

**THE MODERN CRUSADE:
THE MISSIONARIES OF MANAGEMENT COME TO
EASTERN EUROPE***

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Abstract

The paper deals with the communication between the West (industrialized "capitalist" countries) and Eastern and Central Europe, which the paper claims to be uni-directional. Using the metaphor of economic enterprises as religious institutions and business administration as religion, the paper suggests that these organizations perform a crucial ontological role in the modern societies. After the fall of communism in 1989 the values of the capitalist modernity are transferred to the post-communist countries by guest lecturers and consultants taking part in assistance programs and in other ways involved in the transition process. This is depicted by the use of the religious metaphor as missionary activity. The paper ends with a discussion of the uni-directional communication, which in the light of the dawning post-modern society, is perhaps not the best way of a common, East-Western construction of a new social reality.

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Introduction

The connections between religion and society have been explored since Weber's fundamental work on capitalism and protestant ethics. The influences of religion and theology on philosophy (e.g. Kołakowski, 1989a: 166); on social structure (e.g. Kołakowski, 1984); on economy (e.g. Boulding, 1989a; Boulding, 1989b; Stein, 1989) and on organization of industrial society (e.g. Fromm, 1989) have since long been a topic for research and insight. The links between organization and religion also deserve some consideration. Organizations offer their participants rewards not only of a material kind, but increasingly also of an existential and perhaps even spiritual nature. They give people an identity and perform an ontological function, providing a sense of Being to the participants (Schwartz, 1987). Finally, they are *a way of life* (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1993), cultures providing *networks of meaning* (Smircich, 1987). Participants are being socialized into organizations (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1993; Czarniawska-Joerges and Kunda, 1992) and culture is used as a means of control (Van Maanen and Kunda, 1989). The cultural perspective (cf. Smircich, 1983) offers us, thus, a means of understanding the vital - or, in Schwartz's terms, ontological role of organizations to humans, and also what I would call the religious significance of organizing.

Metaphors are play an increasingly important role in social sciences and organizational analysis (cf. Morgan, 1986; Smircich, 1983). In this paper, the business organization is seen as a religious organization and business administration - as religion. The metaphor, besides pointing to an important dimension of organizing, also helps us to see the current transition taking place in Eastern and Central Europe from a new and slightly unorthodox perspective. What is happening

is not "only" an economic and political shift, not "just" the liberation of repressed peoples, but can also be seen as a religious mission: the capitalist West transmitting its managerial religion to the eastern "heathens".

Culture, symbols and myths

Culture I understand as the *medium of life* (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1991), through which we make sense of our lives, and that enables us to communicate with the world, with the extensive use of symbols (cf. Schütz, 1982).

It is through symbols that we given meaning to an originally intransparent reality (Schütz, 1982; 1966). Symbols are, according to Schütz, the outcome of choice between multiple options in the sense-making of human perception, making experiences persistent and continuous. The symbols, present in our memory, are open for interpretation and reinterpretation (1982). Symbols can constitute important elements of the social and cultural context we live in, an intersubjective world of our common experience (Schütz and Luckmann, 1973).

Myths are, according to Kołakowski, a specific kind of symbols, not containing words, but occurrences and persons. The myth is accounted through, or translated into words. Myths enable people to participate in those events, ontologically important to them, through a symbolical "immobilizing" of time (1967). Myth is seldom considered as a serious tool of understanding in management literature (Bowles, 1989).

[M]yth was ... seen as something antithetical to fact; myth is opposed to reality, an implicit assumption being that our set of beliefs is true and not as primitive or arbitrary as those of other cultures or epochs." (Ingersoll and Adams, 1986 as quoted in Bowles, 1989:406).

Mythology elicits and supports a sense of awe before mystery of being, provides a set of ideas which enable humans to answer the most vital questions, socializes the individual, and guides the

him or her towards maturation (Bowles, 1989, after Campbell, 1976). Bowles (1992b) also notifies the role of myth in social life, one beyond the "ego psychology", enabling understanding insights offered by the collective unconscious.

Religion

Religion as the medium of spiritual life

Religion is a kind of culture (cf. Geertz, 1973), constructed as a medium of spiritual life.

According to Kołakowski, religion is the "[s]ocially established cult of infinite reality" (1988: 9).

After Kołakowski (1989b) I distinguish between two approaches to religion: the functionalist and the idiogenetic and holistic. The first approach is grounded on the assumption that religion, through the participation in ceremonies, rituals, institutions, etc. offers the individuals a substitute for other values (or meanings). Religious life is thus a form of communication that offers stability of social structures and institutions. The other understanding of religion implies that religion is rooted in human needs, not related genealogically nor functionally to other more "primary" roots. Humans are seeking transcendental values through religion understood this way.

According to Kołakowski, big religions had the ability to satisfy all non-religious needs of past societies: the political, societal and these of learning about reality. To achieve this, *sacrum* could not be instrumentally understood and had to have a autonomous authority (1988).

This point of view is analogous with Fromm's: the "to have" versus "to be" approach to faith.

In religious, political or personalistic understanding, the concept of faith can have two entirely different meanings, depending on if we use it in the sense of "to have" or "to be". In the attitude "to have" faith is the possessing of answers not needing rational verification." (Fromm, 1989: 44).

