, confession of sins and propitiatory sacrifice.<sup>37</sup>

Generally speaking, we can state that the Africans know definite moral principles and norms, which are socially and religiously sanctioned. They are acquainted with the notion of good and evil as well as a reward and punishment. The Africans have a sense of sin in the ritual and moral sense; they accept the necessity of

expiation and redress for the committed evil and for trespassing of the social and moral order.

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In the present lecture I have chosen and – out of necessity – briefly discussed the following values: the sacredness of life, community life, the notion of the Supreme Being, sacredness of the Earth, ancestor spirits, morality. These values, like each culture, require to be complemented and improved in the light of the Gospel and the teaching of the Church. They find the deepest justification in African traditional religions, which determine the identity of particular peoples and which play a crucial role in their life. The religious attitude of the Africans dominates in the world of notions, experience and attitudes to life. Studying the spiritual and religious values of the African peoples is recommended and necessary since these values are the basis of a fruitful dialogue with their cultures and religions. Besides, they serve better proclaiming of the Good News among the Africans and its inculturation in Africa.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> F. Arinze. Pastoral Attention to African Traditional Religion. In: F. Gioia (ed.). *Interreligious Dialogue. The Official Teaching of the Catholic Church (1963-1995)*. Boston 1997 p. 583 f. Other negative elements include an inadequate notion of God, improper images of some objects of worship, excessive fear of spirits, superstitions. Cf. F. Arinze. *The Present-day Challenge of Bringing Christ to People of Traditional Religions*. "Bulletin. Secretariat of the Holy See for the Promotion of Christian Unity" (from now on: "Bulletin") 27:1992 No. 80 p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> *Ecclesia in Africa* 67. In: Gioia. *Interreligious Dialogue* p. 113

<sup>3</sup> H. Hauser. Nairobi-Kenya: Evangelisation as Dialogue. An Interdisciplinary Session at CUEA (14-17 march 1997). "Pro Dialogo" 1995 No. 88 p. 91; U. Onunwa. Gospel, Culture and the Study of (West Africa) Traditional Religions: An Evaluation of Strategy in Mission. "Indian Missiological Review" 10:1988 No. 3 p. 233.

<sup>4</sup> J. Goody. Religion and Ritual: The Definitional Problem. "British Journal of Sociology" 12:1961 p. 151, 155; E. E. Evans-Pritchard. Introduction. In: R. Hertz. *Death and the Right Hand*. Glencoe, Illinois 1960 p. 12, 21; J. S. Pobee. *Toward an African Theology*. Nashville 1979 p. 26, 45; J. S. Mbiti. *Afrykańskie religie i filozofia*. Warszawa 1980 p. 16, 103; J. B. Ballong-Wen-Mawuda. L'idée de sainteté dans la religion traditionnelle africaine. "Pro Dialogo" 1996 No. 92 p. 185.

<sup>5</sup> E. G. Parrinder. Religions of Illiterate People. Africa. In: C. J. Bleeker, G. Widengren (eds.). *Historia religionum. Handbook for the History of Religions*. Vol. 2: Religions of the Present. Leiden 1971 p. 557 f.; B. Gantin. The Universal Values of African Traditional Religions. "Omnis Terra" 30:1996 No. 268 p. 200-202.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. P. K. Sarpong. Growth and Decay: Can Christianity Dialogue with African Traditional Religion. "Bulletin" 23:1988 No. 69 p. 198-205; Gantin. The Universal Values p. 197-202; Ballong-Wen-Mawuda. L'idée de sainteté p. 184-193; F. M. Gapi. Les religions traditionnelles et le dialogue interreligieux. "Bulletin" 28:1993 No. 82 p. 72-74; A. Sa Angang. Les valeurs contenues dans les religions traditionnelles africaines à la rencontre de l'Évangile de Jésus Christ. "Pro Dialogo" 1997 No. 94 p. 12-23.

<sup>7</sup> S. S. Maimela. Salvation in African Traditional Religions. "Missionalia" 13:1985 p. 66, 68; E. I. Ifesieh. Vatican II and Traditional Religion. "African Ecclesiastical Review" 25:1983 p. 231; V. Mulago. Traditional African Religion and Christianity. In: J. K. Olupona (ed.). *African Traditional Religions in Contemporary Society*. New York 1991 p. 120-123, 131; H. Zimoń. *Afrykańskie rytuały agrarne na przykładzie ludu Konkomba*. Warszawa 1992 p. 89.

<sup>8</sup> Pobee. *Toward an African Theology* p. 49-51, 88.

<sup>9</sup> John Paul II. To the Bishops of Zaire (Kinshasa, May 3, 1980). In: Gioia (ed.). *Interreligious Dialogue* p. 225; Sarpong. Growth and Decay p. 203 f.; Arinze. *The Present-day Challenge* p. 162; Gapi. *Les religions traditionnelles* p. 73 f.

