



„Od konfliktu do komunii”.
Wokół relacji międzywyznaniowych w Polsce
[“From Conflict to Communion”.
Around Interdenominational Relations in Poland].
Eds. J. BUDNIAK, J. KEMPA. Katowice:
Księgarnia św. Jacka, 2020, 174 pp.

The presented publication refers a document entitled *From Conflict to Communion. Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017. The Report of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity*. Even though the text itself constituted a preparation for the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, it has not lost its relevance. The Jubilee came to an end, but the ecumenical cooperation and the coexistence of the Churches is a continuing reality. The ideas included in the document are alive, and the celebration of the Reformation has highlighted even more fundamental theses of unity and interdenominational dispute. Within this context what becomes necessary, above all, is to boldly look into the future in order to properly notice the Holy Spirit leading the Church. This, of course, does not mean ignoring the disputes of the past and the various tensions of the present. It is, however, about a positive look on the prospects of an ever-deeper communion. In the Polish reality, it gains a particular significance in the context of Silesia, especially Upper and Cieszyn Silesia, where a significant part of the largest Lutheran community in Poland lives. That is why the subject matter under considerations is not theoretical, but close to people and practical.

The importance of the presented publication is emphasized by a great many bishops' statements. The author of the first one is Metropolitan Archbishop of Katowice Wiktor Skworc, PhD. He refers to the established ecumenical traditions of the Catholic Diocese of Katowice, in which already in the documents of the First Synod (1975) a resolution entitled *Ecumenism in the Church of Katowice* was included. The Archbishop emphasizes the importance of common prayer and testimony of faith. The voice of the Bishop of the Katowice Diocese of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession, Marian Niemiec, PhD, who draws attention to the importance of celebrating the anniversary of the Reformation in the spirit of ecumenical cooperation, is valuable. In turn, Rev. dr. hab. Jacek Kempa from the Faculty of Theology of the University of Silesia, author of the introduction (pp. 11–14), points out the need to determine the state, achievements and plans of ecumenism, respecting the emotions and different sensitivity of the particular participants to the dialogue. Polish experience in this field, despite difficult moments, has its good history.

The proper publication is composed of three parts, each containing articles by a Lutheran and a Catholic. Part One is entitled "Contemporary Look at Rev. Dr. Martin Luther". It opens with an inspiring text on "Luther's Bible as the Light on the Path of the Reformation Church" (pp. 17–28), by Rev. Prof. dr. hab. Manfred Uglorz of the Christian Theological Academy. It shows the way of Martin Luther with the Word of the Lord: the experience of the depth of this Word led him to an inner freedom and trust in God. This personal experience motivated him to work on the German edition of the Bible. This is even more fascinating when we consider the fact that Luther translated the New Testament in ten weeks. At the same time, the dissemination of this German Bible for many people led to the spiritual search and to the release of a new quality of faith (through listening). What is more, it contributed to the development of the German language and thus had a culturally significant impact.

The second article of the first part is a text by Rev. Prof. dr. hab. Zygfryd Glaeser of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Opole, entitled "Martin Luther Read Once Again. Discussion in the Context of the Celebration of 500 years of the Reformation" (pp. 29–55). The author shows in an interesting way the gradual transition from distrust, condemnation and the use of aggressive-polemic language to a more positive view, which began to appear in the 19th century. The turn of the 19th and 20th century was characterized by a polemical style, however devoid of the hermeneutics of attack. Much credit here goes to Sebastian Merkle, but especially to Joseph Lortz, who was not afraid to point out the intra-Church causes of the Reformation. What is significant within the Catholic-Lutheran debate, are the statements of the Popes who encouraged

research on Luther and did not run away from pointing out what was valuable in his work. The result of all this was the rapprochement of the Churches through specific documents of the Holy See or official speeches of the Popes, such as *Letter on the 500th Anniversary of Martin Luther's Birthday*, *The Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, *Encyclical Letter "Ut Unum Sint"*, and the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. Both Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI (which does not exclude his critical attitude, for example with regard to the Sola Scriptura doctrine) and Francis', especially through his participation in the prayer in Lund, Sweden, on October 31, 2016, contributions are also valuable.