These answers are offered by others to whom we abide. These "others" are usually a bureaucracy, that offers us a sense of certainty. Faith is the price we pay for this sense of security that comes

from belonging to a big social group that deprives us of the demanding responsibility of autonomous thinking and decision making. Believers possess this certitude. Faith claims to have the ultimate, absolute knowledge that is valid, because the people protecting and preserving it think it to be undisputed. Faith in the sense "to be" is not connected to beliefs in certain ideas in the first place, but

inner orientation, *route*. It would be a better way to express it to say that one *is* in faith, rather than one *has* faith..." (Fromm, 1989: 45).

In this paper the religious metaphor is based on the idiogenetic, "to be-" view on religion. I assume, thus, that people engage in the religious discourse because of a relatively autonomous need to do so. The religious construct becomes nevertheless highly institutionalized and entails the what Fromm would have labelled "to have" dimension of religion.

What is religion? Proposed framework

For the purposes of this paper, I would like to propose a definition of religion that will serve as a theoretical framework for presentation of the argument. It is not an ostensive definition, saying what "religion really is", but a performative definition, aimed at facilitating narration of the phenomenon that interests me here (on ostensive and performative definitions in sociology, see Latour, 1986; in organization theory, see Czarniawska-Joerges, 1991, 1993). The elements of my framework are based primarily on Kołakowski's (1967, 1994) view on religion, but in my own interpretation and with my emphases. Kołakowski is further not a constructivist, whereas my picture of religion is constructivist.

Religion is an ordering of symbols that carry spiritual meaning to people. By "ordering" I here mean a process, whereby certain symbols continuously acquire meaning, the avoidance of chaos. Certain types of participants are important religious actors, among them particularly the believers (followers), the elites and of course the priests. They take part in making of religion, a construct, containing several types of symbols, of which I would like to point to the following as

central: symbolic language, physical artifacts, norms and values, and myths, including stories about saints and the Grand Myth of the god.

Error! Bookmark not defined.		RELIGION	
ACTORS		SYMBOLS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * FOLLOWERS * ELITES * PRIESTS 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE * PHYSICAL ARTIFACTS * NORMS AND VALUES * MYTHS 	

Tab. 1. Religion as a symbolic construct

In the case of mission, the actors are respectively: followers, or converted pagans, emerging native elites and missionaries. The symbols become exported to a different culture, thus there is a need to educate the pagans in the symbolic language, for example Latin, but as missions often are accompanied with colonization, then also this was the case of introducing Spanish as the official language in Latin America. Physical artifacts, such as relics, icons or pictures of saints are more or less abundant in different religions. However, missions carry with them typically other artifacts associated with the culture of origin of the missionaries. So the white colonists brought with them cheap but seductive jewelry to Africa, and the contemporary missionaries bring western clothes and technology to Papua. To the people to be converted these artifacts is more or less intended as attraction. It is the complete socialization that is the aim, or to imprint the new norms and values in people's mindsets. Those who succeed are rewarded with the possibility to experience the participation in the myths, most importantly, in the Grand Myth - of the god him or (more rarely) herself. Myths play a central role in all religious systems. In mission stories about saints have an important role in convincing the people that there are examples: at the same time human and superhuman, of successful following.

Substitutes for religion in high modernity

In high modernity (Giddens, 1991) religion tends to be replaced by science (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1993; Kołakowski, 1989a). Fromm perceives yet another substitute for traditional religion, more widespread and powerful: work. Work has become the only way to get love and respect and thus the new post-Christian religion emerged, that of the industrial society (1984). The lost meanings (of work and life) are replaced by a surrogate - motivation (Sievers, 1986). So the economic organizations keep humans going, in a fragmented and shallow way, yet offering people the only meaning generally available in modern society (even if it be a surrogate).

Organization and religion

The religious (and related, focussing on the experiences, that can be regarded as "religious", according to the above quoted definitions) metaphor has been used (fractionally or in-depth) in management and organization literature, to achieve a literary emphasis, or to demonstrate a certain aspect of organization and organizing.

So, for example, eminent management theoreticians have been called "management gurus" (Clutterbuck and Bickerstaffe, 1982). Expressions such as "evangelism" has also been used (Bowles, 1992b:20). A lot has been said and written on charismatic leadership, especially in the corporate culture mainstream of literature (e.g. Deal and Kennedy, 1982; McCormack, 1986; Pascale and Athos, 1982; Peters and Waterman, 1986). Höpfl (1994) explicitly speaks of the religious significance of leadership in modern organizations. Management literature has been likened to mythological biographies of Late Antiquity and Middle Ages and labelled *edifying literature* (Furusten, 1992).

Bowles has been using religious metaphors to explore organizational myths (1989; 1992b), unconscious (or religious, in my perspective here) needs and symbols (1992a; 1992b) and their consequences for organizational action, human relations (1992c), life in organizations (1992b) and individual maturation (1992a). Bowles (1992a) concludes that modern organizations

do have a significant impact on the individual's potential for maturation or individuation such as Jung (1968) has defined it. Organizations model a mass mind, proceed with collectivization and objectivization, they offer ontologic rewards but without deeper religious sense (Bowles, 1992a).

