

## **Soteriological education in the system of professional and technical education**

"Work out your salvation with fear and trembling..."

Apostle Paul. "Epistle to the Philippians".

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### **ABSTRACT**

The article reveals the essence of soteriological education, aimed at the salvation of the human immortal soul, in the system of professional and technical education. The components of soteriological education are considered: cognitive, emotional, praxeological, motivational. Pedagogical conditions of soteriological education include the following: dialogic paradigm; person-oriented approach; activity of participants in the educational process; optimal and effective pedagogical (educational) environment; effective and regular pedagogical diagnosis of the level of spirituality (education) of pupils. The methods of soteriological education are defined as: the method of situational control; method of congruence (authenticity) of behavior; method of emotional resonance; personal orientation; method of personal identification; dialogue (polylogue); neurolinguistic programming and reprogramming. The main principles of soteriological education are described: systematicity, creative synergy, conformity to nature, voluntariness, systematicity and continuity of soteriological education, defining faith. The following are the forms of soteriological education: individual, pair, group, collective. A structural and functional [scheme](#) of soteriological education has been built.

**KEYWORDS:** soteriological education, pedagogical components, pedagogical conditions, pedagogical means, methods, principles and forms of pedagogical interaction

Received : 31/01/2024

Revised : 29/02/2024

Accepted : 21/03/2024

**1. Introduction.** One of the possible options for the development of the Ukrainian pedagogical system based on the corresponding paradigm is the spiritual-Christian, humanistic vector of its transformation, based on Christian worldview positions and values. One of the manifestations of the **Christocentric approach** in pedagogy is such a type of spiritual and moral education as **soteriological** (from the Greek **soterion** –salvation, **logos** – word, teaching). It is proposed by us for consideration and analysis in this article. This education, in turn, is based on a **psychocentric approach**, which consists in recognizing the immortal human soul as the greatest personal timeless value, for the salvation of which Jesus Christ offered Himself as a ransom sacrifice for human sins and a sacrifice for the reconciliation of human with God. Soteriological education is especially relevant for the system of vocational and technical education (hereinafter – VTE) in Ukraine, where the level of incoming spirituality is not high enough for one reason or another. On the other hand, high school age is "sensitive to the formation of value orientations as a stable formation of the personality, it is at this age that the worldview is actively formed..." (Potapova, 2008), as well as "the period of moral self-determination of the individual" (Nechyporuk, 2009).

**2. Literature Review.** Serebriak (2004) devoted his dissertation research to the spiritual and moral education of youth. The relevant issues were also reflected in the works of the following scientists: Barylo (2014) considered the current problems of moral and spiritual education of modern youth in the process of studying psychological and pedagogical specialties in pedagogical educational institutions, taking into account new approaches to the implementation of pedagogical research; Beh (2012) revealed the essence of the psychological mechanisms of consciousness and self-awareness, on the basis of which the spiritual values of an individual are formed; Ivanova (2016) revealed the leading aspects of spiritual and moral education of schoolchildren; Kozłowska (2011) substantiated the expediency of the integration of professional and spiritual knowledge-values of students of vocational and technical educational institutions as a pedagogically important process and result of the formation of the creative personality of a specialist with a holistic outlook and a formed system of universal and professional values; Milchevska & Yeromina (2018) analyzed interactive methods of education and identified methods of their application in the process of spiritual and moral education of student youth; Mykhalchuk (2020) revealed the importance of control in managing the process of moral and spiritual education of students in an innovative educational environment; Plivachuk (2016) identified and substantiated the problems of improving the formation of spiritual and moral values of student youth in a modern general educational institution; Shyshkina (2014) revealed the specifics of using information and communication technologies in the educational process as a means of forming spiritual and moral education; Slipchishin (2012) considered the peculiarities of the educational process in a vocational school, the main approaches to moral and spiritual education and modern methods of their implementation. But in these publications, the attention of the authors is not focused on the soteriological component of spiritual and moral education, a coherent system of such soteriological education has not been formed. Our article is designed to fill this gap.

**3. Methodology.** The purpose of the article is to reveal in a concise form the essence, methods and conditions of soteriological education aimed at the salvation of the human soul and to build its structural and functional scheme. The structural-functional method was used during the research.

