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The Distanced Closeness The Model of Ecumenical Relations between Catholics and Protestants – Sociological Contexts

Abstract

The article deals with the nature of ecumenical relations between Catholics and Protestants. In order to grasp their specificity, they are compared with everyday relations which are not focused on building religious unity between these Christians. This analysis served to reconstruct the model of ecumenism presented on the websites of Catholic weeklies. Additionally, a reflection has been undertaken on the possibility of supporting the ecumenical movement by these services. The analysis is conducted in the sociological perspective on the basis of empirical studies of the content of the Internet services of the Catholic weekly magazines "Gość Niedzielny" and "Niedziela". Content analysis was applied as a research method, and the texts dedicated to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation were studied. This selection of empirical material resulted from the fact that ecumenical themes are rarely taken up in the Catholic press, and the jubilee caused greater interest in them. The sources used were also found research on interfaith relations. The analysis shows that relations between Catholics and Protestants are close and characterised by openness, but they are also marked by distance and remembrance of a difficult history. Moreover, the model of ecumenism promoted by the websites is superficial and concentrates, among other things, on its practical aspect at the expense of its spiritual and theological dimension. The websites of Catholic weekly newspapers, on the other hand, face a hitherto untapped opportunity to support the ecumenical movement.

Keywords: Catholicism, Protestantism, ecumenism, content analysis, websites of Catholic weeklies.

Zdystansowana bliskość. Model relacji ekumenicznych katolików i protestantów – konteksty socjologiczne

Abstrakt

Artykuł dotyczy natury relacji ekumenicznych katolików i protestantów. Dla uchwycenia ich specyfiki są one porównane z relacjami codziennymi, które nie koncentrują się na budowaniu jedności wyznaniowej między tymi chrześcijanami. Analiza ta posłużyła do zrekonstruowania modelu ekumenizmu prezentowanego w serwisach internetowych tygodników katolickich. Dodatkowo podjęta została refleksja nad możliwością wspierania ruchu ekumenicznego przez te serwisy. Analiza jest prowadzona w perspektywie socjologicznej w oparciu o badania empiryczne zawartości serwisów internetowych dwóch katolickich tygodników: "Gość Niedzielny" i "Niedziela". Zastosowaną metodą badawczą jest analiza treści, a badaniu poddano teksty poświęcone jubileuszowi 500-lecia Reformacji. Taki wybór materiału empirycznego wynikał z tego, że tematyka ekumeniczna jest rzadko podejmowana w prasie katolickiej, a jubileusz spowodował większe nią zainteresowanie. Wykorzystanymi źródłami były również badania zastane nad relacjami międzywyznaniowymi. Przeprowadzona analiza pokazuje, że relacje katolicko-protestanckie są bliskie i charakteryzuje je otwartość, jednak są również naznaczone dystansem i pamięcią o trudnej historii. Ponadto model ekumenizmu promowany przez serwisy internetowe jest powierzchowny i koncentruje się m.in. na jego praktycznym aspekcie, kosztem jego duchowego i teologicznego wymiaru. Natomiast przed stronami internetowymi tygodników katolickich stoi niewykorzystana dotąd szansa na wspieranie ruchu ekumenicznego.

Slowa kluczowe: katolicyzm, protestantyzm, ekumenizm, analiza treści, serwisy internetowe katolickich tygodników.

Relations between Catholics and Protestants undertaken in ecumenical activities are the subject of this article. These include ecumenical relations, i.e. interpersonal relations, the task of which is to build the denominational unity between Catholics and Protestants (in this case). They differ from everyday relations, which are characterised by a different purpose and are actualised in the mutual contacts between those Christians. In the article, both types of bonds will be compared and the model of ecumenism presented in the websites of Catholic weeklies will be additionally reconstructed on their basis. A consequence of these analyses will also be a reflection on the possibility of supporting the ecumenical movement by these services.

Articles dedicated to the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation published in these services constitute the empirical material used in this inference. The focus was not put on the anniversary itself, but articles dedicated to it in order to address mentioned issues were used. This proceeding results from the fact that ecumenical issues are rarely addressed in the Catholic press. This is already confirmed by a superficial examination of its printed and electronic content. This incidence means that the research of websites, which would be dedicated to ecumenical issues, would have to include queries from a long period. The 500th anniversary of the Reformation brings these issues into focus, as it resulted in relatively frequent coverage of ecumenical issues on Catholic websites.

The interest in the specificity of ecumenical relations in connection with the topic of web services stems from the fact that the documents of the Catholic Church have repeatedly indicated the importance of these relations. Their continuous diagnosis is necessary, especially in the context of the current debate on the possibility of intercommunion. Moreover, nowadays, the Internet is one of the main channels of communication and can also shape ecumenical relations. In addition, its popularity is constantly growing and newspapers are moving their services online. This migration is confirmed by research on the readership of Poles. Between 2014 and 2016, the percentage of printed press readers declined (from 66% to 59%) in favour of online (from 38% to 41%). It is estimated that there only digital editions will be existing by 2025. Religious websites are mainly searched for information about the life of the parish (43%), the Church (40%), reflections and articles on religious topics (35%).

1. Research method

This article is situated in the field of sociology. It belongs to the pool of few studies focused on ecumenical relations presented from the perspective of this discipline.⁶ Content analysis is the research method applied in the article. It is used in studying various messages – films, advertisements, letters, expert opinions, documents, postcards, and websites.⁷ The method helps to find answers to the questions: "who says, what somebody says, to whom, why, how, and what is its effect."⁸

¹ Suffice it to recall here the Council's Decree on Ecumenism entitled "Unitatis redintegratio".

² Pontifical Council for Social Communications. 2002. "The Church and Internet" no 11 (29/04/2021). https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_20020228_church-internet_en.html#INTRODUCTION; Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. 2020. "The Bishop and Christian unity. An ecumenical vademecum", no 14 (29.04.2021). https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2020/12/04/2012-05a.html.

