



Pentekostalizm w Polsce. Historia i współczesność
[Pentecostalism in Poland: Past and Present].

Eds. W. GAJEWSKI, J. MIRONCZUK

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In 2024, the Polish market of theological and religious studies publications saw the publication of a long-awaited monograph entitled *Pentekostalizm w Polsce. Historia i współczesność*, edited by Wojciech Gajewski, Prof. UG, and Jan Mironczuk, Prof. WSTS, reviewed by prominent experts in Protestant theology and culture Zbigniew Pask (AGH University of Kraków) and Tadeusz Zieliński (Christian Theological Academy in Warsaw). Among the authors are theologians, religious scholars, cultural scholars, and clergy of some evangelical communities. The monograph presents various aspects of the problem of Pentecostal communities in Poland. The intended purpose is reflected in the structure of the book: a historical outline, a description of the present state, and the theological and pastoral dimension. The whole is complemented by annexes (pp. 515–603) containing: photographs of the statutes and confessions of faith of the Union of Congregations of Christians of the Evangelical Faith, photos of various events of evangelical communities. An important part of the appendices is the “Kalendarium Kościoła Pentekostalnego w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej” [The timeline of the Pentecostal Church in the Republic of Poland], compiled by Marcin Dabek, notes about the authors, bibliography, list of abbreviations, brief summary, and personal index and geographical indices.

An important place in the monograph is taken by an introduction (pp. 5–10) by the Editors. They present the context of the book's creation: the centennial of the convention of Pentecostal activists in Krzemieniec, Volhynia, on May 1–3, 1924. The goal is to show the contemporary diversity of Pentecostal Christians, taking into account the broader charismatic movement (communities within the Roman Catholic Church, non-denominational communities). The authors also justify the proposed structure of the work: from history through the present to doctrine and pastoral care.

The first part, *Ruch pentekostalny na przestrzeni dziejów* [The Pentecostal movement throughout history] (pp. 10–212), shows the biblical and historical context of contemporary Pentecostalism in Poland. The foundation is laid by the text by Wojciech Gajewski entitled “Charyzmaty w historii chrześcijaństwa: przegląd świadectw” [Charisms in the history of Christianity: An overview of testimonies]. The value of the article lies in its presentation of biblical and historical messages regarding charisms and various supernatural abilities granted by God to different individuals. The synthetic presentation of biblical, pre-Nicene, post-Nicene, medieval and modern testimonies shows the importance of charismatic reality in the life of Christian communities. At the same time, it is a significant voice against the cessationist theories prevalent in some Christian currents.

In the text, “Ruch zielonoświątkowy w okresie II RP” [The Pentecostal movement during the Second Polish Republic], Jan Mironczuk analyzes archival materials presenting the development of Pentecostalism as a new movement in the interwar period in many areas: legal (the path of legal recognition of new challenges), theological, and structural (Catholic Apostolic Church – New Apostolic Church, Church of God; tensions between the Evangelical Church and Pentecostal communities; Christian Community, the Association of Steadfast Christians; Christians in the Spirit; Muraszkowcy; Evangelical Christians in the Apostolic Spirit; the Union of Churches of the Evangelical Faith); reluctance on the part of various Evangelical-Baptist denominations; difficulties on the part of the Orthodox Church; the formation of the Union of Churches of the Evangelical Faith; difficulties on the part of state administration entities. A valuable part of the article is the detailed list of the number of churches, believers and leaders, showing the development of Pentecostalism despite obstacles created by both state authorities and the leaders of other denominations.

The third article, “Związek Stanowczych Chrześcijan – wspólnota zielonoświątkowa na Śląsku Cieszyńskim” [The Association of Steadfast Christians – a Pentecostal community in Cieszyn Silesia], by Sławomir

Witkowski, shows the formation of the Pentecostal movement in the Lutheran environment, and its subsequent development outside these structures due to accusations by members of the said Union of practicing spiritually unhealthy practices. The author points out the importance of representative figures of the Union. The author then depicts the development of the Association of Steadfast Christians in the interwar period, the difficult time of the German occupation, and then in the period of communist Poland the co-founding with other evangelical denominations of the United Evangelical Church.