**4. Results.** Spiritual and moral education involves considering a person, on the one hand, traditionally, as the integrity of biological, social, spiritual, on the other, noological, as a trinity of body-soul-spirit, image and likeness of God. In these hierarchical structures, the biological must be subordinated to the social, which in turn to spiritual, as well as the corporeal to the soul, which in turn also to spiritual. Only under such conditions a person can fully fulfill his purpose as a unique spiritual personality, the essence of which, in our opinion, consists, first of all, in self-actualization and self-realization of the creative potential embedded in him by the Creator and the realization of the Kingdom of God, which is the Kingdom of light, goodness, peace, faith and love.

In its essence, any education is a pedagogical interaction according to a certain methodology and technique between subjects of education, which takes place with a given goal under certain pedagogical conditions in a certain pedagogical environment. Based on these considerations, we will call **soteriological education** (hereinafter – **SE**) systematic, person-oriented, psychocentric, spiritual-moral and humanistic education, aimed at the spiritual transfiguration (transformation) of the individual, at the internalization (inclusion) and appropriation by it of eternal spiritual values with further their exteriorization, which allows to reach the soteriological **Acme** (from the Greek **Acme** – top) or the spiritual level of personality development (according to the classification adopted by us, as opposed to corporeal, corporeal-spiritual or spiritual-corporeal).

Accordingly, we shall call **soteriological Acme** such a state and level of upbringing and spirituality, which allows a person to recognize the main meaning of his life as the salvation of his own immortal soul and to help others in this, and the main vector of his development is spiritual, which is expressed accordingly in cognitive, emotional and praxeological (active) components of the personality, in its entire image and way of life.

A **scientific and systematic approach** to education requires considering it as a systemic multi-component and multi-level socio-pedagogical education, consisting of four components: target, content, operational-activity and analytical-resultative and covers four levels: ontological, epistemological, methodological and praxeological. Based on this, the goal of the SE (its pedagogical ideal) is to recognize the achievement by all pupils of the level of formation of spiritual and moral qualities of the individual, sufficient for them to grasp the Kingdom of God already here on earth, and, therefore, in eternity.

We will choose Christian anthropology, theocentrism, Christian axiology, and Christian humanism as the **philosophical basis of the SE**, the pedagogical context of which has been considered in (Totskyi, 2011a).

The **socio-pedagogical tools of the SE** include sacred art in active and passive forms; IT-technologies and the Internet; charitable and philanthropic activities; connections with the spiritual environment and spiritual persons.

We recognize internalization, transformation and reprogramming (including neurolinguistic – the so-called NLR) as the main **psychological mechanisms** of pedagogical interaction of **SE**.

A **psychocentric approach** in education requires considering the human soul not only as the main value, which has a timeless dimension, but also as the main subject of education, on which all pedagogical efforts should be focused. Therefore, in accordance with the three spheres of the human soul (mental, emotional and volitional), we will also consider three **components of soteriological (psychocentric) education**: cognitive, emotional and praxeological, which will be supplemented with **motivational**, which is, in fact, the starting point in education, the basis for other components (subsystems). The above-mentioned components are, of course, most closely interconnected and mutually condition each other. Let's dwell on them now in more detail.

Undoubtedly, without knowledge, exchange of knowledge, transfer of this or that information that has educational significance, any kind of education is not possible. After all, a person cannot strive for some ideals, be guided by some principles, without knowing either these principles or ideals. In the **cognitive component**, the **SE** envisages a broad familiarization of pupils with various worldviews and religious systems. Among them, those who do not promise easy roads and in the matter of soul salvation do not allow any ambiguities or relaxations, compromises in the spiritual struggle (reincarnation, purgatory, apokastasis, posthumous disintegration of the soul, etc.) deserve attention first of all. A person must clearly realize that he bears personal responsibility for his every deed and every word and thought, as a result of which he may find himself after death in a place of eternal suffering and spiritual death – hell.

The cognitive component of SE should include regular reading of biblical texts both in school and extracurricular activities, familiarization with the life of spiritual people, the biblical Decalogue and the principles and ideals of Christian humanism. The result of the cognitive component should be solidly assimilated knowledge of moral principles, norms, ideals necessary for the salvation of the soul and the corresponding spiritual and moral reflection of personal consciousness.