³ Izabela Koryś, Jarosław Kopeć, Zofia Zasacka, Roman Chymkowski. 2017. *Stan czytelnictwa w Polsce w 2016 roku*. Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 14.

⁴ Tomasz Łysoń. 2020. "Zmieniający się rynek polskich tygodników opinii na początku pandemii COVID-19". Com.Press 3 (2): 71, https://compress.edu.pl/e-wydania/item/zmieniajacy-sie-rynek-polskich-tygodnikow-opinii-na-poczatku-pandemii-covid-19 (20/04/2021).

Marta Kołodziejska. 2014. "Korzystanie z religijnych stron i portali Internetowych". CBOS 83: 5.

⁶ Justyna Weber. 2018. "Ekumenizm w opiniach i postawach chrześcijan w Bydgoszczy. Studium socjologiczne". Studia Oecumenica 18: 105.

Małgorzata Lisowska-Magdziarz, 2004. Analiza zawartości mediów. Przewodnik dla studentów. Wersja 1.1. Kraków: Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 31.

⁸ Earl Babbie. 2003. Badania społeczne w praktyce. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 342.

Texts published in the websites of the Catholic weekly magazines "Gość Niedzielny" and "Niedziela" were chosen for the analysis. All texts dedicated to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation published in 2016 and 2017 were examined, as these were the time frames of the event. The number of all texts dedicated to this celebration was 47. They were compiled with the help of a research tool known as the categorization key. It was prepared on the basis of free inspection of the empirical material (inductive approach) and reading of ecumenical literature (deductive approach). The analysis and categorisation unit was a whole article dedicated to the jubilee. This was due to the need to capture the meaning of a given text and its contexts. Hence, one text could be categorised more than once and the percentages of texts do not add up to 100%.

Before we move on to present the results of websites research, we will take a look at the results of the research on the attitudes of Poles towards followers of various religions. We are primarily interested in opinions on relations with Protestants, but we will obtain a more accurate picture when we compare them with opinions of believers of other religions and on the basis of beliefs about the role of religion in ordinary contacts. They will show attitudes towards Protestants in everyday situations – from a different perspective than that of ecumenical relations.

2. From the research on everyday interfaith relations

According to a nationwide survey carried out in 2001, 48% of respondents did not want a Muslim to become their daughter-in-law or son-in-law. Such objections were shared by 39% of respondents towards Judaism, 30% towards Protestants and 24% towards Orthodox Christians. The percentages of opposing opinions were respectively: 39%, 49%, 58%, 63% of the surveyed. In 2007, 55% of Poles did not want their son or daughter to marry a follower of Islam, 47% of Judaism, 38% of the Eastern Orthodoxy and 31% of Protestantism. Marriage to a non-religious person was opposed by 37% of those asked. The lack of opposition was shared by respectively: 45%, 52%, 61%, 69% and 63%. In 2012, 43% of respondents disap-

⁹ In Poland, the jubilee began with a service in the Church of Jesus in Cieszyn on 31/10/2016. The worldwide celebrations were inaugurated (on the same day) with a service in Lund attended by Pope Francis. It ended on 31/10/2017 in Katowice with a service in the Church of the Resurrection.

¹⁰ Lisowska-Magdziarz. 2004. Analiza zawartości mediów, 56.

Walery Pisarek. 1983. Analiza zawartości prasy. Kraków Ośrodek Badań Prasoznawczych, 72–82.

¹² Bogna Wciórka. 2001. "Dystans społeczny czy tolerancja i otwartość? Postawy wobec wyznawców prawosławia, protestantyzmu, judaizmu i islamu". CBOS, BS 80: 2.

 $^{^{\}rm 13}$ Michał Strzeszewski. 2007. "Przejawy dystansu społecznego wobec innych narodów i religii". CBOS, BS 3: 6.

proved of their child's marriage to a follower of Islam, 42% to a Jehovah's Witness, 37% to a member of the Hare Krishna community, 32% to a follower of Buddhism, 28% to Judaism, 24% to Protestantism and 17% to the Eastern Orthodoxy. The percentages of acceptance reached: 40%, 46%, 33%, 49%, 58%, 61%, 72%. 14

Between 2001 and 2012, the reluctance towards the marriage of one's child to a believer of a different religion coming from each of the distinguished denominations decreased, while acceptance rates increased (most slowly in case of Muslims and Protestants). The lowest level of disapproval and at the same time the highest level of approval concerned Christian denominations and non-believers.¹⁵

Respondents primarily accepted non-Catholics in roles other than as spouses of their children. In 2001, 80% of those asked had no objection to a Muslim working with them, 79% to being their neighbour and 70% to being their supervisor at work. Also no objection was expressed by the majority (84%) towards working with a follower of Judaism; to being their neighbour (84%) and their superior at work (76%). With regard to Protestant adherents, these percentages were respectively: 89%, 88%, 82%, and in relation to Orthodox faith: 91%, 92%, 86%. ¹⁶ In 2012, 93% of people asked presented no objection towards an Orthodox believer to be their colleague at work, 95% their neighbour, 91% their boss at work. Slightly smaller numbers of respondents accepted Protestants as: their colleagues at work (87%), neighbours (87%) and bosses (84%). For 85% of the respondents, a follower of Judaism could be a colleague at work, for 88% – a neighbour and for 83% – a boss. It was not difficult for 78% of the respondents to treat a Muslim as a colleague at work, 79% as a neighbour and 74% as a boss. A Buddhist as a colleague at work was approved by 89% of the respondents, a neighbour by 80% and a boss by 77%. For 85% of the respondents, a Jehovah's Witness could be their colleague at work, for 85% a neighbour, 83% a boss at work. Finally, 61% of the respondents saw no obstacles for a member of the Hare Krishna community to be their colleague at work, 60% – a neighbour and 59% – a boss. ¹⁷

In 2007, 74% of respondents expressed that it was important for them that their spouse had similar religious views; for 47% it was important that their friends had the same religious views and 30% of respondents said that such views should be

¹⁴ Beata Rogulska. 2012. "Społeczne postawy wobec wyznawców różnych religii". CBOS/BS130: 4–6.

