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“Verily, This Is the Sheepfold of that Good Shepherd”: The Idea of the “True” Church in Sixteenth-Century Polish Catechisms

The article discusses how the authors of sixteenth-century Polish Catholic and Evangelical catechisms perceived and analysed the notion of “the Church”. Following the Tridentine programme, the Catholic authors present their Church as unified under the Pope’s authority and the only inheritor of the works of the Apostles. The veracity of its teaching is testified to with God’s unnatural interventions – miracles. Protestant theologians teach about “the visible and outward Church”, which exists whenever the pure Word of God is preached and where sacraments are administered in accordance with the Holy Writ. Alongside the Visible Church, there exists “the invisible and inward Church” that unites all those following Christ, who is the one and only head of the Church.

Keywords: Church, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, catechism, religious education, Renaissance, Council of Trent, reform at Trent

A sense of belonging to the proper, i.e., “genuine”, Church was a crucial issue in the religiously divided Europe of the sixteenth century.¹ Catholic and Evangelical theologians agreed that the right choice led to salvation, although it did not guarantee it.² That made many

¹ This opinion is shared by among others S.E. Schreiner, “Church,” in: *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, vol. 1, ed. H.J. Hillerbrand (Oxford and New York, 1996), p. 323.

² Eadem, *Are You Alone Wise? The Search for Certainty in the Early Modern Era* (Oxford and New York, 2011), pp. 37–77.

Christians confront their own religious experience with numerous incentives to leave their fellow believers. In general, such a decision for Polish Christians meant abandoning the Roman Catholic Church and joining Protestant communities that defied the “old faith.” Considering in conscience one’s own place in the Church community did not have to bring conversion; on the contrary, it could strengthen one’s faith.³ Spiritual guides played an important role in awakening and clarifying such doubts. It is just for them – and also for laymen – that the catechisms explaining the rudiments of faith were created.⁴

The article discusses the argumentation that grounded the teachings on the idea of the Church. This prompts the question whether the ecclesial uniqueness, defined by confession, excluded any sense of community among the divided Christians. Due to their declarative nature and a relatively broad impact range, catechisms seem to be a representative basis for such deliberations. “Polish Catechisms”, mentioned in the title of this article, are works by Polish authors and adaptors, written for readers who used Polish language in everyday communication, yet who might have also demonstrated some command of Latin.

³ As far as the vast body of studies devoted to the circumstances and consequences of religious conversion in the mediaeval and early modern Europe is concerned, one of the most prominently pessimistic evaluations of the consequences that ensued is to be found in A. Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 211–217. The author emphasises among others the frequent necessity of breaking already established social bonds, difficulties involving adaptation to the challenges posed by the new environment, and resultant disappointments.

⁴ For the chronology of the creation and scope of Polish Catholic and Protestant catechisms, see D. Kuźmina, *Katechizmy w Rzeczypospolitej XVI i początku XVII wieku* (Warszawa, 2002). For Catholic catechisms, see: J.Z. Słowiński, *Katechizmy katolickie w języku polskim od XVI do XVIII wieku* (Lublin, 2005); W. Pawlik, *Katechizmy w Rzeczypospolitej od XVI do XVIII wieku* (Lublin, 2010). For Evangelical catechisms, cf. M. Korzo, “W sprawie jednego z XVI-wiecznych katechizmów kalwińskich w Rzeczypospolitej,” *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 52 (2007), pp. 177–198; eadem, “Przyczynek do roli druków bazylejskich w XVI-wiecznym piśmiennictwie ewangelickim Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego,” *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 55 (2011), pp. 7–25; cf. also T. Reroń, “Katechizmy w dobie Soboru Trydenckiego,” *Wrocławski Przegląd Teologiczny* 7 (1999), pp. 129–143. In *Reading Catechisms, Teaching Religion* (Leiden and Boston, 2015), L. Palmer Wandel draws attention to the cohesion of religious instruction as far as the written word, the spoken word, and iconography are concerned.

An initial form of general religious education in the Catholic Church at the end of the Middle Ages and in the early modern era was not systematic preaching, but rather transferring elementary knowledge to the believers. Although only a minority of clergymen and laymen exhibited deeper religious reflection, the knowledge of the rudiments of faith was common.⁵ Social changes in the sixteenth-century Church led to the development of "intellectual and dogmatic" catechesis, which is proved by Lutheran and Calvinist compendia, and texts defending the Catholic orthodoxy.⁶ The postulates that appeared as a result of the Tridentine reforms, formulated, for instance, at synods, clearly show the significance of catechisms to the then clergy.⁷ Due to the lack of sources, the practical importance of a wider use of such aids in education of laymen and their shepherds in sixteenth-century Poland remains beyond the systematic view. The documentation of the reform, which was inaugurated in 1593 by Cardinal Jerzy Radziwiłł in his extensive Cracow diocese, and was continued by his successors in the first decades of the next age, is a detailed revelation of the difficult inaugurated of the systematic pastoral work. The Cardinal ordered clergymen to use the *Roman Catechism* and other similar aids, if possible. The situation in the Cracow diocese, where priests used the compendia of Polish authors presented below, needs not to be representative for other areas of Gniezno ecclesiastical province.⁸

⁵ Arguments in favour of such rationale are provided by: K. Bracha, *Nauczanie kaznodziejskie w Polsce późnego średniowiecza. Sermones dominicales et festuales z tzw. kolekcji Piotra z Miłostawia* (Kielce, 2007); S. Bylina, *Chryścianizacja wsi polskiej u schyłku średniowiecza* (Warszawa, 2002); J. Kracik, "Przeciw reformacji," in: *Kościół krakowski w tysiącleciu* (Kraków, 2000), pp. 178–250; T. Wiślicz, *Zarobić na duszne zbawienie. Religijność chłopów małopolskich od połowy XVI do końca XVIII wieku* (Warszawa, 2001), pp. 28–38.

⁶ Cf. P. Chaunu, *Czas reform. Historia religii i cywilizacji (1250–1550)*, trans. J. Grosfeld (Warszawa, 1989), pp. 164–155.