The next, **emotional component of SE** is no less, if not more, important than the cognitive one. After all, to a greater extent, a person and his value orientation is determined by what his heart is and what it is filled with, what values and emotions dominate it. Therefore, the main task of the emotional component in the SE is to instill in the pupils love – for God, near and far, people, nature, Motherland, language, faith, church, culture. At the same time, it is necessary to remember that love is generated or nurtured only by love. The emotional component of the SE should include visiting museums of sacred art, concerts of sacred music or singing, religious services or gatherings of believers, staging amateur plays or concerts and evenings of spiritual direction (Christian poetry), etc. The result of the emotional component

should be moral feelings, needs, values and value orientations, which a person will seek to satisfy in his life, finding the meaning of life.

The next, **praxeological or active component of SE**, can be said is a product of a person's volitional sphere, his aspirations, desires, decisions, actions and is manifested in his actions, behavior, life activities. In turn, to a greater extent, a person's actions are determined by his system of values rooted in the mind and heart. It is necessary to improve the praxeological component by accustoming pupils to acts of charity, their wide involvement in various charitable actions, fostering an active humanistic attitude to the surrounding reality, achieving humility and compassion in behavior. The result of the praxeological component should be moral beliefs, habits and moral behavior, which will be manifested and implemented in daily practice and life activities.

Now we will consider the **pedagogical conditions of SE**, the structure of which we borrowed to a greater extent from (Holoborodko, 2008). Among these should be attributed, first of all, the **dialogic paradigm** of pedagogical interaction between subjects of education and the pedagogical environment formed on the basis of such interaction. This paradigm assumes real equal or partnership relations, based on sincere and mutual love of all subjects of the educational process, united by a common desire to save their immortal souls and to help others in this. It also allows maximum self-actualization and self-realization of all participants of the educational process in the professional and spiritual-moral dimension, everyone to be listened to, heard, understood and supported in a timely manner (Totskyi, 2012).

The next pedagogical condition of SE should be a **person-oriented approach** in education, which allows to take into account the individual psychological features and spiritual and moral development of each pupil at the beginning and in the process of education as much as possible. This approach should be implemented in appropriate forms of pedagogical interaction (individual conversation, pedagogical observation, individual creative work, individual practical task, debates and questionnaires, etc.).

The pedagogic conditions of the SE also include the **activity of the participants in the educational process** (Holoborodko, 2008), which should be encouraged and stimulated in every possible way by both the educational and the pupil body of like-minded colleagues who are sincerely interested in the salvation of all souls.

Another pedagogical condition of SE should be an **optimal and effective pedagogical (educational) environment**, formed on the basis of pedagogical interaction between the educational and production staff and each pupil, the educational team and within the latter with the moral support of the head of the educational institution with broad and active involvement in it as well as parent collective on the basis of creative and constructive synergy (interaction). And, of course, this should also include the professionalism of teachers, which includes the professionalism of knowledge (PK), the professionalism of pedagogical communication (PC), the professionalism of improvement (PI), or ultimately their professional skill, the development of which is disclosed in (Kovalchuk, 2011).

In our opinion, an important, if not the most important, pedagogical condition of SE (as well as any education), is also an **effective and regular pedagogical diagnosis of the level of spirituality (education) of pupils**, as a result of which each pupil can be assigned to the next level of spirituality: corporeal, corporeal-spiritual, spiritual-corporeal or spiritual. From such a diagnosis, which should be repeated at least once every six months and which allows you to establish a personal level of spirituality,

the SE should actually begin. The initial, intermediate, and final (summary) diagnosis of the input, intermediate, and final parameters of spirituality, respectively, consists of three components. The **first component** is a questionnaire with 10 questions, some of which must be answered succinctly according to ready-made options (test-questionnaire) or in an extended version with their justification. These questions are:

Do you allow the existence of God, angels, demons?

Do you allow the existence of an immortal soul, an eternal heaven, and an eternal hell?

Do you believe (firmly believe) in the existence of God, angels, demons, an immortal soul, an eternal heaven and an eternal hell?