Rogulska. 2012. "Społeczne postawy wobec wyznawców różnych religii", 4–6; Wciórka. 2001. "Dystans społeczny czy tolerancja i otwartość?", 4–5; Strzeszewski. 2007. "Przejawy dystansu społecznego wobec innych narodów i religii", 5–6.

¹⁶ Wciórka. 2001. "Dystans społeczny czy tolerancja i otwartość?", 2.

¹⁷ Rogulska. 2012. "Społeczne postawy wobec wyznawców różnych religii", 4–6.

represented by people, with whom they spend time occasionally (e.g. on a trip or holiday).¹⁸ Furthermore, religious beliefs (regardless of closeness of a relation) were more important to respondents than such characteristics as nationality, level of education, political views and occupational position.¹⁹

Religion emerged as a significant characteristic of people, with whom respondents interacted on a daily basis. Above all, they wanted their family members to share them and not to associate with dissenters. On the other hand, with regard to further persons and their roles, they had no such expectations. Here they showed great openness in their contacts.

A manifestation of this openness was also the conviction of the respondents in the light of which everyone should have the right to profess such a religion as they wish. In 1999, 92% of respondents admitted this, while 2% of them disagreed. In the same survey, 42% of the respondents rejected the opinion that it would be good for there to be only Catholics in Poland. It was shared by 22% of respondents, and 31% were indifferent.²⁰ In 2014, 88% of respondents saw no difficulty in having a person of a different faith as a neighbour. One in ten (10%) were of the opposite opinion and 2% did not give an answer.²¹

This openness is not matched by declarations regarding personal knowledge of other believers. According to them, in 2012, 94% of those questioned did not know a single member of the Hare Krishna community, 91% of the respondents did not know any Buddhist, 86% – any Muslim, 85% – any Jew, 78% – any Protestant, 67% – any Orthodox Christian, 39% – any Jehovah's Witness. ²² This scale of unfamiliarity was caused by the uneven residence of these people in Poland. Generally, they lived in clusters.

Nationwide research shows that the attitudes of respondents towards Protestants and Orthodox Christians (representatives of Christian denominations) were similar. The percentages of people declaring distance from Protestants were among the lowest. This view was not shared by 61% to 87% of the respondents. The importance of common denominational affiliation was visible in the context of close (family) relations, whereas between 2001 and 2007 the reluctance to marry (by children of the respondents) a Protestant decreased. Respondents had no reservations about collegial and neighbourly relations with them or their superiority at work.

Earlier empirical studies showed that everyday relations between Catholics and Protestants were arranged in different ways. By the end of the 1970s, in

¹⁸ Strzeszewski. 2007. "Przejawy dystansu społecznego wobec innych narodów i religii", 6, 9.

¹⁹ Strzeszewski. 2007. "Przejawy dystansu społecznego wobec innych narodów i religii", 9–10.

²⁰ 1999. "Sekty w Polsce". OBOP, 5.

²¹ Natalia Hipsz. 2014. "Granice tolerancji – stosunek do wybranych grup mniejszościowych". CBOS 149: 2.

²² Rogulska. 2012. "Społeczne postawy wobec wyznawców różnych religii", 2.

Ustroń dominated by Protestants the believers of those two denominations cooperated. The practice of denominational solidarity and maintaining relations only among one's own denomination was no longer in force. It did not play a role in social contacts, and relations with Catholics were usually good. At the beginning of the 1990s, the people of Ustroń prepared a local Catholic and Evangelical electoral list.²³ Other surveys carried out also in the 1990s among Warsaw Lutherans revealed their feelings of discrimination and domination by Catholics, mutual distrust as well as the treatment of Lutherans (because of their religion) as "not entirely" Polish.²⁴

Now, let us proceed to the further part of the article. It will present the results of a study on Catholic websites on the relations between Catholics and Protestants during the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

3. Ecumenical relations between Catholics and Protestants during the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the reformation in the websites of catholic weeklies

The most common issue in the websites concerned the *sense of celebrating* the 500th anniversary of the Reformation indicated by Catholics.²⁵ The percentage of these articles accounted for 44% of the whole number of texts about the anniversary. The authors pointed out there that the 500th anniversary of the Reformation is an opportunity to express common faith in Christ, to pray together for the unity of the Church and to show disapproval of its division.²⁶ It is also an opportunity to continue and celebrate 50 years of Catholic-Lutheran dialogue²⁷ and an opportunity to consider the real reasons for the separation of the Churches. It allows us to look for ways to unite the two faiths²⁸ and to identify what divides them. This latter issue was described as follows: "It is not only disputes of a theological nature. A strong rupture also takes place in the field

²³ Grażyna Kubica-Heller. 1996. *Luteranie na Śląsku Cieszyńskim. Studium historyczno-socjologiczne*. Bielsko-Biała: Wydawnictwo "Głos Życia", 89, 98.

²⁴ Ewa Nowicka, Magdalena Majewska. 1993. *Obcy u siebie. Luteranie warszawscy*. Warszawa: Oficyna Naukowa, 94, 98, 157–158.

²⁵ The categories of the research tool used (categorization key) are in italics. Moreover, the footnotes in this part of the article do not present the entire empirical material, as this would exceed the framework of the research. Single texts have been quoted in order to illustrate this fact.

²⁶ Franciszek na luterańskim szczycie w Szwecji (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3527542. Franciszek-na-luteranskim-szczycie-w-Szwecji/3.

²⁷ Cieszyn: Inauguracja jubileuszu 500-lecia reformacji (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/35-28096.Cieszyn-Inauguracja-jubileuszu-500lecia-reformacji.