⁷ Recent scholarship includes: M. Korzo, "Polski przekład katechizmu Jakuba Ledesmy TJ i jego wpływ na tradycję unicką w XVII w.," *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 47 (2004), pp. 149–150.

⁸ For more extensive coverage, see: H.E. Wyczawski, "Biblioteki parafialne w diecezji krakowskiej u schyłku XVI wieku," *Polonia Sacra* 7 (1955), p. 44; idem, "Studia nad wewnętrznymi dziejami Kościoła w Małopolsce na schyłku XVI wieku," *Prawo Kanoniczne* 7 (1964), p. 109; R. Kuśmierczyk, "Problematyka Listu pasterskiego kard. Jerzego Radziwiłła z roku 1593," *Nasza Przeszłość* 100 (2003), pp. 236–237. A. Rojewski ("Formacja duchowieństwa archidiaconatu dobrzyńskiego w latach 1597–1609 i jej wpływ na przyjęcie posoborowej liturgii," *Studia Płockie* 4 [1976], pp. 34–50) highlights the fact that reference books

There are no reasons whatsoever to doubt the belief of the Protestant pastors in the need to use such sources, either.⁹

This study focuses mainly on compendia that were addressed *ad parochos*, and were used in *cura animarum*, and that explained in an accessible way the basics of faith and God's law to the reader or listener with a rudimentary awareness of his/her place in the Church. For these reasons, the catechism of Stanislaus Hosius, titled *Confessio fidei catholicae Christiana*, which was first published in 1553 in Cracow and was next commonly adopted by the Church as a positive and controversial theology manual, has been basically omitted.¹⁰ The first Polish translation of the *Roman Catechism*, announced in 1568, must have failed to fulfil expectations, thus a new version emerged, although only in 1603.¹¹ It is therefore hard to declare the significant impact of that work on education of the Polish Church before the seventeenth century. Not all compendia of religious knowledge, which were important in sixteenth-century Poland and were written with parish priests in mind, tackled the issue of our interest. The idea of the Church is omitted by, e.g., Marcin Kromer, Hosius's fellow, an active promoter of the fight against opponent religions as part of the renewal of religious life, author of *Catecheses, sive Institutiones dvodecim de septem Sacramentis & sacrificio Missae & de funeribus exequii: ad vtilitatem parochorum & aliorum Sacerdotum, in Polonicam Germanicam[ue] linguam conversae* (1570).¹² Robert Bellarmine addressed his apologetic and dogmatic *Short Catechism* to children and simple-minded people. This "Achilles against heretics", as was written in 1616 in Cracow, was popularised in Poland only after 1606.¹³

by Polish authors were not recommended to the clergy; there is no evidence that the clergy owned them.

⁹ The catechism-based rudiments of faith constituted the foundation of the theological formation and religiosity of Martin Luther, who constantly highlighted the significance of such teaching, see M.J. Haemig, "The Influence of the Genres of Exegetical Instruction, Preaching and Catechesis on Luther," in: *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*, ed. R. Kolb, I. Dingel, L. Batka (Oxford, 2014), pp. 455–460.

¹⁰ Recommended as an educational tool used for the purpose of religious instruction, cf. A. Skolimowska, "Confessio fidei Hozjusza jako podstawa katechizacji wiernych w Hiszpańskich Niderlandach," *Studia Warmińskie* 43 (2006), pp. 273–275.

¹¹ Słowiński, op. cit., pp. 93–99.

¹² See Pawlik, op. cit., pp. 96–97.

¹³ Ibidem, pp. 104–105; A. Kiciński, "Kierunki rozwoju katechizmów katolickich," *Roczniki Pastoralno-Katechetyczne* 59 (2012), p. 128; L. Kromer, "Przedmowa,"

The Evangelical catechisms that are analysed here were influenced by the teachings of Luther, and South German and Swiss theologians, and the views of the Czech Brethren are also considered. Hence the need to comprise compendia that circulated among the Polish Christians who had broken with "the Pope, the son of perdition".¹⁴ Evangelical catechisms of that time combined lectures on the foundations of faith with prayer books and hymnals.¹⁵ One cannot draw clear conclusions based on chants that were included in such catechisms, due to the lack of comprehensive and comparative analyses of those collections.¹⁶

The ecclesiology that was presented to the members of the Polish Catholic Church of the late Middle Ages has differentiated, after Augustine, three kinds of houses of God: the material one, or the edifice of the church, the spiritual one, made of the community of all faithful, and the heavenly one, built of living stones, i.e., the souls of saints and angels. All truly faithful were the stones of the Church community, saint doctors and preachers – the columns, living faith – the foundation, hope – the walls, and love – the floor concealing all the sins. The heavenly Church was also interpreted as the invisible Church of the saved. It was said after Hugh of Saint Victor that the Church gathered its faithful in a state of grace and in a state of sin. Heretics – false prophets, devil's powers, pagans and tyrants, remained outside the Church.¹⁷

Theologians and preachers of the various streams Western Christianity saw the need to explain to believers what the Church community was. The obligation on the clergy to systematically examine the rudiments of faith included, e.g., explaining the declaration of believing in "one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church", which was part of the apostolic Symbol.¹⁸ It is therefore not surprising that the notion

in: L. Lessius, *Narada, której wiary trzymać się mamy* (Kraków, 1616; copy Warsaw, University Library [Biblioteka Uniwersytecka], sign. SD XVII.3.3776), n.p.

¹⁴ *Catholici et sectarii concertatio* (Cracoviae, 1569; copy Kórnik, PAS Library [Biblioteka Kórnicka PAN, hereafter: BK], sign. Cim. O. 184), fol. C_{iv}.

¹⁵ A. Kawecka, "Kancjonały protestanckie na Litwie w w. XVI," *Reformacja w Polsce* 4 (1926), p. 128.

¹⁶ Despite in-depth studies, including among others: P. Fijałkowski, "Kancjonał Piotra Artomiusza z 1620 r.," *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 44 (2000), pp. 129–148; K. Smolarek, "Piotr Artomiusz i jego kancjonał toruński z końca XVI wieku," *Rocznik Toruński* 41 (2014), pp. 169–186.