When analyzing important documents dedicated to the person of Luther, we cannot overlook the text entitled *Martin Luther — Witness of Jesus Christ*, published in 1983, which is an expression of the search for “ways to a community of faith.” Within this context it is extremely helpful to acknowledge the sincerity of Luther's search for given justice. Similarly, the already mentioned document *From Conflict to Communion. The Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017* points to Luther's entrustment to the grace carrying justification and the need for man to turn to God. After all, it is important for both Lutherans and Catholics. It is, therefore, valuable to conclude that, following the renewal of Catholic theology, “Catholics today can appreciate the postulates of Luther's reform and interpret them more openly than before” (No. 28). The work of Catholic theologians, especially Johannes Willebrands, Walter Kasper, Kurt Koch, Thomas Sarory, Charles Boyer, Yves Congar, and Alfons Nossol, contributes to this view.

The second part of the publication is entitled “Common Testimony as the Way to Unity”. It opens with the text “50 Years of Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue” (pp. 59—70) by the Lutheran Bishop Prof. dr. hab. Marcin Hintz of the Christian Theological Academy. It is a valuable historical synthesis of the five stages of ecumenical rapprochement. The first one included the period from 1967 to 1972, when the Malta Report, entitled *The Gospel and the Church*, stated that a consensus on justification was possible. The second stage covered the years 1972—1985, when important works entitled the Eucharist and the Ministry in the Church were created, as well as the *Declaration on the Way and Facing Unity — Models, Forms and Phases of Catholic-Lutheran Church Fellowship*. The third phase, years 1985—1995, was centred around the work on the question of justification, which resulted in a study document entitled *Church and Justification. Understanding the Church in the Light of the Doctrine of the Justification. Report on the Third Phase of the International Lutheran-Rome-Catholic Dialogue* (1993). The fourth phase encompassed years 1995—2006. The

International Commission addressed the topics of apostolicity and the Eucharist. A special milestone in this phase was the signing of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* in 1999. Now, since 2009, there has been a fifth phase of the dialogue, which includes the document *From Conflict to Communion*. Taking all this into account, Bishop Marcin Hintz also points out specific contemporary challenges: differences in the approach to some ethical issues, overcoming the cooling of dialogue after the publication of the document *Dominus Iesus* by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, a common understanding of the causes of the Reformation and an analysis of the paths of both Churches.

The search for unity involves a difficult dialogue and the resolution of disputed issues. Within this context, the text of Rev. Prof. dr. hab. Wojciech Hanc from Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, *Interdenominational Doctrinal Dialogues as a Significant Element of Ecumenical Challenges* (pp. 71–108), which shows the multidimensional forms of the meeting for the search for unity, as mentioned in the documents of the Holy See (e.g., *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*) and in the 2001 Ecumenical Charter (*Guidelines for the Growing Cooperation among the Churches in Europe*) is valuable. Among the dialogues undertaken, the bilateral and multilateral ones, both universal and local, must be indicated. The latter help to recognize more deeply the diversity of the particular communities. The fruit of this mutual encounter and dialogue is the *Lima Document* of 1982, proclaimed by the “Faith and Order” Commission of the World Council of Churches, on Baptism, the Eucharist and the Ministry (within this context it is important to remember that Catholic theologians are also members of this Commission) or the multilateral declaration *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*.

When speaking of ecumenical dialogue, we cannot overlook the specific topics, that is, baptism and matrimony. The fruit of the common search in Poland is the *Declaration of the Churches in Poland at the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, which was created on the basis of previous research and documents. The project *Christian Matrimony of People of Different Denomination. Declaration of the Churches in Poland at the Threshold of the Third Millennium* of 2011 is still awaiting evaluation. It is because according to the Catholic procedures the document requires the approval of the Holy See. In addition to the above-mentioned dialogues, other topics are being discussed. Rev. Wojciech Hanc quotes the *Appeal of Polish Churches for the Protection of Creation* (2013), the *Appeal of Polish Churches for Respect of the Celebration of Sunday* (2015), the *Message from the Churches in Poland Concerning Refugees* (2016) and the ongoing talks between the Roman Catholic Church and the Seventh-day Adventists Church.