²⁸ Kard. Koch o udziale papieża w obchodach reformacji (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3516717.Kard-Koch-o-udziale-papieza-w-obchodach-rocznicy-reformacji.

of moral teaching. It is difficult, for example, to imagine how to conduct a dialogue with the Lutheran communities in Sweden or Norway, which celebrate with a smile on their lips the abandonment of the Gospel and common sense, yielding completely to the most degenerate forms of political correctness. If the 500th anniversary of the Reformation is to lead to something, it must also call such difficulties as they are."²⁹

It was also pointed out that the Reformation Jubilee strengthens the dialogue between the Churches. It will include joint action for social justice and respect for human dignity. This will be done by Caritas Internationalis and the World Service Department of the Lutheran World Federation.³⁰

In the context of the meaning of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, it was explained that, from the perspective of the Catholic Church, this jubilee is a commemoration, not a celebration. In one article one could read: "According to the Council for Ecumenism of the Polish Bishops' Conference, for Catholics the apt key word here is 'commemoration', which includes both gratitude for the gifts brought by the Reformation and repentance for the lost unity, as well as for the suffering resulting from the politicisation of the theological dispute." Another author emphasised that the Catholic Church could not be expected to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in the same way as they jointly celebrated the jubilee of 2000 years of the birth of Christ. The participation of Catholics is a commemoration. It is an acknowledgement of the importance of historical events that continue to shape reality. It is an opportunity to meet to pray together and to talk about possible joint actions resulting from faith in Christ.

A separate dimension of the Reformation anniversary celebrations was the interest of Swedes in Pope Francis and Catholicism. He participated in the celebrations in Lund. According to Catholic commentators, the organisation of his visit and his participation became a priority for everyone. More important even than the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. "It was not the figure of Luther that stood at the centre of events, but the person of the Pope, the head of the Catholic Church. [Bishop] Anders Arborelius even stated that 'one even had the impression that all of Sweden had opened up to the Catholic

²⁹ Reformacja – wspólna sprawa (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3493781.Reformacja-wspolna-sprawa.

³⁰ Franciszek: Priorytetem jest wychodzenie do odrzuconych (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3528603.Franciszek-Priorytetem-jest-wychodzenie-do-odrzuconych/2.

³¹ Katolik a Reformacja (2/02/2021). http://niedziela.pl/artykul/128823/nd/Katolik-a-Reformacja.

³² Reformacja – wspólna sprawa (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3493781.Reformacja-wspol-na-sprawa.

³³ Świętowanie reformacji? (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3493789.Swietowanie-reformacji.

Church."³⁴ The Pope was talked about in the media and an interview with Jesuit Ulf Jonsson appeared in the most popular daily newspaper on four pages and was well received by Catholics and Lutherans.³⁵

Authors of online texts also wrote about the course of the jubilee. The percentage of these articles amounted to 40% of the surveyed texts. They wrote about the places where the celebrations took place and the forms of commemoration. One could read about the thanksgiving³⁶, ecumenical and penitential³⁷ services. The example of Hungary was cited, where Good Friday was declared a public holiday on that occasion³⁸, and numerous cultural events were described: organ and chamber music festivals³⁹, concerts⁴⁰, multimedia exhibitions on the history of the Reformation.⁴¹ However, the focus was on the Swedish celebrations marking the beginning of the Jubilee Year of the Reformation with the participation of the Pope.⁴²

The *ecumenical subject* was another of the most frequently tackled issues. Texts about it accounted for 36% of all analysed articles. They emphasised that ecumenism is realised through dialogue, which is 50 years old. The past 450 years have essentially been marked by divisions and disagreements. Attempts at reconciliation have only been made since the Second Vatican Council.⁴³ One article quotes Pastor Martin Junge: "There was a time, when joint celebrations of the Reformation were unthinkable, although there were already those who met and prayed together for unity and formed ecumenical communities." Other author wrote: "At the beginning of the 1970s, during an agape feast after an ecumenical service in the Dominican church in Cracow, in the presence of Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, a Methodist evangelical jokingly remarked: 'In the 16th century, we

³⁴ Czy warto było jechać do Szwecji? (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3542875.Czy-warto-bylo-jechac-do-Szwecji.

³⁵ Szwecja: katolicyzm w centrum uwagi mediów (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3528588. Szwecja-Katolicyzm-w-centrum-uwagi-mediow.

³⁶ Inauguracja obchodów 500-lecia Reformacji w Polsce (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/gal/spis/3528259.Inauguracja-obchodow-500lecia-Reformacji-wPolsce.

³⁷ Pokuta za reformację (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/1394460.Pokuta-za-reformacje.

³⁸ Na Węgrzech dało się to zrobić: Wielki Piątek będzie wolny od pracy (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3497718.Na-Węgrzech-dalo-sie-to-zrobic-Wielki-Piatek-bedzie-wolny-od.

³⁹ Częstochowa: wielkie dzieła muzyki organowej zabrzmiały w kościele ewangelicko-augsburskim (2/02/2021). http://niedziela.pl/artykul/30415/Czestochowa-wielkie-dziela-muzyki.

⁴⁰ "Bazylika św. Piotra ma bardzo złą akustykę" (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3166449.Bazylika-sw-Piotra-ma-bardzo-zla-akustyke

⁴¹ "Ciężarówka reformacji" jedzie przez Europę (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3535448.Ciezarowka-reformacji-jedzie-przez-Europe.

⁴² Luteranie razem z papieżem (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3519353.Luteranie-razem-z-papiezem.

⁴³ Długa droga do jedności (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3542864.Dluga-droga-do-jedności.

⁴⁴ Pastor Junge: Odpowiedzmy na głód zranionej ludzkości (3/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3528478.Pastor-Junge-Odpowiedzmy-na-glod-zranionej-ludzkości.

would not have left here alive. Back then it was no laughing matter, we fought with swords and sharp words. Today, thanks to the theological dialogue, it has turned out that Catholics and Lutherans do not divide even such a controversial issue as the doctrine of justification."