¹⁷ See K. Bracha, op. cit., pp. 289–293.

¹⁸ J. Wolny, "Z dziejów katechezy," in: *Dzieje teologii katolickiej w Polsce*, vol. 1: *Średniowiecze* (Lublin, 1974), pp. 191–206.

of the “true” Church has been discussed in the sixteenth-century catechisms on the occasion of explaining the text of the *Credo*. The notion has surely appeared in deliberations of Middle Age preachers, which is evidenced by art relics and treatises.¹⁹ Although they emphasised the necessity to educate the faithful, the fathers of the Council of Trent fell only into a general conclusion that people should be taught “what is necessary for all for salvation”.²⁰ What they mostly stressed was the moral aspect of such education. However, eminent Polish preachers of the era, such as, for instance, Jakub Wujek SI, were aware of the need to explain what the Church really was. In accordance with Bellarmine and Stapeltone, Wujek has defined it as: the unity of faith and the unity of the shepherd, supported by the gravity of the ages, succession in hierarchy, universality on earth, glorification of the Church, internal power and miracles.²¹ What is evident here is the influence of the *Tridentinum* (Tridentine decrees) that had finally broken with conciliar aspirations of the Church.²²

Views of the dissenters represent the stand of Paweł Gilowski, one of the leaders of the Lesser Poland’s Reformed Church in the time of the Sandomierz Agreement (1570).²³ In his opinion, every young man should know God’s commandments, Profession of Faith, Lord’s Prayer and the “true Christian Church, and should have a good understanding of the sacraments”.²⁴ Young people gain that knowledge by active participation in the life of the congregation. This stand is not surprising, as the preaching according to the Good News, proper administration of the Sacraments (and discipline) are the foundations of the Protestant ecclesiology. Next to the visible Church, as defined above,

¹⁹ See A. Dąbrowka, “Treści religijne w średniowiecznych podręcznikach i lekturach szkolnych,” in: *Animarum cultura. Studia nad kulturą religijną na ziemiach polskich w średniowieczu*, vol. 1: *Stosunki kościelno-publiczne*, ed. H. Manikowska, W. Brojer (Warszawa, 2008; *Colloquia Medioevalia Varsoviensia*, vol. 4), p. 474.

²⁰ *Dokumenty soborów powszechnych. Tekst łaciński i polski*, vol. 4: *1511–1870: Lateran, Trydent, Watykan I*, ed. A. Baron, H. Pietras (Kraków, 2005), pp. 246–247.

²¹ F. Bracha, “Jakub Wujek jako dogmatyk,” *Polonia Sacra* 3, no. 1–2 (1950), pp. 131, 151–156.

²² See S. Świeżawski, *Eklezjologia późnośredniowieczna na rozdrożu* (Kraków, 1990), pp. 49–77, 202–206.

²³ S. Szczotka, “Gilowski Paweł,” in: *Polski słownik biograficzny*, vol. 7 (Kraków and Wrocław, 1948–1958), pp. 471–472.

²⁴ P. Gilowski, *Wykład katechizmu Kościoła krześcijańskiego* (Kraków, 1579; copy Wrocław, Ossoliński Library [Biblioteka Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich, hereafter: BO], sign. XVI 2801), fol. 114rec.–114ver.

there is also a universal, invisible Church, with which the unity is professed in the *Credo*.²⁵

I discuss the issues mentioned here first on the basis of Catholic explications, and next on Protestant expositions. The texts are generally concise, yet some of them extensively describe the foundations of faith, therefore the commentaries to the issues of interest vary in volume.

Catholic sources

Wojciech Nowopolczyk (Albertus Novicampianus), Professor of the University of Cracow, theologian and polemicist, gives the Church relatively little attention.²⁶ He points out that it is based on the Word of God written in the Holy Bible, and that the Church teaching office (*magisterium*) differentiates between the true and false preaching. He therefore recalls, after St. Paul (referring to the First Letter to Timothy 3:15): "ecclesia columna et firmamentum veritatis".²⁷ The Church, which is led by the Spirit, becomes in his interpretation the highest

²⁵ Such labelling of the visible Church was embraced by numerous eminent theologians during the early stage of the European Reformation. To read more, see: P.D.L. Avis, *The Church in the Theology of the Reformers* (Eugene, OR, 2002); idem, "Luther's Theology of the Church," *Churchman* 97 (1983), pp. 104–111; D.P. Daniel, "Luther on the Church," in: *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*, pp. 333–335; E. Campi, "Calvin's Understanding of the Church," *Reformed World* 57 (2007), pp. 291–292; R.M. Kingdon, "The Church. Ideology or Institution," *Church History* 50 (1981), pp. 85–86; H. Kowalska, "Przejrzani i wybrani'. O Kościele na Żgodzie Sandomierskiej budowanym," in: *Kultura polska a kultura europejska. Prace ofiarowane Januszowi Tazbirowi w sześćdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin*, ed. M. Bogucka, J. Kowecki (Warszawa, 1987), pp. 205–213. This was not, however, the only argumentation available at that time, as the Church was defined differently by, among other, Jan Łaski in the confession of his London congregation (1551), cf. J. Becker, "Migration and Confession among Sixteenth-Century Western European Reformed Christians," *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 13 (2011), p. 14; H. Kowalska-Kossobudzka, "Jana Łaskiego pojęcie Kościoła," *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 10 (1965), pp. 81–101.

²⁶ See: H.E. Wyczawski, "Nowopolczyk Wojciech," in: *Słownik Polskich Teologów Katolickich*, vol. 3, ed. H.E. Wyczawski (Warszawa, 1983), pp. 233–234; A. Kaim, "Mistrz i przyjaciel. Wojciech Nowopolczyk i humanizm chrześcijański," in: *Historia świadectwem czasów. Księdzu Profesorowi Markowi Zabajkiewiczowi*, ed. W. Bielak, S. Tylus (Lublin, 2006), pp. 265–291; J. Tyrawa, "Nowopolczyk, Nowopolski, Novicampianus, Wojciech," in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 14, ed. E. Gigilewicz et al. (Lublin, 2010), coll. 77.