How often do you read the Bible and pray? – regularly; not regularly; I don't read at all (I don't pray).

How often do you attend religious services (meetings of believers)?

Do you think about the meaning of your life? Other people? – yes, constantly; yes, sometimes; almost never; not at all.

Are you worried about the salvation of your soul? Other people?

What is better for you: to be kind or to be rich? Why?

What is worse for you: being offended or offending someone? Why?

Are you ready to save another at the cost of your own life? Who exactly?

The **second component** of the initial diagnosis is a questionnaire with one question: What kind of person do you consider yourself to be: corporeal, corporeal-spiritual, spiritual-corporeal or spiritual? Why?

The **third component** is a questionnaire with ten positive personal spiritual and moral characteristics (for example: kindness, sincerity, responsibility, meekness, restraint, generosity, compassion, honesty, mercy, humility, etc.). According to these parameters, each pupil should rate himself on a ten-point system. The maximum number of points for each questionnaire is 100, and for three, respectively, 300. Moreover, according to the second and third questionnaires, parents of pupils can also be involved in the survey, deriving the average result from the two answer options later. Based on the answers to the questions of these three questionnaires, an initial rating of the personal level of spiritual or soteriological IQ – SQ (SQ – Spirituality Quotient – coefficient of spirituality) is established, which should not exceed 300.

At the level of intermediate and final diagnosis on the second and third questionnaires (for greater objectivity and more active involvement of all pupils in the pedagogical interaction), teaching colleagues also give their evaluations (it is possible anonymously) and, of course, the teacher. On the basis of these three assessments, an average indicator is derived, which is taken into account when ranking the personal level of spirituality. The number of points up to **75** corresponds to the corporeal level of development, from **76** to **150** – the corporeal-spiritual level, from **151** to **225** – the spiritual-corporeal level, from **226** to **300** – the spiritual level.

Such and similar diagnostic measures (at least once every six months) should, in our opinion, draw the attention of children to the problem of saving their own souls, to their spiritual development, and also help the educational and production staff to adequately establish the personal level of spirituality of each pupil and effectively monitor its dynamics in the process of upbringing. At the same time, ensuring success in the spiritual and moral formation of the individual and SE in order to achieve the soteriological Acme by the pupils (at a certain stage, quantity must turn into quality).

Now we will consider the methods, principle and forms of SE. Among the **methods of SE** should be included such methods that help every young person to realize, first of all, for themselves, all the dangers of sinful behavior and cause a sincere desire to change spiritually and morally develop and improve. We include the following as such methods.

The **method of situational control**, which consists in the fact that any pedagogical situation, both programmed and spontaneous, regardless of its format, form and content, democratic and transparent atmosphere in the educational team, should always be under the organizational control of the educator and not while crossing certain frameworks and boundaries established exclusively by him.

The **method of congruence (authenticity) of behavior** involves sincere, open and frank relations between all subjects of the educational process under any circumstances, which is manifested both in verbal and non-verbal (pantomime, facial expressions, prosody, eye contact, appearance, communication distance, etc.) communications, as well as in the correspondence of thoughts, feelings, words and actions among themselves.

The **method of emotional resonance** consists in the teacher's indifference to his duties as an educator of saved people, in his sincere interest in the achievement of this goal by each pupil, in the sincerity, selflessness and honesty of his position. This cannot fail to find an appropriate positive response (emotional resonance, first of all) in the souls and hearts of pupils in the process of pedagogical interaction, in school and extracurricular activities.

**Personal orientation** involves treating each pupil as a unique, spiritual, whole and self-sufficient being, created in the image and likeness of God, for whom the Lord in terrible agony gave His life on the Calvary Cross. The main purpose of which is, therefore, the salvation of one's own soul and the



maximum assistance and help to each neighbor in this holy and most important task of one's life based on Christian unconditional and selfless love.

The **method of personal identification** consists in the constant, purposeful and persistent guidance of both the teacher and each pupil towards a personal individual psychological identification with the most authoritative person in a spiritual and moral sense and projecting his deeds and actions on his own behavior and vice versa. Everyone should choose such a pattern of behavior and activity for himself, and in difficult, problematic cases under any extreme circumstances, he should check with his ideal: how would he act in this situation? Of course, for any Christian, such a model should be, first of all, our Savior and Lord, the Son of God and the Son of Man, Jesus Christ.