The dialogue is manifested in the meetings of the leaders of Christian Churches, in common worship services, in reading the Holy Scriptures. Its important expression is the "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification", the documents: "From Conflict to Communion" and "The Sacrament of Baptism as a Sign of Unity. Declaration of the Churches in Poland on the threshold of the third millennium."⁴⁶ There is also an ecumenical dimension to initiatives such as the regular exchange of choirs between the Vatican, Germany and the Church of England, or the lending to Anglicans of the reliquary of the pastoral of Gregory the Great, the evangeliser of England.⁴⁷

An important form of ecumenical activity presented by the services was Pope Francis' participation in the Reformation Jubilee celebrations in Lund. He participated in a joint service and also signed a declaration ("Together in Hope") of cooperation between Caritas Internationalis and the World Service Department of the Lutheran World Federation.⁴⁸ The authors of the texts emphasised that the ecumenical dimension of this meeting presupposes the continuation of dialogue, treating the separation of Christianity as a sin and seeing the common good. This dialogue rejects looking at one another as heretics and beating one another people's breasts.⁴⁹ Common belief in Christ and baptism oblige to repent and seek unity.⁵⁰

According to the authors of online articles, the Lund meeting also strengthened ecumenical cooperation in the social child: helping immigrants, the poor and ecology. One commentator even used the term "NGO-style ecumenism."⁵¹ Finally, the organisation of the visit of Francis also had an ecumenical aspect. It was written about as follows: "Lund is a small town, the invasion of Catholics and Lutherans from all over the world has already been clearly visible for sev-

⁴⁵ Katolik a Reformacja (3/02/2021). http://niedziela.pl/artykul/128823/nd/Katolik-a-Reformacja.

⁴⁶ Cieszyn: inauguracja jubileuszu 500-lecia reformacji (3/02/2021). http://niedziela.pl/artykul/25442/Cieszyn-inauguracja-jubileuszu-500-lecia.

⁴⁷ Katolickie nieszpory w kaplicy Henryka VIII (3/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/2968294.Katolickie-nieszpory-w-kaplicy-Henryka-VIII.

⁴⁸ Wielu protestantów zrozumiało "kim jest Papież" (3/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3533817. Wielu-protestantow-zrozumialo-kim-jest-Papiez.

⁴⁹ Papież zszywa rozdarty świat (15/01/2021). http://niedziela.pl/artykul/127716/nd/Papiezzszywa-rozdarty-swiat.

⁵⁰ Długa droga do jedności (18/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3542864.Dluga-droga-do-jedności.

⁵¹ Długa droga do jedności (18/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3542864.Dluga-droga-do-jedności.

eral days and in the Grand Hotel here all this time the 500th anniversary of the Reformation is being experienced in an atmosphere of ecumenism created by all or almost all the guests. At breakfast, one sees a mixture of Catholic priests, gendarmes, pastors and Lutheran, Swedish and German bishops, where all are sitting together at the table, together preparing the great event in a rather relaxed atmosphere."⁵²

In the texts analysed there was also a theme of the difficulties of ecumenism.⁵³ It has been pointed out that reconciliation is hindered by the "rapprochement of the Protestant Churches with the world" called in one text an uncritical acceptance of today's ideology.⁵⁴ It is the opening of Lutherans "to everything and everyone."55 The acceptance of abortion, homosexual marriage, gender ideology, euthanasia, the ordination of women to the priesthood and the episcopate.⁵⁶ Neither do the divisions within Protestantism itself facilitate the dialogue.⁵⁷ One author wrote thus: "However, we must not close our eyes to the existing obstacles to unity, which cannot be so easily overcome. The communities and churches that have grown out of Protestantism are numerous today and new ones keep appearing (...). Lutheranism is the oldest and leading branch of Protestantism, but only one of many. Protestant communities sometimes differ considerably in doctrine, liturgy and ethics. Even this latest declaration, signed by the pope and the head of the Lutheran World Federation, is not something binding for the 145 individual Lutheran churches that make up this organisation, which also differ on many issues."58

At the end of the day, difficulties in the ecumenical field arise from dogmatic and ethical issues.⁵⁹ The authors of the texts either wrote about them in general terms, using concepts such as: "ethical problems" or "moral differences"⁶⁰ or

⁵² Szwecja: katolicyzm w centrum uwagi mediów (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3528588. Szwecja-Katolicyzm-w-centrum-uwagi-mediow.

⁵³ Papież zszywa rozdarty świat (15/01/2021). http://niedziela.pl/artykul/127716/nd/Papiezzszywa-rozdarty-swiat.

⁵⁴ Kard. Muller: katolicy nie mają powodu, by świętować Reformację (5/03/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3062640.Kard-M-ller-katolicy-nie-maja-powodu-by-swietowac-Reformacje.

⁵⁵ Luteranie razem z papieżem (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3519353.Luteranie-razem-z-papiezem.

⁵⁶ W duchu pokuty (5/02/2021). http://niedziela.pl/artykul/127609/nd/W-duchu-pokuty.

⁵⁷ Luteranie razem z papieżem (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3519353.Luteranie-razem-z-papiezem.

⁵⁸ Długa droga do jedności (18/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3542864.Dluga-droga-do-jednosci.

⁵⁹ Wielu protestantów zrozumiało "kim jest Papież" (3/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3533817. Wielu-protestantow-zrozumialo-kim-jest-Papiez.