Sievers asserts that "organizations and enterprises tend to become surrogates for the churches" (1988: 36). Further, he maintains that these organizations are based on

the assumption that there is evidently no evidence and, therefore, no further understanding beyond what obviously is obvious: the companies' and its' members welfare (1988: 36-37).

The metaphor: business administration as religion and business organization as religious institution is not only an interesting way of depicting the phenomena but, in modern society, also a useful tool to achieve a greater understanding of the organizational world. In Alvesson's (1993) terms, the religious metaphor is thus a "second level", while the cultural-symbolist (see e.g. Turner, 1986, 1990) - a "first level" metaphor.

In my opinion the cultural perspective is fundamental in the undertaking to understand the ontologic role that organizations play in human life. Looking through the cultural glasses helped people to realize that organizations are not only a "tool" or "instrument" (or machine) for the achievement of goals, indented by the constructor, but a way of life. Organizations are, furthermore, a way of *spiritual life*, offering to their participants a set of meanings, together with proper interpretations (also a mental escape from the inevitability of death, as organizations are a substitute for immortality, cf. Sievers, 1986). They offer myths and other important symbols, helping them to deal with the irrational and non-rational, they become a moral frame of reference, through the shared norms and values.

The ones to lead their sheep in this kind of religious institutions, are the managers and organizational leaders. They know how to interpret symbols, they, together with the "experts", the management consultants, offer meanings to the (organizational) people. Leaders perform a

vital societal role - the one belonging to priests, namely, in Czarniawska-Joerges' words,

to provide the rest of the cast and the audience with the illusion of controllability... The arbitrariness of life - especially organizational life - is too frightful to envisage. A leader who fails to provide the illusion... by showing us the illusion for what it is, cannot be applauded. The illusion must be supported at whatever cost (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1993: 42).

Management educators and consultants teach managers how to perform this role.

Religion of Business Administration comes to Eastern Europe - the Mission

A remark on the method and the metaphor

Adopting the interpretive approach, I do not claim the conclusions to be universal nor generally applicable. I see them as an insight that can be shared and discussed. The empirical material is founded on my various experiences. From these experiences I chose a few windows (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992) that I consider "typical". I do not claim them to be statistically representative, they are however, substantially representative, i.e. represent the context described in the paper. I contrast the windows with quotations from historical sources (on religious mission among various "pagan" peoples). The quotations come from library research on the topic.

The modern business organization of the western type I, then, see as a religious institution, providing the fulfillment of religious needs (as I have defined these above) of the participants. Business administration as the modern religion has its priests: the managers and leaders of business, its missionaries: management consultants, management educators and its prophets: the authors of management books. While the priests look to their church-attendants, the missionaries are busy with transmitting the symbols and myths of their religion to the heathens, and supporting the priests. After the fall of the Berlin Wall a thriving field for missionary quest has been opened. The not yet redeemed peoples are an thrilling opportunity to strengthen the

faith of the own believers - to convert the idolatrous has perhaps always been a means of strengthening the faith of the ones already saved.

The new Latin to learn

It is widely believed that the East should "learn" from the West (this is particularly visible to the reader of East European press, such as myself) and that it has a long way to run before it "catches up" (this point is often stressed in Polish mass media). The desire to "catch up" (or, as Orgogozo put it, "East European aspirations towards Eldorado now", 1992:596) is reflected in the flood of western models, publications, visiting professors and consultants coming to Eastern and Central Europe. First of all, the Polish language became enriched immediately after 1989 with such terms as: *management* (or *menedżment* - instead of or simultaneously with the Polish term: *zarządzanie*), *manager* (or *menedżer* - instead of *kierownik*), *cash-flow*, *controlling*, *businessman* and *businesswoman*, *business* or *biznes*, etc. *Marketing* existed since long already, as did *dywizjonalizacja* and *holding*. Similar things happened to other languages of ex-Eastern Bloc countries.

Some of my postgraduate students of business administration, most of them in their late forties, complained that some of the lecturers use foreign words. One commented: "I feel like listening to a Turkish sermon" (this is a common Polish expression, meaning that you listen to something you do not understand). They expressed their anger with this kind of treatment: "Why can't they speak Polish?", but at the same time they refused to talk about it with the lecturers in question. They probably felt ashamed of not being "adequate", not *au courant*.

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The white missionaries showed a greater or lesser sensitivity to the native languages of the pagans they sought to convert to Christian faith. Some, like the Jesuits of Missiones in Latin America, used the native language, while communicating with the Indians. Others failed to do so. It is however true that missions spread the original language of the missionaries, which ultimately became the national - as Spanish in Latin America - or the official language - as English in the colonial India and French in Algeria.

Sometimes the catholic missionaries, who sometimes used Latin, especially to write more important letters and documents, could be met with adversity from suspicious natives. The following conversation took place between a Chinese dignitary and a Catholic missionary, whose letter the former had confiscated:

'In which language is [this letter] written?'

'In Latin.'

'This is very suspect indeed! Why don't you write in Chinese?' (Hunermann, 1961: 273).