The historical theme is also taken up by the fourth article, “Wyznania ewangeliczne na Kresach Wschodnich w okresie drugiej wojny światowej” [Evangelical denominations in the Eastern Borderlands during the Second World War], by Jan Mironczuk. It shows the difficult, and sometimes dramatic, situations of the faithful (e.g., the Soviet occupiers accusing the faithful of having contacts with people from abroad, repression of Baptists in Białystok, repression of Pentecostals in Polesie), the improvement of the situation during the German occupation, as the evangelical movement was tolerated in Germany, but at the same time repression of those evangelicals who somehow acted earlier on behalf of the Soviet authorities or spoke out against the Nazis. The author also points out the different situations in different local contexts.

The article, “Kościół Chrześcijan Wiary Ewangelicznej w latach 1945–1953” [The Church of Evangelical Christians between 1945 and 1953], by Przemysław Gola, takes up the subject of the uneasy post-war years in the context of building a socialist Poland. Initially, the authorities did not make difficulties for the worship of evangelical religious communities, especially since they did not oppose the communist authorities. However, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the authorities’ hostility toward evangelical communities was already noticeable, especially because of suspicions of contacts with foreign circles, which led to the incorporation of the Evangelical Faith Christians Church into the United Evangelical Church.

This theme is continued in the article that follows, “Ograniczanie działalności zielonoświątkowców w Zjednoczonym Kościele Ewangelicznym” [Restricting the activities of Pentecostals in the United Evangelical Church], by Leszek Jańczuk. The text shows tensions in this church congregation, especially in the context of the approach to charismaticism and the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit, marginalizing radical Pentecostals. In some churches there were conflicts between representatives of free Christians and Pentecostals. There were also expectations that

Pentecostal Christians would become more like other groups. Also difficult were the contacts of some leaders of the United Evangelical Church with the communist authorities, including Pastor Stanisław Krakiewicz (he claimed to the authorities that Pentecostals were a violent movement). The author also presents complaints directed at Pentecostal pastors Edward Czajka and Kazimierz Sosulski as well as other local activists.

The same author, in the text “Kościół Zielonoświątkowy w RP wobec kwestii współpracy swoich duchownych ze służbą bezpieczeństwa” [The Pentecostal Church in Poland on the issue of cooperation between its clergy and the security services], confronts the uneasy history of the relations of church leaders with the authorities of communist Poland as well as different approaches to the issue of inspection. The position of the Supreme Council of the Pentecostal Church, calling for those caught up in collaboration with the security service to come forward, prevailed on this issue. At the same time, it was advocated not to rely solely on the fact of registration of secret collaborators (the registration did not necessarily indicate genuine cooperation). A valuable part of this study is a table listing the names of secret collaborators and the nature of their activities.

The second part of the monograph is entitled *Kościół i wspólnoty pentekostalne we współczesnej Polsce* [Pentecostal churches and communities in contemporary Poland]. The conceptual foundation is the article by Leszek Jańczuk entitled “Wspólnoty pentekostalne w Polsce i ich klasyfikacja” [Pentecostal communities in Poland and their classification] (pp. 215–231). From the text one can learn about the first wave of Pentecostalism (classical communities), the second wave (the so-called faith movement of 1950–1960), the third wave of the 1980s and 1990s (New Pentecostal Reformation, postdenominational churches; spiritually unusual manifestations, theology of success, minimal form of church structure). The text attempts to specifically classify the various communities of the first wave, the second wave, and the third wave. The author also points out communities that are difficult to classify, as well as non-trinitarian communities.