 $^{^{60}}$ Luteranie razem z papieżem (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3519353. Luteranie-razem-z-papiezem.

pointed to specific obstacles: intercommunion⁶¹, understanding the Church, the sacraments, the priesthood, the role of Mary and the Pope.⁶²

The next most common theme was that *Catholics have no reason to celebrate this anniversary*. The percentage of articles on this topic was 34% of all texts analysed. The context of this thesis was the association of the Reformation with a division in the Church. "Catholics and Lutherans commonly agreed that the ecumenical meeting marking the 500th anniversary of the Reformation should not take the form of celebration. For it is difficult to celebrate a schism in the Church, as the Catholic side emphasises particularly. This will be the commemoration of the events that had happened centuries ago in the spirit of penance and prayer" said Catholic Bishop Anders Arborelius. A similar statement was made by Lutheran Bishop Marian Niemiec: "Today we begin with a solemn service the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in Poland (...). Admittedly, there are voices saying that we should not rejoice because the Western Church was divided in the 16th century. I am not calling for rejoicing over the schism; I am not calling for the erasure of the past (...). We must not forget the religious wars, the persecutions."

Sometimes the authors of the texts strongly questioned the participation of Catholics in the jubilee. They defined then the Reformation as a tragic event dividing Christians. ⁶⁶ Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller's statement was also invoked here: "If we are convinced that God's revelation is entirely preserved and unchanged in Scripture and Tradition, in the doctrine of faith, in the sacraments, in the hierarchical system of the Church based on the sacrament of Holy Orders, then we cannot accept that there are sufficient reasons for separation from the Church (...). Leading reformers called the Pope the Antichrist in order to 'justify the separation' from the Catholic Church." ⁶⁷

The lack of reasons to celebrate the Reformation was still linked to criticism of Catholics involved in the Jubilee. It was written about in this way: "In Poland, Primate Wojciech Polak who joined the Committee of Honour of the celebra-

⁶¹ Długa droga do jedności (18/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3542864.Dluga-droga-do-jednos-ci.

⁶² Wielu protestantów zrozumiało "kim jest Papież" (3/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3533817. Wielu-protestantow-zrozumialo-kim-jest-Papiez.

⁶³ Jesteśmy skazani na miłosierdzie (15/02/2021). http://opole.gosc.pl/doc/3191986.Jestesmy-skazani-na-milosierdzie.

⁶⁴ Luteranie razem z papieżem (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3519353.Luteranie-razem-z-papiezem.

⁶⁵ Wspólna modlitwa na 500-lecie reformacji (15/02/2021). http://bielsko.gosc.pl/doc/3527973. Wspolna-modlitwa-na-500lecie-Reformacji.

⁶⁶ Pierwsze "Dialogi u św. Anny" (15/02/2021). http://krakow.gosc.pl/doc/3766182.Pierwsze-Dialogi-u-sw-Anny/2.

⁶⁷ Kard. Müller: katolicy nie mają powodu, by świętować Reformację (5/03/2021). http://gosc. pl/doc/3062640.Kard-M-ller-katolicy-nie-maja-powodu-by-swietowac-Reformacje.

tions, among others, faced criticism from some publicists. Pope Francis has also come under criticism for taking part in the celebrations together with Lutherans in the Swedish town of Lund. One thing is repeated in the criticism of these gestures: we have no reason to celebrate the drama of the division of Western Christianity, and the presence of the head of the Catholic Church suggests that we are reconciling ourselves with what began 500 years ago."⁶⁸

Websites also address the *sense of celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation as defined by Protestants*. These texts accounted for 17% of all surveyed articles. They pointed out that the Jubilee commemorated the positive consequences of the Reformation such as the renewal of faith and the life of the Church, the use of the Bible in national languages and obeying its principles every day. It also mobilised for the transformation of the world, of Christianity and encouraged the laity to serve God and the Church.⁶⁹ These qualities have sometimes been linked to the negative consequences of the Reformation – religious tensions and wars. Its legacy is therefore also distrust and rivalry.⁷⁰

There was also a *thread of Protestants meritorious for Polish culture* in the Internet articles. Their percentage was 13% of all texts. However, prominent evangelicals were rarely mentioned by name. Mikołaj Rej, Samuel Linde and Józef Sowiński⁷¹ and Bishop Juliusz Bursche⁷² were mentioned once. The rest of the texts concerned in general terms the heritage developed by Christians from different churches and non-believers, which is something to be proud of and should be passed on to future generations. It was emphasised that Lutherans are the mainstay of Polishness in the Cieszyn Silesia, they contributed to the economic, educational and cultural development of Poland.⁷³ They were patriots, fighting for the nation's freedom, dying in uprisings, in Katyń, and in Palmiry.⁷⁴ Their involvement in shaping contemporary European culture was recalled. Protestantism and Christianity played a fundamental role.⁷⁵

⁶⁸ Reformacja wspólna sprawa (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3493781.Reformacja-wspolna-sprawa.

⁶⁹ Prymasi anglikańscy na 500-lecie Reformacji: Okazja do pokuty za podziały (15/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3661313.Prymasi-anglikanscy-na-500lecie-Reformacji-Okazja-do-pokuty-za.

⁷⁰ Cieszyn: inauguracja jubileuszu 500-lecia Reformacji (3/02/2021). http://niedziela.pl/artykul/25442/Cieszyn-inauguracja-jubileuszu-500-lecia.

⁷¹ Świętowanie reformacji? (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3493789.Swietowanie-reformacji.

Wspólna modlitwa na 500-lecie Reformacji (15/02/2021). http://bielsko.gosc.pl/doc/3527973.Wspolna-modlitwa-na-500lecie-Reformacji.

⁷³ Cieszyn: inauguracja jubileuszu 500-lecia Reformacji (3/02/2021). http://niedziela.pl/artykul/25442/Cieszyn-inauguracja-jubileuszu-500-lecia.

⁷⁴ Cieszyn: inauguracja jubileuszu 500-lecia Reformacji (3/02/2021). http://niedziela.pl/artykul/25442/Cieszyn-inauguracja-jubileuszu-500-lecia.

Na Węgrzech dało się to zrobić: Wielki Piątek będzie wolny od pracy (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3497718.Na-Wegrzech-dalo-sie-to-zrobic-Wielki-Piatek-bedzie-wolny-od.