The desirable things: Artifacts

Being "international", "American" or "British" became a virtue *per se*, which is also reflected in the way other products are marketed. Says a private entrepreneur leading a marketing agency:

I often have to put English text and names on the labels of my clients' products, the clients insist. Sometimes the description of the product is in English, I think it is weird, the consumer often does not understand the text. Somewhere on the label, in a corner, with a small font, they add 'Made in Poland'. But this is how products sell nowadays in our country.

Also genuine western made products invade our markets. They are marketed and advertized for on the TV, sometimes, in the case of the Polish TV, direct translations (often in incorrect and hardly understandable Polish) are accepted and broadcasted. The already quoted entrepreneur remarks:

Many of the advertized western products have already run their life cycle out in the West. They advertize for the 'old version' in Poland and for a 'new, improved one' on Sky or MTV.

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The white missionaries brought with them glass pearls and mirrors to attract the 'pagans'. The Africans and the Indians would do almost anything to get the 'precious' goods of the white people. 'Having learned that the [Indians] willingly sell their women for European 'glitter', such as beads, hair-pins, metal buckles, they [the white settlers] threw themselves to initiate contacts with the Indians. A [...] Brazilian historian, Varnhagen, found through studies of Jesuit chronicles from the 15th Century, that in that epoch it was possible to buy a young Indian girl for a... hair-pin. (Wójcik, 1974: 23).

The most important feature of the "new era" of transition is, however, the focus on management and the western-type business organization. In connection to business

administration, there are many iconic artifacts now intensely introduced, such as titles (MBA), advertisements, brands, etc.

Schooling in norms and values

As an addition to already existing management education institutions (they were not many; in Poland it was in the first place the School of Management of the Warsaw University and also the Central School of Planning and Statistics, currently: the Warsaw School of Economics), new institutions started to mushroom throughout the ex-Eastern Bloc. They often have "international" in their names, or including an English word, e.g. "management" or "business". Management education is growingly popular in Poland and is viewed as one of the most dependable (or perhaps even the most dependable) path to professional career (before studies in foreign languages, law and international trade), as a pilot study presented in the popular weekly *Polityka* indicates (Nowakowska, 1993).

The interest in management is enormous. An employee of a Polish publishing company said: "Say 'management' and people will come running to buy it, whatever it is." It is also easy to observe: the bookstores are full of publications on management, of various quality. According to the vendors the clients ask for these books and they sell very well (my interviews, Warsaw and Karpacz 1993).

Throughout the country numerous seminars, courses and complete studies are arranged by western institutions. These programs are sometimes of high and sometimes of poor quality. Some are organized together with Polish institutions, private or public. They have though one thing in common: they teach not only "new methods, techniques and concepts", but also (or is it: in the first place?) *a new set of norms and values*.¹

In 1989 I have participated in a seminar organized by an eminent western institution, aimed at training in management and management consulting.

The participants found themselves seated in a classroom, reminding of a school-class. A group of people from industry sat in the front half of the class. The back was occupied by University people, among them one tenured professor and two assistants. Into the class came in the visiting lecturer and his young assistant. They presented themselves as professional consultants with academic background and the lecture started.

First, the senior lecturer explained that communism had a very demoralizing impact on the society and in order to achieve wealth and success the Eastern and Central Europeans will have to work hard. It is not an acceptable attitude any more to wait for the state "giving" the citizens all they demanded. Market economy meant competition, hard work and problem solving. Communism was not a sustainable economic system, anyone could see that.

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The Indians were not used to hard work, they lived a life in harmony with nature and they had to be 'persuaded' to work by the Jesuits in a special way - work was associated to religious ceremonies so that the natives understand its importance (Wójcik, 1974). 'The natives do not cultivate the soil, nor do they keep any tamed animals. Here there are no cows, horses, goats, sheep nor chicken. The natives do not eat anything except for maniok roots, fish and fruit growing abundantly in the forests. In spite of this they are of remarkably high stature and good health [...]' (ibid: 18).

The Poles were, however, a very dynamic nation, the lecturer went on. He himself, as well as his assistant, were of Polish origin. It was here, in Poland, that democracy was born in the Eastern Bloc. *Solidarność*, the great social movement of 1980 was an event that shook the world. Now, after the fall of communism, the Poles would easily adapt to the new environment. They have an "economic mind", they will learn fast and outwit their teachers. Here the lecturer smiled with benevolence.

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If our colonists, that settle down on these territories, learn the language of these natives, with facility they will convert them to the true religion, in which with God's help they may succeed! It should be noted, that these natives seem to be honest people. God gave them human faces and postures, to become like us, and the Lord, Jesus Christ, did not direct us here by accident, knowing that Your highness wants to multiply His honor through the redemption of new souls to the sacred catholic faith! [...] (Wójcik, 1974: 17-18).

The lecturer told us a few anecdotes, acquainted us briefly with his job and explained, that the assistant would now introduce some basic western managerial concepts and theories we will certainly be needing. He left the room and the assistant, in heart breaking poor Polish, explained the concept of costs, fixed and variable. Then he went on to price-setting and the relationship between demand and supply in a market economy. To the academics and many of the industry people these issues were trivial, but made almost unrecognizable through the language. The assistant emphasized strongly what he was saying: this was certainly the "good news" of market economy.