**Dialogue (polylogue)** involves the solution of all problematic pedagogical tasks or situations on the basis of only dialogical (polylogical) solutions with mandatory consideration of the opinion of each teacher, pupil and, if necessary, the parent team.

**Neurolinguistic programming and reprogramming (NLPR)** as a method of education takes into account the extremely important influence of verbal communication on the psyche and behavior of people, which should be taken into account as much as possible in school and extracurricular activities. Neurolinguistic influence on the souls of pupils should be manifested not only in verbal means of education (conversations, debates, lectures, oral or written surveys, etc.), but also in the creation of an appropriate verbal soteriological environment, both in an educational institution and at home with the support of parents. The last type can include, as an example, the decoration of home spaces with such inscriptions that would remind a person of his high vocation, purpose and mission: I don't want to sin anymore. I will sin no more. I will definitely do at least one good deed today. Sin is death to the soul. Remember eternity. My goal is the salvation of my soul.

Now we will briefly consider the **main principles of the SE**. We include the following among them: systematicity, creative synergy, conformity to nature, voluntariness, systematicity and continuity of upbringing, defining faith.

The **principle of systematicity** involves considering each subject of the educational process and this process itself as a system of integrated hierarchically structured subsystems with interconnected, mutually determining and mutually conditioned structural and functional components, which must necessarily be taken into account in the comprehensive solution of pedagogical tasks to achieve pupils' soteriological Acme.

The **principle of creative synergy** consists in the organization of pedagogical interaction in such a way that the creative cooperation of all its participants produces a result that exceeds their total effectiveness and efficiency when they would act alone.

The **principle of conformity to nature** implies that all educational measures must necessarily take into account, shape and encourage the natural innate predispositions of a person as the image and



likeness of God, to goodness, mercy, altruism, and complimentaryness; the desire and ability to see and maximally develop this image in each pupil.

The **principle of voluntariness** is that the personal participation of pupils in the educational activities of the SE should take place only on a voluntary basis with prior familiarization of the parents, which in turn excludes any coercion and violence against the pupil's personality.

The **principle of systematicity and continuity of SE** means that it can be successful with systematic, persistent, purposeful, continuous pedagogical interaction during the entire stay of pupils in an educational and pedagogical institution and maintaining benevolent and fraternal relations between mentors and former pupils even after they have completed their studies.

The **principle of determining faith** assumes that the success of the SE as a whole and of each pedagogical event in particular is determined, first of all, by the boundless faith of the head of the educational institution, the entire educational team, and each pupil in the possibility of spiritual and moral rebirth, rebirth for a saved life, their achievement of the level of soteriological Acme and the salvation of the soul as a result of such upbringing.