The last theme concerned the *defection from Martin Luther's teachings by modern Protestants*. Texts concerning the problem accounted for 6% of surveyed articles. The authors mainly pointed out that the departure from Luther's message is the acceptance of homosexual relationships and the approval of the removal of crosses from public places. This was written as follows: "I personally regret that today there are Lutherans whose teachings probably make Luther turn over in his grave. For what to say, for example, about Mrs [Eva] Brunne, the Lutheran Bishop of Stockholm, living in a lesbian relationship, who wants to remove crosses because they might offend Muslim immigrants. May the Lutherans be truly Lutherans..."

Other cited examples of departures from Luther's teachings were: the advanced secularisation of Swedish society, the need to evangelise it⁷⁷, the scale of leaving the Lutheran Church, the problem of maintaining empty churches, the decline in the number of participants in services and the declining influence of the Lutheran Church on society. Religion ceased to be the source of meaning, it became a fantasy. It has been replaced by consumerism ideology, liberalism, a sense of economic security and the ludic part of life. According to the authors of the texts, this is the effect of the consent of the Lutheran Church for: the ordination of women as priests, homosexual relationships, abortion, the clergy's luxurious life, and the loss of its status as a state church.⁷⁸

Conclusion

The information contained in the websites shows that ecumenical relations between Catholics and Protestants are generally based on cooperation and mutual respect, without particular tensions. Joint religious, cultural and social activities are undertaken: common prayers, dialogue, promotion of the life of the gospel and charitable initiatives. Concerts and exhibitions are also organised. Special events such as the Pope's visit to Lund are part of the programme. In addition, Catholics and Protestants see the need for and want to continue working together.

Despite these positive aspects, both sides are aware that their state of unity is still a distant prospect. One of the reasons for this is the existing mutual dis-

⁷⁶ Świętowanie reformacji? (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3493789.Swietowanie-reformacji.

⁷⁷ Luteranie razem z papieżem (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3519353.Luteranie-razem-z-papiezem.

⁷⁸ Franciszek na luterańskim szczycie w Szwecji (2/02/2021). http://gosc.pl/doc/3527542. Franciszek-na-luteranskim-szczycie-w-Szwecji/3.

tance. This is mainly due to the difficult past.⁷⁹ It is clearly visible in interpretations of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, where both Catholics and Protestants remember their difficult history. Even Protestant assessments of the Reformation generally focusing on its positive effects recall the former negative experiences. According to Catholic assessments, the Reformation remains a conflict-provoking and divisive event in Christianity, hence the jubilee is only an opportunity (perceived also by Lutherans) to build unity. Both denominations are also divided by doctrinal differences, as well as the fact that some of them are still deepened by some currents of Protestantism that accept a liberal secular mentality. Finally, the manifestation of this distance is the occasional criticism of Catholic clergy (including Pope Francis and the Primate of Poland) for participating in the Jubilee. This is also part of the way in which meritorious Evangelicals for Polish culture are presented, who are rarely mentioned by name, but are usually referred to as "outstanding Lutherans".

Catholic and Protestant relations presented in Internet services correspond with the results of the nationwide surveys referred to at the beginning of this article. They also show openness as well as reserve towards Protestants. A situation in which a Protestant is a neighbour, supervisor or colleague at work is accepted, but a distance is revealed when he or she would be a daughter-in-law or son-in-law. In other words, both in ecumenical relations and in everyday Catholic-Protestant relations, closeness, cooperation and respect are present, but also distance and differences are visible. It is possible that this is the next stage in the journey of these denominations from conflict to communion.

It is difficult, however, to find an in-depth view of ecumenism on studied websites. No emphasis was put that essential information should lead to Christian unity since the community in baptism is connected to the ecclesial community. The position that ecumenical action is part of the fullness of Christian life and concerns all the faithful (clergy and laity), and that its implementation takes place above all in individual conversion, prayer (including prayer for unity) and an attitude of openness to other Christians is not heard. Not

⁷⁹ Rajmund Porada. 2013. "«Od konfliktu do komunii» – w drodze ku 500. rocznicy Reformacji". Studia Oecumenica 13: 302–304, https://czasopisma.uni.opole.pl/index.php/so/article/view/3372 (18/04/2021).

⁸⁰ Jerzy Kostorz. 2010. "Wychowanie do postawy ekumenizmu w nauczaniu religii – doświadczenia katolickie" Paedagogia Christiana 2 (26): 239, 241; Zygfryd Glaeser. 2017. "«Od konfliktu do komunii». W kontekście luterańsko-katolickich obchodów 500-lecia Reformacji". Studia Oecumenica 17: 61–61, https://czasopisma.uni.opole.pl/index.php/so/article/view/149 (15/04/2021).

⁸¹ Kostorz. 2010. "Wychowanie do postawy ekumenizmu w nauczaniu religii – doświadczenia katolickie", 237–240; Glaeser. 2017. "«Od konfliktu do komunii». W kontekście luterańsko-katolickich obchodów 500-lecia Reformacji", 64; John Paul II. 1995 "Ut Unum Sint. On commitment to Ecumenism", no 15–17 (29.04.2021). https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf jp-ii enc 25051995 ut-unum-sint.html.

only do the websites omit those qualities of an ecumenical attitude that their readers can pursue while deepening their Catholic religiosity, but they also fail to demonstrate the necessity of a symmetrical relationship between theology, spirituality and ecumenical activity. Ecumenism (as theologians have argued) requires convergence between dogma, piety and ethos. Otherwise, it has action and casual character.⁸²

Moreover, articles published in online services do not correct popular perceptions⁸³, according to which the ecumenical movement is a conversion to the Catholic faith and is the recovery of prodigal sons. It is intended to lead to a common faith dominated by a Catholic message, resulting from the "fusion" of beliefs accepted hitherto.⁸⁴ Neither has it been made clear in the articles that ecumenism cannot lead to such fraternity and mutual respect as would amount to interfaith friendship.⁸⁵ Thus the Internet messages do not contribute to the disappearance of attitudes that weaken the ecumenical movement – confessionalism and loss of denominationalism in the minds of their readers. The former makes dialogue impossible, as it constitutes an extreme attachment to one's own denomination and "closing" within it.⁸⁶ The second results in agnosticism or disbelief due to abandoning the specificity of one's own.⁸⁷