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The Augustines admitted the pagans to the Holy Mass before their baptism. After the Gospels, a minister explained to them the meaning of the ceremonies... Finally, he held a short lesson in catechism. The Indians were not admitted to baptism before they knew the *Pater*, the *Credo*, the commandments of God and the Church and before they had sufficient comprehension of the sacraments. (Ricard, 1933: 105).

Now the senior lecturer returned. He was carrying a video. He explained that we were to see a lecture of the "big economic guru", Michael Porter. He told a few anecdotes from Porter's life, and then we watched the film. The video was attractive to watch, and included many suggestions about "how to succeed in business", both recipes and insights. The video offered the participants a possibility to review what they already knew or believed in, in a splendid "package".

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The more modern Catholic missionaries educate the pagans in the new faith not so much by making them learn the catechism by heart, but by teaching them about what being a good Christian means in practice. They often account the stories of the saints and other pious Catholics.²

Students or followers?

After having acquainted us with the new "religion", the lecturers conducted a computer game.

The participants filled in questionnaires, after having discussed matters through in small groups. Then the lecturer collected the papers and left the room to "process the data in his computer", which we did not see. It was located somewhere else, in the lecturer's individual room. Then he came back with the results. The winning team was honored and celebrated. Other teams were also celebrated - they had "done a good job". Everybody felt satisfied, and this was perhaps the most gratifying moment of the course, judging from "break gossip". None of the gossip, neither critical or complimenting, were given voice in class.

The course participants reacted in a way, that e.g. Jankowicz (1994) describes as common among Polish managers and hindering creative learning. Jankowicz, involved in management education in Poland, observed a passive attitude among Polish managers, waiting for the lecturer "to teach them". On explicit request from the lecturer that they participate in a more active way, people tended to react with embarrassment or even started to protest.

The participants were more loquacious in between classes, commenting and forming networks. They formed a lobby that ultimately would have the aim of grouping influential people within industry and management consulting. "This was the main benefit from the course" - a participant commented. The redeemed souls would now carry the mission further.

Educating the elites

This kind of brief course is, of course, not the only way of communicating the Good News of Market Economy and Business Administration to the post-communist heathens. An elite must be formed, competent natives who will further the faith in practice and theory.

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A modern Church cannot live without leaders. The humble mass of peasants, craftsmen, all who live of the work of their hands and to whom, in the New Spain, the missionaries had brought the security of tomorrow, this humble mass should be directed, schooled and educated by an elite. A laique, a clerical and an elite of religious orders. The indispensibility of [such elites] is not to be disregarded, it is, to put it this way, of a theological importance. (Ricard, 1933: 160).

Thus, several high-standard, prestigious institutions have been established, based on cooperation between eminent Polish and western educational institutions. One of them is offering full fledged MBA studies. Some of the lectures are in English and, probably, most of the course materials are. The students, selected out of many candidates, are highly motivated and hard working.

Knowing about the importance of formation of such elites, the white missionaries established some colleges for education of future priests and civil leaders. The most successful schools educated natives (Ricard, 1933).

The work load is immense, compared to other management education curricula I know of in Poland. The students receive regularly bulky readings and pass demanding exams, even though they are busy with their work elsewhere - most of them are executives for various enterprises, some of which are of considerable size and importance. The course includes, among others, sophisticated financial management techniques, modern accounting, computer science, going into details and demanding memorizing of long and complicated texts and procedures.

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If the preliminary education of Motoliné represented a minimum, it seems certain that the Pláticas³ des Douze represented, on the contrary, the maximum. Certain indications about the different categories of angels, Seraphins, Cherubins, Thrones, Dominions seem excessive for a preliminary education and extremely complicated. (Ricard, 1933: 108).

The courses, more or less high prestige and more or less advanced, all result in a diploma or degree, from MBA to a simple certificate of completing the course. This document is highly valued by the students and candidates - it gives them a good position on the labor market. In the terms of my metaphor they acquire a certificate of being baptized and thus members of the "new church".

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The administration of baptism was [...] always preceded by an schooling which could be more or less abbreviated, more or less rapid, depending on the case and the circumstances. (Ricard, 1933: 105).

The missionaries: Ethos and practice

It has to be remembered that before 1989, Eastern and Central Europe were ruled in an undemocratic and totalitarian way (Staniszki, 1989; Wesołowski and Wnuk-Lipiński, 1992). Totalitarian rule, is, according to Wesołowski and Wnuk-Lipiński, "the rule of an uncontrolled elite, supported by a mass political party, and executed by bureaucratic institutions that pervade public life" (1992:85). The peoples were suffering from more or less direct oppression and their human rights were frequently and notoriously violated. Market economy and western type democracy seemed to them after 1989 almost as the "coming of the Messiah" and this is also what my American interlocutor (private communication, Winter 1991; young American participating in assistance program) alluded to, while describing his task:

I think my job is very important. The Polish people have fought for their freedom, now they are trying to create a democratic society, for the first time since the beginning of World War II. They really had a tough time under communism.