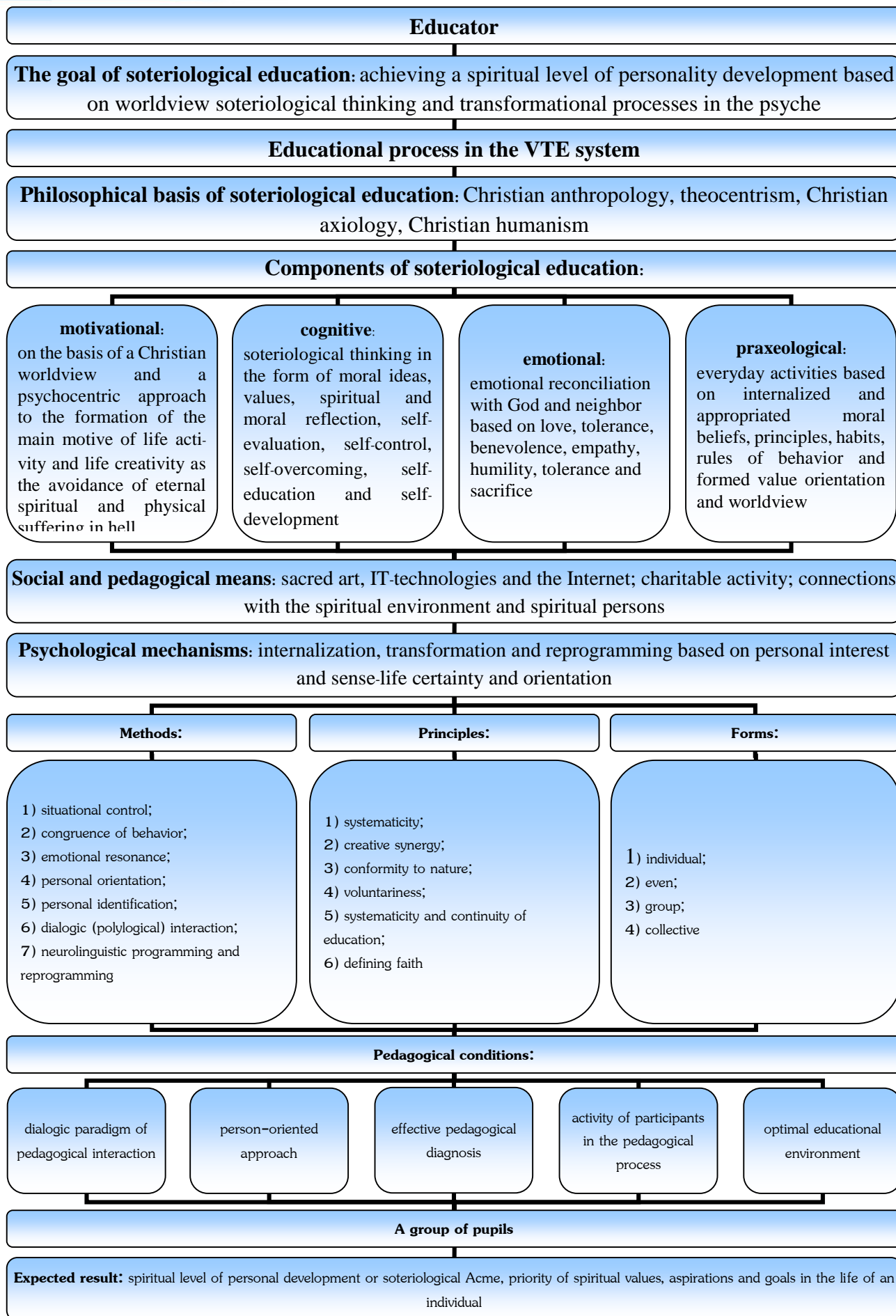
We include the following **forms of SE**: individual, pair, group, collective. The **individual form** of education includes direct pedagogical interaction between the teacher and the pupil; to **pair** and **group** – when pedagogical tasks are solved by pupils in cooperation and interaction at the level of a micro-team (from two and up to six pupils, respectively), and to **collective** – when the pedagogical process takes place with the active participation of the entire educational team (educational group or class).

Based on the above structure of the **SE**, we will build its structural and functional scheme, which we will depict in Fig. 1. Moreover, some structural components and elements of its compositional construction and the very configuration of this scheme were borrowed by us from (Holoborodko, 2008), (Nechyporuk, 2009), (Potapova, 2008).

**5. Conclusions.** Thus, the result of our research was the construction of a structural and functional scheme of the SE aimed at saving the human immortal soul and helping others in this, based on the synthesis of both borrowed elements and our own original development. It should be noted that SE is possible and necessary, in our opinion, to be implemented not only in the VTE system of Ukraine.

It seems self-evident that a spiritless ("corporeal") person cannot cultivate spirituality in others. Therefore, the spiritual and religious aspect of teachers' training (self-training) for SE, considered in (Totyskiy, 2011b), is gaining special weight, importance and significance. And, of course, the Best Educator is, of course, God Himself, the Creator of all things, "Who wants all people to be saved and come to know the truth" (Bible, 2009).

But, certainly, also the fact that first of all God educates those who trust in Him with all their hearts and seek and know Him in all their paths, ways and roads, avoiding or resisting evil (first of all in themselves) and revealing and creating (under God's guidance and with the fear of God) Good, and, therefore, also their salvation (Bible, 2009). This is exactly what the SE of youth is meant to teach and promote, first of all.



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