²⁷ A. Novicampianus, *Scopus biblicus Veteris et Novi Testamenti, cum annotationibus summam doctrinae Christianae complectentibus* (Antverpiae, 1559; copy BO, sign. XVI 0.36), pp. 168–170, here p. 168; 1st impr. Kraków, 1553).

authority laying down the laws of faith. He finds arguments for the saving role of the Church in the biblical tradition, and includes them in the commentary on the law.

Considerations of another Cracovian scholar, Antoni of Napachania, published in 1558, are of an openly polemic, although non-aggressive character.²⁸ He accuses the “heretics” of trying, against the promise of Christ: “Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Mt 28:20), to appropriate the Son of God to their churches. Thus, he warns the readers: “So if someone told you: Christ is here or there, do not believe him”;²⁹ he calls Luther and other Protestants “false Christs”.³⁰ He also repeats one of the most popular anti-Protestant controversies, cited by the Catholic polemicists, that arguments among Protestant theologians are an evidence of the lack of unity in the Holy Spirit, and, in effect, the lack of basic ecclesial competence of those congregations.³¹

There is one, holy, universal (“common”) and apostolic Church, identified with the “congregation of the believers”, i.e., with the assembly,³² and “held” by the Holy Spirit. According to the teachings of St. Paul, believers make the spiritual body of Christ, and the Saviour makes the head (Eph 1:22–23), and the *Credo* repeated during the mass reminds us of this tenet of faith. The abovementioned characteristics of the Church precondition the preservation of its unity, which is also encouraged by the Apostle (1 Cor 10–13). The Church’s holiness is not determined by its holy and righteous members, since,

²⁸ Antoni z Napachania, *Enchiridion to iest książki ręczne o nauce Chrześcijańskiej, czego się Chrześcijański człowiek dzierżyć ma czasu niniejszey rozności wiary* (Kraków, 1558; copy BK, sign. Cim. O. 169). For information about the author, see: H.E. Wyczawski, “Antoni z Napachania,” in: *Słownik Polskich Teologów Katolickich*, vol. 1, ed. H.E. Wyczawski (Warszawa, 1981), p. 59; M. Rechowicz, “Antoni z Napachania,” in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 1, ed. F. Gryglewicz et al. (Lublin, 1995), p. 665.

²⁹ Antoni z Napachania, op. cit., fol. 1rec.–1ver.

³⁰ Ibidem, fol. 1ver.

³¹ For the polemics of Hosius and Łaski and for the stance of the latter, which was representative of the then Evangelical ecclesiology, see H. Kowalska-Kossobudzka, “Wpływ Jana Łaskiego na kształtowanie się reformacyjnego Kościoła w Małopolsce,” in: *Jan Łaski 1499–1560. W pięćsetlecie urodzin*, ed. W. Kriegseisen, P. Salwa (Warszawa, 2001), p. 26.

³² The term “congregation” as the synonym of “the Church” (*ecclesia*) was predominantly used by the Evangelicals, see I. Winiarska, *Słownictwo religijne polskiego kalwinizmu od XVI do XVIII wieku (na tle terminologii katolickiej)* (Warszawa, 2004), p. 276.

according to Antoni of Napachanie, "[i]t is certain that there are more sinful than righteous, more evil than good people in it",³³ therefore he also refers to the parable of wheat and the chaff (Luke 3:16–17), tare and wheat (Mt 13:24–30) and the Day of Judgement, sheep and goats (Mt 25:31–34). The holiness of the Church depends on something else: "Whoever is holy, will be holy in this Church".³⁴ Individual holiness of believers is tantamount with being free from sin for the shed blood of Christ (the author quotes the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians here, which reminds of Christ who had purified his Church with water and word). He repeats after St. Augustine, author of the *Enchiridion*..., that "all faithful were first called saints", and the Church "is also common, because it is spread in the entire world".³⁵ Such a congregation obeys the Roman bishop as the successor of Peter. The author comments at length on Christ's choice of Peter, the rock, as the foundation of the Church (Mt 16:18–19; J 21:15–17) and emphasises that the primacy of the Pope has been confirmed by the authority of the Word of God. Moreover, he reminds that Jesus prayed that Peter's faith should not cease and that he should get the power of encouraging the believers. Antoni of Napachanie backs up his interpretation with the authority of the fathers of the Church who understood Christ's decision in this way (he mentions among others Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose and Bede).

He justifies the need of maintaining the hierarchy also by examples from the world of nature. He points to bees and cranes that "have one leader".³⁶ He also quotes *Metaphysics* by Aristotle: "Many a lord cannot govern well at all".³⁷ Christ governs his Church, invisibly, by the ministry of his priests. Therefore, if there were no Pope, "there will be as many heretics, as the priests".³⁸ Defending the necessity of maintaining the apostolic succession, he mentions Luther, Zwingli, Calvin and Anabaptists in this context, as their ecclesiologies meant repudiation of allegiance to the Pope. He stresses that not all instructions of the apostles are known from the Holy Bible. Some of their teachings, although not included in the New Testament, have been preserved by oral transmission, and are therefore the fully-fledged

³³ Antoni z Napachania, op. cit., fol. 2ver.

³⁴ Ibidem, fol. 3rec.

³⁵ Ibidem.

³⁶ Ibidem, fol. 5rec.

³⁷ Ibidem.

³⁸ Ibidem, fol. 8rec.

heritage of the Church that should be respected by tradition. Augustine confirms the importance of tradition in the life of the congregation. The Church does not exist without apostolic succession, and what remains is only “Satan’s synagogue”.³⁹ By citing Tertullian, he calls up “heretics” to show the origin of their Church. Without a closer argumentation, he recommends following Desiderius Erasmus and not Luther, with whom he goes into a detailed ecclesiological polemic. Summing up his elaboration, which is both incoherent at times and strongly argumentative, he states that the strength of the Church arises from tradition included in the writings of the Fathers, and especially of Augustine, and the believers’ testimony of faith.⁴⁰ The main objective of the teaching described here is the defence of the papacy based on the apostolic succession and Church tradition.