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It seems indubitable that among pre-cortesian Indians morality did not reach their level of intelligence. Their religion, indeed, does not appear as anything but an ensemble of mere rituals: human sacrifices, ritual drunkenness and anthropophagy; they were all too often bloody and immoral. (Ricard, 1933:43).

The West is supporting the ex-communist countries financially, through the activity of many foundations, offering important loans, grants, programs, etc. This help is more than welcome by the often underinvested and poor countries. It is, however, often difficult to acquire credit or financial support for the East and Central Europeans, as the formal requirements are viewed as complicated and far from what the ex-communist societies are used to. "It is impossible and infuriating; they make me paranoid and I start thinking they do it on purpose" - so the difficulties with filling application forms and taking care of the formalities when applying for western grants were commented by a young researcher (private communication, Spring 1993). Many of the Polish loans "wait" unused (J.Kostera, 1992). What more, they are often connected to specific western services and products which have to be bought if the credit is

granted, or so at least my interviewees affirmed (explorative effort: interviews with academics and businesspeople, Spring, 1993).

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It should be remembered that white missionaries often offered genuine valuable help to the natives they were (and still are) working with. The best known example is, perhaps, the ones of the *Misiones* mission in Latin America. But there are other as well (e.g. Si-ing, 1940, Ricard, 1933). However, with this help went the new faith as an 'additional' offering.

There are of course different Western "helpers", and different guest lecturers. I see two broad categories of "the management missionaries": the "free-marketeers" and the "culture sensitive". While the former tend to concentrate on free market values and classic economics, often explicitly suggesting that the Polish students are to learn the "universally accepted" rules of the game and typically address to an intellectual elite, the latter show concern for the Polish "common man and woman", gathering information on the culture and students before the lecture and adapting the style and language as much as possible to the listeners. The latter also show interest in the material situation of their listeners, while the former stress the importance of holding on to the crucial values (such as competition, individualism, pragmatism, etc.), usually performing in front of middle and upper class students. However, the message taught is typically very much the same: "if you work really hard and economize, you will enjoy the fruits of your labor when the time comes".

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The Catholic and Protestant missionaries resembled each other in their way of thinking. The same sentiment of superiority of Christians, having the knowledge about the revealed truth toward the Chinese: 'these ignorant pagans' and the same combination of religious zeal and imperialist ambition... So, the religious practices could be different among the Catholics and Protestants... [but] before their eyes the Chinese pagans appeared in the same condition of ignorance and misery. (Si-ing, 1940: 105).

The method of recruitment of the Catholic missionaries was typically the one of protection of the peasants or of the poor. Because the Chinese used to group themselves in clientèles they could not have found better protectors against the abuse of local authorities or better supporters than the Catholic missionaries... (Si-ing, 1940: 106).

Simultaneously, the method of recruitment of the Protestant missionaries was based on humanitarian works. Because they were rich in personnel and money,

thanks to the American element, they occupied themselves much more often with the citizens than with the peasants. They devoted much money at works having to do with hygiene and assistance. (Si-ing, 1940: 107).

I would like to point out that according to my experiences the role of the "culture sensitive" missionaries is more advantageous and helpful than that of the "free marketeers". The former often stay at Polish hotels, let themselves be invited to people's homes and thus learn about the culture and the people's needs and expectations. The "free marketeers" usually stay at the Marriott in Warsaw (thus their nickname: "the Marriott brigades"), and are said never to leave the hotel except for in one of the hotel's taxis. The "culturally sensitive" often ultimately develop reciprocal relationships with the students.

Myths and the god

Eastern societies also receive a set of myths that they can now participate in to experience the fundamental truths of the new religion. The most important myths are: the myth of *hard work*, the myth of the *free market* and the one of *economizing*.

An example of the myth of hard work is the well known story of the shoe-shiner who became millionaire ("rags to riches"), also known as the American Dream. This story is being repeated now to the Poles, and the lecturers emphasize the moral lesson: all you have to do is to work hard, and believe in your product. If you do work hard, success inevitably will follow. There is a protestant ethic moral in the story, a belief in predestination. Similar myths on the free market are being communicated: the Market as a just judge and the fair allocator. If you only rely on the Market in 100%, prosperity and justice will follow. These myths (often the British example) are told especially during lectures on privatization. Finally, the third Grand Myth, the one on economizing, is told in its various versions, but perhaps most often about the Japanese, who do not consume what they produce but invest and save. This is offered to the Polish students as the recipe for success and virtue in itself.

The central value of the religion of business administration is the one of *rationality*. It has been pointed out before (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1993; Kostera and Wicha, 1994) that modern organizations are primarily rationality-producing constructs. It is true about both communist and capitalist enterprises. However, their rationality criteria were different, as Kostera and Wicha (1994) show. The communist enterprise was based on political rationality, the capitalist - on economic rationality. By economic rationality I mean maximization of material utility. By political rationality I understand maximization of influence and power "utility" (Kostera and Wicha, 1994). Rationality is socially constructed (cf. Berger and Luckmann, 1966/1983), and the rules for this construction are contingent with, among other factors, the basic kind of "utility" the society is concerned about to achieve. Thus, the eastern peoples are not only un-believers, they are idolaters and this is exactly what the western missionaries are trying to demonstrate to them: that their way of perceiving the organizational world is "irrational" and that there are "more effective" alternatives (i.e. better suited to reach the desired ends, salvation or well-being). Economic rationality is such an important and self-justifying value that I would claim it is the god of the new religion. In the name of rationality we prepare our accounts, just as Christians do in order to face God at the day of judgement. This does not apply only to purely economic accounts (such as the Annual Report), but everyday life in modern society. In organizations, rationality is produced by introduction of specialized rationalization actions into the system and through preparing rational accounts for external use - the two methods are interrelated (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1993). In modern society this rationality production process is taken for granted and obvious, it is regarded as the unquestioned, most often, unconscious ultimate end and also meaning of (organizational) life.