The model of ecumenism that can be reconstructed on the basis of the studied websites focuses on practical cooperation in charitable and social and cultural initiatives. This is the dominant type of activity. Its spiritual aspect is also visible, but it is exhausted in undertaking common prayers. On the other hand, it does not emphasise the role of individual prayer in ecumenism and the treatment of the ecumenical attitude as an expression of a deepened religious life. This model hardly sensitises to the necessity of building unity and does not explain its essence or the attitudes which exclude it. There is a clear rift between the theological, spiritual and practical aspects of ecumenism. This model also assumes an awareness of historical conflicts and currently existing doctrinal differences.

It is impossible to consider the studied websites as the basic and only subject of ecumenical socialisation. The influence of messages on their recipients

⁸² Piotr Jaskóła. 2009. "Ekumenizm – prawda w teorii i życiu". Roczniki Teologii Ekumenicznej 1 (56): 29–30.

⁸³ Piotr Jaskóła. 2010. "Tożsamość wyznaniowa – problem ekumeniczny?". Roczniki Teologii Ekumenicznej 2 (57): 28.

⁸⁴ Stanisław C. Napiórkowski, Stanisław J. Koza. 1994. Ekumenizm. In *Być chrześcijaninem dziś*. Ed. Marian Rusecki, 632–633. Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL.

⁸⁵ Kostorz. 2010. "Wychowanie do postawy ekumenizmu w nauczaniu religii – doświadczenia katolickie", 236.

⁸⁶ Rajmund Porada. 2018. "Urzeczywistnienie się Kościoła w dialogu ekumenicznym – perspektywa katolicka". Studia Paradyskie 28: 79.

⁸⁷ Jaskóła. 2010. "Tożsamość wyznaniowa – problem ekumeniczny?", 27–28.

is a process that is conditioned in various ways. 88 However, there is an opportunity to build deeper relations between Catholics and Protestants, particularly, as the Internet is nowadays one of the fundamental formative agents of human religious sensitivity and spirituality. Sometimes it strengthens it to such an extent that it also persists in the real world, leading to a convergence of the online identity of the individual and his real identity. 89 This is emphasised both by researchers 90 and documents of the Church, which draw attention to the need to use the Internet in pastoral ministry, ecumenical cooperation and inter-religious cooperation. 91

The issue of the formation of ecumenical awareness by Catholic Internet services acquires a special dimension in the perspective of the findings of the research on the opinions and ecumenical attitudes of Polish Christians. They show that the respondents value ecumenical activity, but their actions do not correspond to these declarations. They do not engage in initiatives of ecumenical organisations. Only a few do so and they are mainly members of the Evangelical-Augsburg faith. The situation is similar with the knowledge of ecumenical documents and undertakings. It is low, and Catholics (compared to Protestants and Orthodox) are the weakest in this respect. 92

The research shows that the websites of Catholic weeklies have an opportunity and a task to support (as ecumenists have been postulating for a long time⁹³) open religious identity. Its representatives perceive positive values in the individual religions and see the possibility of their complementing each other, which in turn presupposes knowledge of one's own religious identity.⁹⁴ All these aspects of open identity can be supported by web services. Not only in the context of the

⁸⁸ Tomasz Goban-Klas. 2006. *Media i komunikowanie masowe. Teorie analizy prasy, radia, telewizji i Internetu.* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 236; Grzegorz Zaraziński. 2006. *Komunikacja i media. Wprowadzenie.* Siedlce, 97–130.

⁸⁹ Piotr Siuda. 2010. *Religia a internet. O przenoszeniu religijnych granic do cyberprzestrzeni.* Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, 10.

⁹⁰ Siuda. 2010. Religia a internet, 196-199.

⁹¹ Pontifical Council for Social Communications. 2002. "The Church and Internet", no 11 (29/04/2021). https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc 20020228 church-internet en.html#INTRODUCTION.

⁹² Weber. 2018. "Ekumenizm w opiniach i postawach chrześcijan w Bydgoszczy. Studium socjologiczne", 129.

⁹³ Alfons Nossol. 2001. *Ekumenizm jako imperatyw chrześcijańskiego sumienia*. Opole: Wydział Teologiczny Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 91–97.

⁹⁴ Aniela Różańska. 2017. "Międzykulturowe konteksty edukacji religijnej – problem otwartej tożsamości religijnej". Lubelski Rocznik Pedagogiczny 33 (3): 52; Leon Dyczewski. 2004. Od tożsamości zamkniętej do otwartej w społeczeństwie wielokulturowym i globalnym. In Język, komunikacja i edukacja w społecznościach wielokulturowych. Ed. Tadeusz Lewowicki, Janina Urban, Anna Szczypka-Rusz, 60–61. Cieszyn – Warszawa: Uniwersytet Śląski – Filia w Cieszynie, Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna ZNP w Warszawie; Porada. 2018. "Urzeczywistnienie się Kościoła w dialogu ekumenicznym – perspektywa katolicka", 78–78.

ecumenical movement, but also from the perspective of the developing cultural pluralism in Polish society. In societies where this pluralism is advanced, open religious identity is an important and frequent component of harmonious everyday life.⁹⁵

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⁹⁵ Aniela Różańska. 2014. Tożsamość religijna dzieci uczących się w szkołach z polskim językiem nauczania. In *Tożsamość kulturowa, religijność i edukacja religijna postrzegana z perspektywy społeczności szkół z polskim językiem nauczania w wybranych krajach europejskich*. Ed. Ewa Ogrodzka-Mazur, Urszula Klajmon-Lech, Aniela Różańska, 139. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek.

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