The lecture of Antoni of Napachanie, in its many parts, seems to reflect Stanislaus Hosius’ teachings on the Church, especially in the fragments where the faithful are considered to constitute the mystic body of Christ and about the holy congregation. Hosius tackled the issue of the institution of papacy in the 1557 edition of his *Confessio fidei christiana catholica*, repeating the argumentation for Peter’s succession and apostolic succession of bishops in the next editions of this compendium.⁴¹

Benedykt Herbest, author of the most comprehensive and the most communicative Catholic catechism that was presented to Poles in the sixteenth century,⁴² starts defending his Church already in the

³⁹ Ibidem, fol. 10ver.; cf. N. Widok, “Klemens Rzymski o sukcesji apostołskiej,” *Vox Patrum* 62 (2014), pp. 541–550.

⁴⁰ Antoni z Napachania, op. cit., fol. 1rec.–9rec.

⁴¹ S. Hozjusz, *Chrześcijańskie wyznanie wiary katolickiej albo Wyjaśnienie wyznania złożonego przez ojców zebranych na synodzie prowincjonalnym, który odbył się w Piotrkowie roku pańskiego tysięcznego pięćsetnego pięćdziesiątego pierwszego, w miesiącu maju* [from the 1557 Mainz edition], trans. J. Wojtkowski (Olsztyn, 1999), pp. 83–85; cf. among others idem, *Confessio catholicae fidei christiana: vel potius explicatio quaedam confessionis, in synodo Petricoviensi factae M.D.LI.* (Antverpiae, 1561 [1562]; copy Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Biblioteca de la Facultad de Filosofía, sign. 18367), fol. 51rec.–59rec. (I relied on the digital copy available at: googlebooks.pl); cf. Universal Short Title Catalogue, ustc.ac.uk/index.php/record/405017.

⁴² B. Herbest, *Nauka prawego chrześcijaństwa* (Kraków, 1566; copy Cracow, Jagiellonian Library [Biblioteka Jagiellońska, hereafter: BJ], sign. Cim. 339, irregular folio). For Herbest, see: H.E. Wyczawski, “Herbest (Herbestus, Neapolitanus) Benedykt,” in: *Słownik Polskich Teologów Katolickich*, vol. 2, ed. H.E. Wyczawski (Warszawa, 1982), pp. 36–37; S. Rabiej, “Herbest, Herbestus Neapolitanus, Benedykt SJ,” in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 4, ed. J. Walkusz (Lublin, 1993), coll. 741.

introduction. He repeats the well-known arguments: The Roman Catholic Church is the Church of traditions and signs that occurred within it. The Church's true character is expressed by saints who had been given the grace of doing miracles. New churches do not have such credible witnesses of faith, and Protestants attribute the miracles of God to Beelzebub. However, withdrawing from the Church means leaving Christ and submitting to Satan. Quoting the same biblical parables as Antoni of Napachanie, he explains that there are sinners in the Church, but they are not granted the special gifts of the Holy Spirit. One should not leave the "true" Church because of them.⁴³

In his commentary to the appropriate article in the *Credo*, he expresses his wish that ordinary people should learn to recite "the Holy Catholic Church", which is the Church of Christ, consecrated by the Holy Spirit that everyone receives at baptism. The apostles taught about such a Church, yet it was Christ who decided it should be universal, sending them to the pagans. He attributes the prefiguration of that image of the Church to the children of Abraham and once again refers to the Bishop of Hippo (and to the words: "sparsum est semen sanguinis, surrexit seges ecclesiae").⁴⁴

He describes all other Christian communities as "newly conceived" and explains the reasons of their separation from the Catholic Church in the following way: "None of the churches had been spread around the world before, but the one that listened to the Pope, the Holy Father. It is thus unwise to look for another church".⁴⁵ Last but not least, he quotes Augustine: "heretics" believe in what they did not see (the Ascension), yet they do not believe in what they are looking at: that the universal Catholic Church has the true glory of God. He follows Augustine (*Sermones de tempore*, 109) in writing that "two parents, Adam and Eve, have born us for death, two: Christ and the Church, bear us for the eternal life. [– –] And if one does not want to have the Church as Mother on earth, he will not have God as Father in heaven".⁴⁶ The Church with its sacraments and liturgy draws a safe path to salvation. On the one hand, it belongs to the corporate world, and on the other it exists beyond time and place as a congregation of the living and the dead. It never errs, is always a witness to

⁴³ Herbest, op. cit., fol. 96rec.

⁴⁴ This is a paraphrase of Tertullian; Sermo 22, 4, 4; see C. Mohrmann, "Saint Jérôme et Saint Augustin sur Tertullien," *Vigiliae Christianae* 5 (1951), pp. 111–112.

⁴⁵ Herbest, op. cit., fol. 84ver.

⁴⁶ Ibidem, fol. 98rec.–98ver.

the truth, lies on the gravity of Christ represented by “apostolic and bishops’ councils”.⁴⁷

According to the literary tradition of biblical wisdom, the source of wisdom springs from godliness: “A godly man is wiser than all philosophers of the world who do not obey God”.⁴⁸ The author refers to the belief shared by some defenders of the old Church, and mainly by its contesters about the limitations of mind for learning the revealed mysteries of faith. However, whereas the Protestants learned the Bible by “heart” as a consequence,⁴⁹ Herbest looks for a safe ground for the religious and moral formation of a Christian and the entire Church in the liturgical calendar. Combined with the annual nature cycle, it abounded in religious practices sanctioned by the custom and the memory of generations.⁵⁰ Herbest describes those practices as “reminders for simple people”.⁵¹ He arguments in detail the appropriateness of such para-liturgical solemnities as: blessing of oats, wine, bells, fields, etc., processions of the Way of the Cross, or before the Ascension Day. He also praises the fact that these customs are preserved by good and simple people. He is aware of the pagan origin of some practices, but he approves of the approach of the Church which adapted them to its own pedagogy.