The second article is a text by Zbigniew L. Gadkowski and Henryk Wojciechowski titled “Od pięćdziesiątników przez nogoumywalców i prostaków do Chrześcijańskiej Wspólnoty Zielonoświątkowej” [From the Pentecostals, through foot-washers and simpletons, to the Christian Pentecostal Community]. The authors show the history and main principles of the nascent communities, especially particular ones, such as starting the service with the Lord’s Prayer recited on one’s knees, manifestations of a certain religious austerity. In turn, Andrzej Stachowiak in his text

“Protestancka wspólnota regionu bieszczadzkiego – Ewangeliczna Wspólnota Zielonoświątkowa” [The Protestant community of the Bieszczady region – Evangelical Pentecostal Community] shows the history of the community born during the time of religious awakening in the Evangelical Augsburg Church in Cieszyn Silesia – the Christian Community. As a result of a prophecy in 1962 that the community should leave the previous area (due to persecution in the area of Zaolzie in Czechoslovakia). One of the places was the Beskid Niski. The community took the name Evangelical Pentecostal Community.

The fourth article, by Andrzej Nędzusiak and Wojciech Gajewski, is titled “Kościół Boży w Chrystusie: historia i współczesność” [The Church of God in Christ: History and present day]. This church is associated with the Pentecostal awakening in the Second Polish Republic, and the community-building by Bolesław Dawidow in the 1980s. Initially, there was also cooperation within the Church of Christ. Through the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit and contacts with American Pentecostals, the emerging community became part of the so-called second wave. In time, the church obtained the right to function and in 1990 was registered in the register of religious associations as the Church of God in Christ. Gradually, too, the number of churches increased and central organs and agencies were constituted. The text closes with a list of churches, with names, addresses, service times, and pastors.

The fifth article, “Kościół Zielonoświątkowy w RP” [Pentecostal Church in Poland], by Leszek Jańczuk, shows the circumstances of the establishment of this community, the history of its development, the difficulties of affiliation with the Polish Ecumenical Council, the formation of the Evangelical Alliance in Poland, and tensions with the Church of Christ. The text shows the Church’s involvement in the Bible Society in Poland, in Pentecostal European Fellowship and World Assemblies of God Fellowship. The author presents the Pentecostal Church’s legal issues, structure, and specific issues such as demonology, the problem of inspection, ordination of women, and involvement in refugee ministry. The text also presents the numerical growth of churches and members (in 1988, 88 churches and about 10,000 believers; in 2023, 288 churches, 27,309 believers), structure, agencies, missions, universities, and a list of churches grouped into 7 districts.

The sixth text, “Kościół Chrześcijan Wiary Ewangelicznej w Polsce po 1987 roku” [The Evangelical Christian Church in Poland after 1987], by Mariusz Orłowski, shows another Pentecostal denomination, its organizational and territorial structure, issues of legal empowerment. From

the text one can learn about the church's catalog of congregations, its former and current agencies, associations and foundations cooperating with the church, social and charitable activities and cooperation with other evangelical Christians. Also important is the ecumenical theme with non-evangelical churches.

The seventh text, by Marcin Rzepka, entitled "Kościół Boży w Polsce. Historia, misja, tożsamość" [The Church of God in Poland. History, mission, identity] shows the specifics of the next Church, which is part of the international Church of God. The author presents the historical background of the establishment of the Church of God in Poland, but also internationally (in the United States). An important aspect is the fact that part of the community in Poland originated from Catholic charismatic communities, as well as the influence of independent charismatic churches of the so-called third wave is noticeable. The article further includes a description of the structure, numerical development, social, cultural, educational, development, and missionary involvement. The church's participation in international projects is also highlighted.

The text, "Kościół 'Chrystus dla wszystkich' w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej" [The Church of "Christ for All" in the Republic of Poland], by Marcin Głowacki, shows the challenges, difficulties, anxieties, and successes of the denomination. The organizational structure, cooperation of churches, splits, list of agendas, and forms of involvement of the Church are shown in historical and current dimensions.