The third part of the presented book, historical, is entitled “Attempts at Unity in Poland”. In the first article, the Sandomierz Agreement — 1570 (pp. 111—117), Prof. dr. hab. Janusz Tadeusz Maciuszko shows the importance of Polish solutions to denomination issues. Analyzing the subject of this Agreement, he draws attention to complex political issues (especially the maintenance of the Polish-Lithuanian Union) and the heterogeneity of the Protestant community (Lutheran and Reform, Czech Brethren) in terms of theological provenance and organization. Finally, the Agreement was signed during the Synod in Sandomierz on April 14, 1570. Its importance is focused on the possibility of agreement despite confessionalization and the community of the altar and the pulpit between the Protestant Churches. The significant involvement of lay Protectors of the Reformation can be seen here.

The second text is “*Colloquium Charitativum* — Catholics, Lutherans and Calvinists in Pursuit of Unity of Faith and Religious Peace” (pp. 118—134) by Rev. dr. hab. Henryk Olszar from the Faculty of Theology of the University of Silesia. The author takes up the topic of an important European interdenominational meeting convened on the initiative of the Catholic bishops to Toruń from August 28th to November 21, 1645 in order to have a fraternal conversation for better understanding. It was a pioneering event, taking into account the context of the then religious and political disputes. Despite different evaluations of this event and the subsequent bloody events in Toruń in 1724, the *Colloquium Charitativum* is a signpost for the ecumenical movement, in which a tolerant and open dialogue between participants representing different denominations is essential.

The whole publication is crowned by a text by Rev. Prof. dr. hab. Józef Budniak of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Silesia, “Towards a Summary of the Celebration of 500 years of the Reformation in Poland” (pp. 135—156). The author points out first of all the main lines of the document *From Conflict to Communion*: common responsibility for the breakup, the need for action to heal the memory, common striving for unity and the imperatives for ecumenical dialogue (perspective of unity, own change, search for visible unity, rediscovery of the power of the Gospel, testimony on God’s grace). Additionally, Rev. Budniak enumerates the important moments of the celebration of the 500 years of the Reformation. Not without significance are the tangible fruits of the Jubilee in Poland: the ecumenical Polish translation of the Bible and the video post.

The attached annexes (pp. 159—174) are also of value: *Joined in Hope. Common Catholic-Lutheran Commemoration of 500 Years of the Reformation. His Excellency Cardinal Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promoting Christian Unity, Rev. dr. Martin Junge, Secretary General*

of the Lutheran World Federation (11.10.2016); Common Message of the Synods of the Evangelical-Augsburg Church and the Evangelical-Reformed Church for the Jubilee of the 500 Years of the Reformation announced at the meeting in Cieszyn (15.10. 2016); *Open Letter of the three Evangelical Churches in Poland on How the Sejm will process the draft resolution Commemorating the 500 Years of the Reformation; Common Statement of the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for the Promoting Christian Unity at the end of the year of joint commemoration of the Reformation* and two addresses of Pope Francis during the pilgrimage to Geneva on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the World Council of Churches (June 21, 2018).

The publication *“From Conflict to Communion”. Around the Interdenominational Relations in Poland* is a valuable Polish theological work. The theological and historical issues taken up show the importance of ecumenical dialogue in our Homeland, whose origins must be seen as early as in the 16th and 17th centuries. The particular authors of the texts, within the scope of their competence and with ease of writing, lead the reader to a deep reflection on ecumenism in many of its dimensions and motivate to intensify the activities for mutual knowledge of one another, hearing one another and cooperation with one another. The inspirational climate of the publication is valuable, which reveals the real atmosphere of Polish ecumenism, which is particularly important in the context of the majority character of the Roman Catholic Church.

Reading the presented book and looking at the Polish interdenominational reality, we can formulate the following postulates: spreading the history regarding the Polish interdenominational initiatives over the past centuries, showing the theological progress of ecumenical rapprochement, showing the biblical and theological basis of ecumenism, motivating further research. The particular authors provoke Christian Churches to engage even more seriously in theological explorations and motivate the faithful to mutual openness at the levels of parishes and local communities. The latter is served by an interesting and simple language of these texts. Ultimately, we may wish that the book entitled *“From Conflict to Communion”. Around Interdenominational Relations in Poland* becomes an inspiration for Polish ecumenism in the next decade of the 21st century.

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