In his opinion, the Church offers daily practices leading to salvation. These are not only a Sunday mass or the procession that accompanies it, but also daily visits at the church, sprinkling with holy water (“make the sign of the cross, look at walls, altars, paintings; [– –] listen to what is read or sung”).⁵² He adds that Satan fears holy water as a reminder of baptism. The power of water comes from the prayer and the priest’s word. Gestures, which are explained in detail, are the sum of Christian faith and “urgent reminder of salvation things”,⁵³ just like images hung in the church (e.g. the cross on the rood screen draws attention to the Lord’s mediation). It is thus not surprising that

⁴⁷ Ibidem, fol. 98rec.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, fol. 89rec.

⁴⁹ For further reading, see K. Meller, “Noc przeszła, a dzień się przybliżył”. *Studia o polskim piśmiennictwie reformacyjnym XVI wieku* (Poznań, 2004), pp. 174–184.

⁵⁰ For the genesis and universality of certain customs, see B. Wojciechowska, *Od godów do św. Łucji. Obrzędy doroczne w Polsce późnego średniowiecza* (Kielce, 2000).

⁵¹ Herbest, op. cit., fol. 102rec.–102ver.

⁵² Ibidem, fol. 112ver. These recommendations are not dissimilar from the widely-known ones addressed to the faithful, see I. Skierska, *Obowiązek mszalny w średniowiecznej Polsce* (Warszawa, 2003), pp. 202–205.

⁵³ Herbest, op. cit., fol. 113rec.

a townsman talking to the priest says that the look of the Crucified Christ moves him so much as to "disgust sin". The priest replies: "We need superior signs. The simplest woman knows very well what a sign is and what it marks. [- -] A strange thing is that the new believers destroy the symbols of God's Passion wherever they see them; aren't they Christians?"⁵⁴ He considers the ignorance of visual representation as the expression of a new fashion, clearly opposed to the good old customs ("older people did not act in this way"⁵⁵), in which he includes Stations of the Cross and Calvary in the fields, at the crossroads or at hospitals. He speaks well of the poor beggars at the church, who remind us of the "poverty of this world" with their behaviour,⁵⁶ yet, at the same time, play an important role in the divine plan of salvation. Herbest makes an image of the strong universal Church with faith passed on from one generation to the next. It is well known that para-liturgy and sacraments had been given a prominent place in it. Moderate use of that tool in the fight for the souls of believers, recommended by legislators, both in earlier and later centuries, has generally been limited to synodal declarations only. These practices, supervised by the parish priests, were very close to superstitious behaviours. Herbest seems to be aware of that risk and the price that must be paid to keep the Church coherent, secure and unthreatened, although that cohesion might not necessarily be based on a deeper understanding of the dogmas of faith.

Universal Church – through the annual and daily liturgy exercised at the church and at home, at hospitals, in the field, on the road, by signs and rites, or the mass – teaches about the Crucified Christ, reminding us about the need to obey His will. With this statement Herbest begins answering the question: "Why do these new Christians defy holy things, why do they discard both masses and hours from churches?"⁵⁷ The images of holy martyrs (mainly from the formative period of the Church, yet he also mentions St. Adalbert), presentations of young girl-martyrs, are an effective tool of encouraging

⁵⁴ Ibidem, fol. [113' ver.]. The late-mediaeval religiosity aimed at inducing spiritual revival by means of inspiring an emotionally-charged religious experience. See J.J. Kopeć, "Nurt pasyjny w średniowiecznej religijności polskiej," in: *Męka Chrystusa wczoraj i dziś*, ed. H.D. Wojtyska, J.J. Kopeć (Lublin, 1981), pp. 52–59. On the role of rood screens, see K.L. French, *The People of the Parish: Community Life in a Late Medieval English Diocese* (Philadelphia PA, 2001), pp. 154–162.

⁵⁵ Herbest, op. cit., fol. [113' ver.].

⁵⁶ Ibidem, fol. 114rec.

⁵⁷ Ibidem, fol. 116rec.

believers, which is confirmed by the practice of the early Christian Church and instructions of the Fathers.⁵⁸

Strongly defending the customs that were most frequently attacked by the dissenters,⁵⁹ he refers not only to the tradition of the universal Church and theological writings, but also to the history of Poland. He goes back to the piety of Polish monarchs, which was revealed in, e.g., the transfer of the remains of St. Stanislaus of Szczepanów to the Wawel Cathedral, setting it as an example for the infidels.⁶⁰

The priest also tackles the issue of indulgence feasts and looks for the rationale behind organising them in the first Christians' customs. The confrontation of the past with the present leads him to criticising some behaviours. He is for the return to the public penances of sinners, yet remains distanced towards teaching faith at home – even when he is told by the townsman that Christ and the apostles used to do that, too. He also condemns family catechesis as the one of dubious quality. That might have been affected by “home praying service” which was popular among Evangelic Protestants (its role in forming proper religious and moral attitudes was highly rated by the Reformers). Yet, the priest is not consistent here. Praising his lay interlocutor for a good knowledge of gospel ideals, he repeats the latter's answer that he had learnt from explanations of his father who had known the Gospel by heart, although he had not been a literary man.⁶¹ He moreover defies blessing of the nobility's home weddings, inherited from the past and popularised among his contemporaries.

Herbest's Church is the congregation of clergy and laymen fulfilling daily religious duties and heading for the meeting with God. Defending the teachings of his community, the author is not uncritical, especially towards the conduct of his brother priests. However, he concludes that: “You must follow the preaching and not the action

⁵⁸ Ibidem, fol. [119rec.–119ver.]. For more on this source, see W. Kowalski, “Man and God: The First Three Commandments in the Polish Catholic Catechisms of the 1560s–1570s,” in: *The Ten Commandments in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, ed. Y. Desplenter, J. Pieters, W. Melion (Leiden and Boston, 2017; Intersections: Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture, vol. 52), pp. 219–238.

⁵⁹ For more, see, i.a., B. Wojciechowska, “Krytyka religijności katolickiej w pismach Mikołaja Reja,” in: *Mikołaj Rej z Nagłowic. W pięćsetną rocznicę urodzin*, ed. W. Kowalski (Kielce, 2005), pp. 323–339.

⁶⁰ From 1254 onwards, placed in an adorned coffin in the very centre of the church, see M. Rożek, *Katedra wawelska w XVII wieku* (Kraków, 1980; Biblioteka Krakowska, no. 121), p. 68.