The third part of the monograph is entitled *Doktryna i praktyka* [Doctrine and practice] (pp. 365–514), consisting of six articles. The first of these, "Chrzest w Duchu Świętym w polskiej tradycji pentekostalnej" [Baptism in the Holy Spirit in the Polish Pentecostal tradition], by Leszek Jańczuk, provides a theological foundation (the history of the Pentecostal awakening in Poland, discussions about baptism in the Holy Spirit within the United Evangelical Church, the opposition of some factions to the subject, including free Christians). Only after the breakup of the United Evangelical Church and the formation of the Pentecostal Church does the clarification of the issue of baptism in the Holy Spirit appear in official documents; the same is true of the principles of faith of other Pentecostal churches. At the same time, the first-wave communities do not resolve whether the manifestation of the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit must be speaking in tongues. Only third-wave denominations, such as the Church of Praise, see glossolalia as a sign of the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The second text of the part in question is the one by Andrzej Migda entitled “Osobliwości pentekostalnego doświadczenia wiary” [The peculiarities of the Pentecostal experience of faith]. The author attempts to describe a multifaceted Pentecostal spirituality. He notes that the religious experience becomes crucial, and only later comes the theological elaboration. It is primarily about new birth, personal conversion. In Pentecostal thought, this gives a person the opportunity for direct contact with God. It is not just something spiritual. For it is about repairing one’s life with the help of the Holy Spirit. In building a relationship with God, revelation from Him is essential. Among the basic components of Polish Pentecostalism, the author enumerates: the recognition of the four Reformation principles (*sola Scriptura*, *sola fide*, *sola gratia*, *solus Christus*), biblicism, cross-centrism, conversionism, activism, *sola experientia*, charismatic spiritual phenomena, the necessity of external manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the personal and communal dimensions. The author also describes the evolving Pentecostal ritual, the importance of worship, the different understandings of the Lord’s Supper (there is essentially no single interpretation). He also highlights the influence on Polish Pentecostalism of converts from the Catholic Church.

The third text is an article by Wojciech Leszczyński entitled “Misja i ewangelizacja Chrześcijan Wiary Ewangelicznej – zielonoświątkowców na ziemiach polskich do roku 1939” [The mission and evangelisation of Evangelical Christians – Pentecostals in Poland until 1939]. It is an overview of the work of evangelists and preachers, living out the universal priesthood of believers, and the activities of missionaries from other countries.

The intellectual dimension of Polish Pentecostalism is taken up by Piotr Nowak’s article entitled “Uczelnie biblijno-teologiczne Kościoła Zielonoświątkowego w RP i instytucji go poprzedzających (1930–2024)” [Biblical and theological colleges of the Pentecostal Church in Poland and its predecessor institutions (1930–2024)]. In the historical aspect, the author presents the scholarly and evangelistic activities of the Bible Institute in Gdańsk, the Bible School of the United Evangelical Church, the Warsaw Theological Seminary. The text also brings an enumeration of the many people involved in this educational activity. Piotr Nowak then discusses the wide-ranging activities of the Warsaw School of Theology and Social Sciences (WSTS), the Capital Bible Institute, WSTS’s cooperation with the Christian Academy of Theology in Warsaw (graduate studies in evangelical theology, Pentecostalism Research Laboratory), the Theological Seminary in Ustroń and the Kraków Bible Seminary.

The fifth text, by Elżbieta Bednarz, is entitled “Katechizacja dzieci i młodzieży w Kościele Zielonoświątkowym w RP” [Catechism for children and young people in the Pentecostal Church in Poland]. The author draws attention to the primary role of the family in the process of passing on the faith, and then to the important function of the church, where not only the preaching of the truths of faith takes place, but brings the experience of living in community. Thus, the essence of Pentecostal catechization is not teaching alone, but the introduction to discipleship, so it also has a dimension of education. For this reason, it is important “for students to master knowledge, skills and attitudes, to improve their motivation and inner convictions, their view of their place, tasks and responsibility before God, and their value system according to biblical indications” (p. 445). This path is closely related to the Church’s profession of faith. The author also reports on the concepts of catechetical teaching in the Pentecostal Church: hermeneutical-existential and thematic-problem-based. The scheme is a didactic path: evoking experience, discovering light (the Word of God), shaping a person’s response.