<sup>10</sup> Mbiti. *Afrykańskie religie* p. 48. Cf. also K. A. Busia. *Africa in Search of Democracy*. London 1971<sup>3</sup> p. 5; M. J. McVeigh. *God in Africa. Conceptions of God in African Traditional Religion and Christianity*. Cape Cod 1974 p. 6; S. Piłaszewicz. *Bogowie i bóstwa Czarnej Afryki*. "Przegląd Religioznawczy" 1992 No. 1 p. 46; S. Piłaszewicz. *Religie Afryki*. Warszawa 2000 p. 43.

<sup>11</sup> Busia. *Africa in Search of Democracy* p. 4 f. Cf. also J. Urban. *Doświadczenie Boga u ludów Bantu*. Warszawa 1987 p. 44; Mbiti. *Afrykańskie religie* p. 48.

<sup>12</sup> J. S. Mbiti. *Concepts of God in Africa*. London 1970 p. 12, 18; Mbiti. *Afrykańskie religie* p. 51, 53; E. E. Evans-Pritchard. *Nuer Religion*. Oxford 1967<sup>3</sup> p. 4; E. B. Idowu. *African Traditional Religion. A Definition*. Maryknoll, N.Y. 1973 p. 155; McVeigh. *God in Africa* p. 52-55, 117, 126-128, 132-135.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. E. W. Smith. *The Whole Subject in Perspective: An Introductory Survey*. In: E. W. Smith (ed.). *African Ideas of God. A Symposium*. London 1966<sup>3</sup> p. 21 f.; V. Mulago. Le dieu des Bantu. "Cahiers des religions africaines" 2:1968 p. 23-64, especially p. 58-64; Mbiti. *Afrykańskie religie* p. 48-102; Idowu. *African Traditional Religion* p. 140-165; H. Zimoń. *Modlitwa u ludów afrykańskich*. "Roczniki Teologiczne" 43:1996 No. 2 p. 337-340; H. Zimoń. *Koncepcja Istoty Najwyższej u wybranych ludów afrykańskich*. "Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego". *Studia Religioznawcze* 2000 No. 33 p. 174-177.

<sup>14</sup> J.-C. Froelich. La tribu Konkomba du Nord Togo. Dakar 1954 p. 180 f., 184 f.; Zimoń. *Afrykańskie rytuały agrarne* p. 122; H. Zimoń. *Sakralność ziemi u ludu Konkomba z Afryki Zachodniej*. Lublin 1998 p. 36 f.

<sup>15</sup> E. Hurel. Religion et vie domestique des Bakerewe. "Anthropos" 6:1911 p. 78; H. Zimoń. *Regenriten auf der Insel Bukerebe (Tanzania)*. Freiburg Schweiz 1974 p. 19.

<sup>16</sup> Zimoń. *Regenriten auf der Insel Bukerebe* p. 19, 76 f., 81, 90.

<sup>17</sup> Evans-Pritchard. Nuer Religion p. 316; B. C. Ray. African Religions. Symbol, Ritual and Community. Englewood Cliffs 1976 p. 50-52; G. Parrinder. Religion in Africa. Harmondsworth 1969 p. 46; H. Zimoń. Problem monoteizmu ludów pierwotnych w świetle współczesnych badań etnologiczno-religioznawczych. In: H. Zimoń (ed.). Działalność Instytutu Anthropos w dziedzinie lingwistyki, etnologii i religioznawstwa. Pieniężno 1980 p. 33-39; Zimoń. Koncepcja Istoty Najwyższej p. 182-185

<sup>18</sup> W. B. Kristensen. The Meaning of Religion. Lectures in the Phenomenology of Religion. The Hague 1971<sup>3</sup> s. 88; M. Eliade. Traktat o historii religii. Warszawa 1966 s. 241; M. Eliade, L. E. Sullivan. Earth. W: M. Eliade (ed.). Encyclopedia of Religion. Vol. 4. New York 1987 p. s. 534.

<sup>19</sup> I conducted two ethnoreligious field studies among the Konkomba people in the region of Saboba (northeastern Ghana), first from July 1984 to January 1985 and next from September 1990 to August 1991.

<sup>20</sup> The fact that the local Earth spirits among the Konkomba can have male or female character deserves special attention. In some degree, it corresponds to the opinion of scholars of religion pointing to an indefinite character of the Earth and chthonic deities, which have no individual attributes or functions. Cf. Kristensen. The Meaning of Religion s. 88.

<sup>21</sup> Zimoń. Afrykańskie rytuały agrarne p. 92 n.; Zimoń. Sakralność ziemi p. 37-39.

<sup>22</sup> Froelich. La tribu Konkomba s. 176.

<sup>23</sup> D. Tait. The Political System of Konkomba. "Africa" 23:1953 s. 219; Tait. The Konkomba of Northern Ghana. London 1961 s. 63, 145; J.-C. Froelich. Les Konkomba, les Moba, les Dyé. W: J.-C. Froelich, P. Alexandre, R. Cornevin. Les population du Nord-Togo. Paris 1963 s. 133.

<sup>24</sup> Froelich. La tribu Konkomba s. 113, 137 n., 145 n., 181, 184, 187 n.; tenże. Les Konkomba, les Moba, les Dyé s. 148.