⁶¹ Herbest, op. cit., fol. [108'rec.].

of the priest". Then, elsewhere, he adds: "Sometimes it is much better to remain silent than preach in a wrong way".⁶²

In the catechism by Marcin Białobrzeski, Suffragan Bishop of the Diocese of Cracow, we can find a lecture that is less expansive, though based on the same foundation.⁶³ The theologian and polemist takes on a much more aggressive tone in it. Once again we are told about the Church built by Peter and Paul, with Christ as the head, apostolic succession of popes and martyrs bearing witness to their faith. The bishop adds however that although you can find sins and sinners in the Roman Catholic Church, there are no "heretical errors nor heretics in it". The Church is one and it only exists where the sheep listen to the voice of their shepherd (J 10:1–16). Although not all members of that sheepfold may always be guided by the Gospel, we "should not leave God for the devil".⁶⁴

A healthy word of God is the word of peace; a false one brings discord and war. He gives the peasant uprising in Germany and conflicts between Swiss towns as examples.⁶⁵ Already in the patristic epoch, St. Basil warned against the consequences of quarrels among Christians, like the ones of the Reich or Switzerland, when he talked about the victory of Arians over the Church. Białobrzeski also shows that withdrawal from the Church has sparked off the war in Livonia, in which the Kingdom of Poland was involved. He quotes Augustine's words against the Donatists to prove that the true and universal Church has always fought against heretics. He does not find conversion to new religions as loss, since once Jews had fallen away from the true faith, God called pagans to replace them instead. What he mentions are executions of the followers of the Roman Catholic Church in Germany, England

⁶² Ibidem, fol. 82ver.–140rec., here: fol. 135rec., 136ver.

⁶³ M. Białobrzeski, *Katechizm albo wizerunek prawey wiary chrześcijańskiej wedle nauki Pana Jezusa Chrystusa, Apostolów iego y Kościoła iego świętego przeciwko wszystkim obłądliwościom tych czasów barzo pożyteczny* (Kraków, 1566 [1567]; copy BJ, sign.. Cim. 4452); see *Katalog poloników XVI wieku Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej*, vol. 1: A–Ł, ed. M. Malicki, E. Zwinogrodzka, M. Gołuszka et al. (Warszawa and Kraków, 1992), p. 85. For information about the author, see: H.E. Wyczawski, "Białobrzeski Marcin," in: *Słownik Polskich Teologów Katolickich*, vol. 1, pp. 131–132; M. Brzozowski, "Białobrzeski Marcin O.Cist.," in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 2, ed. F. Gryglewicz et al. (Lublin, 1995), colls. 365–366.

⁶⁴ Białobrzeski, op. cit.

⁶⁵ This line of reasoning was frequently voiced by the Catholics; for further information, see J. Tazbir, *Szlachta i teologowie. Studia z dziejów polskiej kontrreformacji* (Warszawa, 1987), pp. 71–94.

and France. The reference to the martyrdom of the modern Church, although indicated in the polemics of the communities,⁶⁶ is not present in the context of our interest in other catechisms that are mentioned here. In contrast to the authors of other Catholic prints of that kind, Białobrzęski does not limit himself to the leading European heresiarchs in pointing to the enemies of the Church, but he also mentions Schwenckfeld, Stankar and other local contesters of the “old faith”.

Like Herbest, he explains that the apostolic tradition is composed both of the New Testament books and of the oral tradition handed down from father to son. He finds the reasons for various dilemmas of the Church in God’s “admission”, interpreted as punishment for sins and erroneous revelation of the deepest truths of faith (“Hastily did we want to know and spread to all the hidden truths of our faith”).⁶⁷ In his opinion, the Church of the “true faith”, guarded by the Pope and the bishops, can be rescued by councils, as they are “the poison for all heretics”.⁶⁸ He therefore praises the work of the Council of Trent. Alongside the typical New Testament argumentation, he devotes a lengthy part of his discussion to the history of Israel, in order to show what a lack of respect for the will of God leads to. The narration is reinforced by invectives, e.g., “swine that torment and ruin the Lord’s vineyard”⁶⁹ (that refers to Isaiah 5:1–7 and Matthew 20:1–16; 21:33–46; the vineyard symbolises God’s grace granted to His Church). Although distinct from the tone of other catechism writings analysed in this article, such a narrative expression falls within the polemical discourse of that time.⁷⁰

We can find analogous contents in the last Catholic print mentioned in this study, written by Hieronim Powodowski, one of the greatest Polish theologians and preachers of his times.⁷¹ His statement is limited to

⁶⁶ For the important, martyrological context of religious conversion, see M. Hanusiewicz-Lavallee, “Okrucieństwo kacyrskie przeciw katolikom w Anglije, czyli polski głos w sporze o męczeństwo,” *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 56 (2012), pp. 37–60.

⁶⁷ Białobrzęski, op. cit., fol. 132ver.

⁶⁸ Ibidem, fol. 137rec.

⁶⁹ Ibidem, fol. 116rec.–140rec.

⁷⁰ The issue is discussed by S. Radoń, *Z dziejów polemiki antyarykańskiej w Polsce XVI–XVII wieku* (Kraków, 1993), pp. 91–118.