Salvation, as communicated by the missionaries, is, besides economic well-being and prosperity (measured in GNP per capita), also the modern society itself, seen as a value in itself. To be "well-organized" and "hard-working" on the societal level is an aim as laudable as

prosperity. In the "good news" there is a hidden message: "You don't have to be as wealthy as we are, as long as you are tidy, hygienic, hard-working and frugal". Wealth is not a value of the new religion, in the western societies people are often living modestly and are very careful about how they spend their money, not at all how the Easterners imagine life in the wealthy ("prosperous") West.

Communication between West and East: Sermoning the idolatrous

As the above windows show, the communication East-West seems to be pretty uni-directional. It is exactly what I would like to point out in this paper: the general direction for the transfer of symbols and meanings in the world after 1989 is that from the West to the East. It is thus not a process of *conversation*, it is a monologue, or, in the terms of my metaphor, a *sermon*. The West is teaching the East to adopt its religion. The missionaries are sometimes cynical, sometimes genuinely devoted and pious, wishing sincerely to see their eastern brothers and sisters saved through the adoption of the "right" faith. They communicate to them the "right" symbols, norms, values and myths - with the assumption that *if* they only be espoused and used properly, salvation (prosperity and modernity) will be possible for these peoples.

The most important thing to me is not so much that missionaries from the West are trying to convert Easterners to their religion. What I see as crucial is the fact that the communication is uni-directional. And yet, as Orgogozo (1992) points out, we have so much to learn *from each other* and *together*, I would add. Orgogozo notes:

[T]he discoveries being made by those fleeing to Western Europe regarding relations of mutual aid and cooperation, the coolness and indifference of wealthy Europeans towards each other, can help us become aware of our most serious deficiencies (Orgogozo, 1992: 598).

She explains, that the capitalist society has disregarded the cost free relations, such as family,

education and replacing them with sellable goods or services. Easterners have experienced life in a differently constructed society, with other goals and rationalities. In the case of Poland many valuable societal meanings and symbols derive from a powerful experience people have made: the *Solidarność* era of 1980-1981, and to a certain degree the years of popular dissent and skepticism during the martial law. Furthermore, under communism it was quite "normal" for working class people to go to cinema, theater, to read books. Especially during the 80. there were many "people's flying universities" active in Poland, among them one lead by Jerzy Popiełuszko, a catholic priest, who organized high quality cultural activities in his church, including lectures by eminent professors, concerts, theater performances, directed primarily to blue collar workers of Huta Warszawa (Warsaw Steel Mill). Another typical example: a note in the Polish daily *Zycie Warszawy* of May 7, 1993 about the yearly film festival. The western partners were surprised, according to the note, that such a "post-communist festival of ambitious films" be arranged in Poland, but since it promised to be profitable, they accepted the idea. The festival lasted for two weeks and was a feast for those interested in non-commercial, ambitious films. According to the media, the overall interest in such events, the tendency to read books other than *Harlequin*, see films other than Hollywood productions and video tapes, is in decline in Poland. What people from Eastern Europe so light hearted give up today seems to be non-negligible. It is, by the way, not what the conservative-nationalist parties in today's Poland mean by "taking care of traditional values". What they mean is reviving the values from before World War II and decreasing some of the human rights (for example those of women and sexual minorities) (cf. e.g. Kostera et al., 1994).

Moreover, the adoption of the new religion in itself might not bring the desired ends. What Western Europe achieved they had a high price to pay for, and also it was to an important extent the result of the Marshall plan, not just "hard work and economizing". Are the East Europeans willing to (and able of) pay this price? And would it lead them in the desired

direction, considering the role of the Marshall plan for the development of economy of Western Europe? And then, would it really be worthwhile? These questions will probably stay unanswered, but they are certainly worth to be asked. By both Easterners and Westerners.

To summarize: it is time that we acknowledge that East has a culture of its own, an own religion. Eastern Europe was long supposed to suffer a kind of "no-culture", negligible or even simply negative, in other words "not deserving" to be labelled a "culture", instead it was designated as a "system".

Heathens waiting to be sermoned

There is another side to the management crusade in Eastern Europe. People reacted with solidarity and ironic resistance toward administered symbols during the 1980-ties of martial law in Poland, and there is a dear myth about the Polish society as being particularly unsubmitive and ironic to attempts at colonization. People pride themselves in the Polish history of contradiction and sarcasm: how the Poles made jokes during Nazi occupation, then during communism. This attitude seems lost somehow in the recent development. How come?