<sup>25</sup> The full analysis of the Earth beliefs among the Konkomba and other Voltaic peoples cf. Zimoń. Sakralność ziemi s. 36-45.

<sup>26</sup> According to Mbiti (African religion p. 39 f., 43, 112, 203 f.), the living dead are the dead people up to the fourth or fifth generation, who are remembered by the descendants and recognised by name. They live in the "present" time called *sasa* (from Swahili) and are in the state of personal immortality.

<sup>27</sup> Ray. African Religions p. 146-150; R. C. Mitchell. African Primal Religions. Niles 1977 p. 27-30; G. Parrinder. African Traditional Religion. London 1968 p. 57-66; G. Parrinder. West African Religion. London 1978<sup>7</sup> p. 115-126; Idowu. African Traditional Religion p. 178-189; Mbiti. Afrykańskie religie p. 112-121; A. Moyo. Religion in Africa. In: A. A. Gordon, D. L. Gordon (eds.). Understanding Contemporary Africa. London 1992 p. 228 f.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. M. Fortes. Some Reflections on Ancestor Worship. In: G. Dieterlen, M. Fortes (eds.). African Systems of Thought. Studies Presented and Discussed at the Third International African Seminar in Salisbury, December 1960. London 1965 p. 124 f., 129; D. Zahan. Religion,

spiritualité et pensée africaines. Paris 1970 p. 82-85; H. Hardcare. Ancestor Worship. In: M. Eliade (ed.) The Encyclopedia of Religion. Vol. 1. New York 1987 p. 265; Idowu. African Traditional Religion p. 184-187.

<sup>29</sup> G. Wagner. Die Religion der Bantu von Kavirondo. "Zeitschrift für Ethnologie" 71:1939 p. 207.

<sup>30</sup> M. Fortes. An Introductory Commentary. In: W. H. Newell (ed.). Ancestors. The Hague 1976 p. 4, 10 f., 13; T. Sundermeier. Todesriten und Lebenssymbole in den afrikanischen Religionen. In: G. Stephenson (ed.). Leben und Tod in den Religionen. Symbol und Wirklichkeit. Darmstadt 1980 p. 255 f.; J. F. Thiel. Tod und Jenseitsglaube in Bantu-Afrika. In: H.-J. Klimkeit (ed.). Tod und Jenseits im Glauben der Völker. Wiesbaden 1978 p. 41, 47.

<sup>31</sup> Fortes. Some Reflections on Ancestor Worship p. 122; Fortes. An Introductory Commentary p. 3; Hardcare. Ancestor Worship p. 264; Ray. African Religions p. 149 f.

<sup>32</sup> Ballong-Wen-Mewuda. L'idée de sainteté p. 189-193; A. T. Sanon. Religion et spiritualité africaine. La quête spirituelle de l'humanité africaine. "Cahiers des religions africaines" 17:1983 No. 33-34 p. 52 f.; Idowu. African Traditional Religion p. 187. Moral integrity as a condition for achieving the status of an ancestor is also discussed by a French africanist Zahan (Religion p. 83).

<sup>33</sup> Ecclesia in Africa 43. "L'Osservatore Romano" (Polish edition) 11:1995 No. 10 p. 14. Cf. also Sarpong. Growth or Decay p. 199 f.; Gapi. Les religions traditionnelles p. 72 f.

<sup>34</sup> Evans-Pritchard. Nuer Religion p. 18, 177, 192; Idowu. Olodumare p. 145 f.; J. O. Awolalu. Sin and Its Removal in African Traditional Religion. "Orita" 10:1976 p. 9-11; 15 f.; P. Sarpong. Aspects of Akan Ethics. "The Ghana Bulletin of Theology" 4:1972 No. 3 p. 41, 43 f.; M. M. Edel. Some Reflections on Chiga Ethics. In: A. F. E. Wallace (ed.). Men and Cultures. Philadelphia 1960 p. 440.

<sup>35</sup> H. Zimoń. Grzech I. W religiach pierwotnych. In: Encyklopedia Katolicka. Vol. 6. Lublin 1993 kol. 259 f.; Idowu. Olodumare p. 148 f.; C. Gaba. Sin in African Traditional Religion. "The Ghana Bulletin of Theology" 4:1971 No. 1 p. 24-27; Mbiti. Afrykańskie religie p. 264.

<sup>36</sup> R. M. Green. Religion and Morality in the African Traditional Setting. "Journal of Religion in Africa" 14:1983 p. 3, 7-11; Evans-Pritchard. Nuer Religion p. 189 f.; Gaba. Sin in African Traditional Religion p. 22 f.; Shorter. African Culture and the Christian Church. An Introduction to Social and Pastoral Anthropology. London 1973 p. 63, 82.

<sup>37</sup> Zimoń. Grzech col. 260; Awolalu. Sin and Its Removal p. 15-21; Evans-Pritchard. Nuer Religion p. 191, 193, 195; Gaba. Sin in African Traditional Religion p. 27-30; S. N. Ezeanya. A View of Christian and Pagan Morality. "West African Religion" 2:1964 p. 4; Urban. Doświadczenie Boga p. 119-124.