Finally, the last article of the volume is “Zakładanie nowych wspólnot kościelnych w Polsce w świetle badań” [The establishment of new church communities in Poland in the light of research] by Agnieszka Prokopczuk. The starting point is to define the church. Basically, it is a local community, a place of growth and charismatic service. While structure is important, institutional minimalism is essential. In this context, the author indicates the theoretical basis for the establishment of communities and presents statistical data. At the same time, she lists the key factors for the formation of church communities: motivation, endowment for service and evangelism, guidance of the Holy Spirit, faithfulness to the calling, commitment of the founding team, pastoral competence, the need of the church in a particular place, competence of the leader, mobilization for action, relationships, unanimity, friendship, cooperation, clear vision, goals, values, structure, prayer, fasting, worship, mentors, support of the mother church. Among the factors for development, the author lists: the work of the Holy Spirit, awareness of the call to establish a church, a permanent meeting place, persistent evangelism, a team of co-workers, the skills of leaders, team-building events, evangelistic gifting of leaders, mentoring, financial support. Among the challenges in development, the author lists the following: lack of suitable premises, financial problems, inadequate teams, reluctance of other churches, immature leaders, inability to evangelize, lack of relationships, poor communication, pressure of professional

work, splits, insufficient leadership team, loneliness, lack of support, discouragement, toxic influence of scarred people. The sociological analysis of the reasons for the disappearance of existing communities is also interesting. Among them are leader incompetence, conflicts, broken relationships, excessive ambition, leader dishonesty, lack of grounding in the Word, lack of finances, lack of help from other communities, lack of guidance by the Holy Spirit, leader burnout, theological differences, lack of committed people, migration of people, secularism, unbiblical teaching, premises problems. Finally, the author reports on the reasons for not starting a new community (e.g., the pastor taking over an existing community, multiple responsibilities of the pastor, lack of people to work with, no need for a new church, etc.) and the motivating factors for starting churches (including a team of people, leaders, external support, substantive and financial support).

Analyzing the presented monograph, it is necessary to emphasize its substantive qualities. The goal set by the authors has been achieved, namely, the multifacetedness of Pentecostal communities, in the historical and contemporary, action and theological aspects, resounds. The multiplicity of authors, their scientific and pastoral specialization shows the multidimensionality of Polish Pentecostalism. The structure of the book is logical: from the historical part, through the description of the contemporary state to the presentation of doctrinal and pastoral issues. The individual parts, and within them the subsequent articles, are properly organized and coherent. Analysis of historical sources, sociological research and theological reflection played a major role in the creation of the monograph. The language of the monograph is correct, accessible to scholars and readers without special conceptual training. The brevity of the texts is also conducive to this. Of course, the enumeration of historical details in some texts can be tedious, but this factuality helps to understand the importance of the reality discussed.

The presented monograph is genuine and is an important component of the theological, cultural, and sociological analysis of Polish Pentecostalism. A thorough analysis of the texts provokes further research questions in the areas of doctrine, ritual, the influence of other churches and communities, the issue of conversion, ecumenism, spirituality (healthy and dysfunctional), confrontation with the problem of secularization of society. For this reason, the book *Pentekostalizm w Polsce. Historia i współczesność* should be considered essential reading for scholars of Polish spirituality and ecumenism, for students of theology, cultural studies and religious

studies, as well as for all others interested in the issues of Pentecostalism. It is all the more important because, globally, Pentecostalism is the most dynamically developing current of Christianity.

Przemysław Sawa

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5634-3078>