One of the answers may be that the colonized somehow allow colonization though their passivity or even active expectations. A western academic told me a story about a help project that he was engaged in. Before 1989 the Polish partners were eager to act as partners and he thought of that period as cooperation, even if the material support went in just one direction. The Poles offered other kinds of support and advice that the Westerners appreciated. After 1989 the attitudes changed: the very same people began to expect to *be helped*, to be offered material support no longer as a link in cooperation but as a "gift". The story tells about a mysterious metamorphosis in the minds of people. More often, the Westerners coming as missionaries are not the same people who came in the 80. to participate in the Polish experience of *Solidarność* and then martial law. These Westerners were typically remarkable people, coming to Poland to

give and to take, to participate and to experience. The contemporary "missionaries" are usually consultants, profit minded and economically oriented. The "disciples" are typically not the same people who cooperated with the Westerners coming during the 1980-ties. Those were dissidents, workers, academics, people dissatisfied with the regime. Today's disciples are managers, Polish consultants, also economically oriented. However, the metamorphosis of societal attitudes at large remains as a reality.

The phenomenon has certainly complex roots, that can be traced to feelings of helplessness that the public opinion polls tell about (CBOS, 1993-July 1994), Polish myths about the "rich western society", attitudes that the communist era has successfully developed in people: that the "rich" should give to the "poor" who just have to take and nothing more, etc. However, the picture again reminds of the proud Native American cultures, that nevertheless gave up their dignity when western missionaries came to preach them about the white man's conditions. The Polish people have long believed that the western god is more powerful: his or her disciples are rich, happy and young. When the Wall fell down (who knows? maybe it was the western god who performed this miracle?), the Easterners resolved to abide, "open their minds", and this is precisely a question of faith, to which I shall return again in the conclusions. According to the framework presented in this paper they do this also for the reasons of their autonomous need of a religion. They not only want all the goods, but the whole symbolic sphere that is associated with them. Who would care so much for a Rolex watch if it was not part of a highly developed and attractive symbolic lifestyle?

Conclusions: Toward syncretic-polyphonic management learning

In modern society, religious needs were (and still are) being fulfilled in a superficial way by organization and especially the business organization. The modern religion of business

administration with economic rationality as god has long served as a surrogate for deeper spiritual experiences. It is now being transferred to Eastern Europe, trying to find a model for organization of social life after the fall of communism. This process I have here described as mission. The uni-directional communication is not only an imperfection and a relative loss of values that the East Europeans could offer their western neighbors. The Westerners probably need these values as much as the Easterners need western experiences. The fact that the communication is so intense (as the metaphor of "mission" suggests) and uni-directional also means that we all are likely to lose some important values forever. If the East Europeans convert, there will be nowhere to look for the values given up and nobody to learn from.

Another important conclusion concerns the attitudes to democracy. People in Poland associate the free market with democracy. When they finally recognize the current situation as colonization and start to resist it, they may refuse to believe in democracy as well. The attitudes toward both free market and democracy are already declining, as public opinion surveys show (CBOS, 1993-July 1994). In a recent survey a majority declared that the Polish democracy was faulty. While 62% said that they in principle were for democracy, as many as 37% considered dictatorship as necessary "in certain cases". The same percentage claimed that they would welcome a "strong person" as Poland's leader (CBOS, 1993/7:5-18). This parallels with people's growing disillusion with the free market, as a source of injustice rather than justice, oppression rather than freedom and poverty rather than wealth. The western god can be rejected just as easily as he or she was accepted. Together with the "new rationality" all other values can be refused, among them democracy. The religious metaphor helps to discern this dimension of social reality, and also perhaps provides with a perspective to understand the dynamics that pervades it. Democracy and the culture of organizing of a society are also about faith, and lost faith is not only a consequence of the deteriorating material situation. There is a need to believe common for humans, thus a readiness to trust and to distrust, beyond the obvious. These needs deserve to be

taken more seriously.

Therefore it is of critical importance to rethink the management education project in Eastern Europe. The mission need not, and should not, continue as a crusade. The actors should be reconsidered for future participation: from West's side less profit oriented, more inclined to "learn from the East", and from East's side more oriented to active cooperation. The teaching programs should also be reevaluated and directed more toward joint learning, common construction of a religion including values of East and West that can be shared in the future. This is what I call a "syncretic-polyphonic" religion of business administration, a living construction based on mutual learning. Crusades and colonialism, even if based on strong faith in the "one best way", are hardly seen as advantageous projects by contemporary Western (and Eastern) societies. It is my strong conviction that management learning in Eastern Europe should be urgently reexamined.

ENDNOTES

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1.Speaking of missionaries here, I mean only the lecturers and consultants who come to Poland on behalf of institutions and firms, pursuing well defined and material interests, earning very good money, and coming with ready made "packages" of knowledge and know-how.

There are lecturers who come for entirely different reasons and work together with Polish partners, often in answer to their explicit questions and problems. I do not include them in my category of "missionaries".

2.Modern mission activity is familiar to me mainly through correspondence with a Catholic missionary working in New Guinea.

3.The Pláticas of Br.Bernardino de Sahagún, found by K.P.Pascual Saura and published in 1924 by P.Póu y Martí.