⁷¹ H. Powodowski, *Catechizm Kościoła Powszechnego, nauki do zbawienia potrzebniejsze, z dowodów Pisma świętego snadną, a dokładną krótkością zamykający... książki bardzo pożyteczne...* (Poznań, 1577; copy BJ, sign. Cim. 541). For information about the author, see: E. Ozorowski, “Powodowski (Povodovius,

the reflection that the universal Church preserves the unity of faith and preaching. Other religions are "surreptitious, torn, new and different; they cannot be the righteous Christ's Church".⁷² The holiness of the Church is expressed in its sacramental service. We can therefore experience the grace of God that is needed for salvation only in the Church. The Church, a community of the living and the dead supporting themselves with prayer, is understood as "the communion of saints".⁷³

Evangelical sources

Until the early 1560s, the Reformation movement in the Kingdom of Poland was not clearly formed ideologically. Naturally, at the very beginning, the contesters of the traditional church order were inspired by the teachings of Luther and Melancthon. It was so in the Lesser and Greater Poland, where in the 1550s the Czech Brethren established their own church, and also in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania where since 1556 Antitrinitarism had also been developing. Until ca. 1553–1557 Calvin's theology was very little known. Zwingli, whose teachings have been implemented to an unknown extent, was sometimes treated as its author. In the formative period of the Polish Reformation movement many sources were used, and more those from Basel and Zurich than from Geneva. In general, the movement was anti-Roman by nature. The followers advocated rejecting everything from the teaching of the Catholic Church that was in opposition to the Bible. The teachings of John Calvin had been adopted as a leading theology in ca. 1560, with the strengthening of the Evangelical organisational structure.⁷⁴

z Powodowa) Hieronim," in: *Słownik Polskich Teologów Katolickich*, vol. 3, pp. 430–432; R. Skrzyniarz, "Powodowski Hieronim," in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 16, ed. S. Wilk et al. (Lublin, 2012), pp. 141–142.

⁷² Powodowski, op. cit., p. 25.

⁷³ Ibidem, pp. 25–26.

⁷⁴ See: J.T. Maciuszko, "Poglądy religijne Mikołaja Reja," in: *Mikołaj Rej z Nagłowic*, pp. 302–307; M. Kosman, *Protestanci i kontrreformacja. Z dziejów tolerancji w Rzeczypospolitej XVI–XVIII wieku* (Wrocław, 1978), pp. 20–26; J. Dworzaczkowa, *Z dziejów Braci Czeskich w Polsce* (Poznań, 2003), pp. 18–21; K. Bem, "'From Many Different Sources.' The Formation of the Polish and Lithuanian Reformed Liturgy," in: *Liturgy in Migration. From the Upper Room to Cyberspace*, ed. T. Berger (Collegeville, 2012), pp. 101–130; J. Urban, "Reformacja w życiu wsi małopolskiej," in: *Et haec facienda et illa non omittenda. Profesor Wacław Urban w swych dziełach wybranych*, ed. A. Kądziela et al. (Warszawa, 2012; Opera Necessaria), pp. 25–39; M. Ptasiński, "The Polish-Lithuanian

The anonymous print, entitled *Catechismus to jest nauka barzo pożyteczna każdemu wiernemu krześcijaninowi jako się ma w zakonie Bożym a w wierze i w dobrych uczynkach sprawować* (Catechism is a very useful teaching for every Christian believer...), published in 1543 in Cracow, is chronologically the first known Polish manual on religious education, compiled according to the Reformation principles. It was based on *Catechismus minor puerorum*, written by Luther's fellow, Urban Rhegius, and announced in 1535 in Wittenberg.⁷⁵ Researchers generally agree as to the impact of Mikołaj Rej of Nagłowice on the creation of this Polish adaptation. As has been demonstrated by Janusz T. Maciuszko, the catechism promotes Reformation views to the greatest possible extent at the 1540s, i.e., by the time of Sigismund II Augustus' accession to the throne in 1548.⁷⁶ In contrast to his father, the last of the Jagiellons "allowed everyone to live as they wanted".⁷⁷

Rej declares his ecclesial attitude already in the introduction to the deliberations: "I believe there is only one assembly of the Holy Christian Church. It is not that I believe in the gathering of the Christian Church, but in the gathering of the Christian Church according to Christ's will".⁷⁸ He explains further on that one should trust God alone, "as it is the Lord himself who assembles the holy Church".⁷⁹ The definition of the Church cannot be therefore discussed. It is

Commonwealth," in: *A Companion to the Reformation in Central Europe*, ed. H. Louthan, G. Murdock (Leiden and Boston, 2015; Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, vol. 61), pp. 40–66.

⁷⁵ For the theological analysis of the print, see R.M. Leszczyński, "Nauka ewangelicko-reformowana w polskojęzycznych katechizmach z XVI wieku," in: *Ewangelicyzm reformowany w pierwszej Rzeczypospolitej. Dialog z Europą i wybory aksjologiczne w świetle literatury i piśmiennictwa XVI–XVII wieku*, ed. D. Chemperek (Warszawa, 2015; Kultura Pierwszej Rzeczypospolitej w Dialogu z Europą. Hermeneutyka Wartości, vol. 9), pp. 69–74.

⁷⁶ J.T. Maciuszko, *Mikołaj Rej. Zapomniany teolog ewangelicki z XVI w.* (Warszawa, 2002), pp. 83–115. The date of the first impression and the authorship after Universal Short Title Catalogue, ustc.ac.uk/index.php/record/244559.

⁷⁷ See A. Januszek-Sieradzka, "W co wierzył król Zygmunt August?," in: *Rycerze, wędrowcy, kacerze. Studia z historii średniowiecznej i wczesnonowoczesnej Europy środkowej*, ed. B. Wojciechowska, W. Kowalski (Kielce, 2013), p. 281.

⁷⁸ J.T. Maciuszko observes that Rej's argumentation is deprived of all the distinctness and conciseness of the German theologian: „wywód Rejowy gubi całą dobitność i lapidarność [– –] wypowiedzi teologa niemieckiego [– –]. Non enim credimus in Ecclesiam, cum ecclesia sit creatura, sed credimus ecclesiam esse”; Maciuszko, *Mikołaj Rej*, p. 104.

⁷⁹ *Catechismus*, fol. 44ver.

Christ's will to have only one Church guarded by God, just like a house is guarded by its host or a town by its head.

By referring to St. Augustine (with no special indication), Rej says that both the pilgrims in this world, the souls devoted to God in heaven and angels constitute one Church. Irrespective of all divisions, Christians are united in faith of the Church, as all, serving God in various places and assemblies, make one Church of one faith based on the Holy Bible and sacraments. It is thus "the entire community of the divine disguised by faith, no matter how different they are".⁸⁰ One can get to the Church by being baptised via the action of the Holy Spirit. When asked by a student: "Where should we look for that holy Church?", the master replies after Luther: "Wherever the word of the Lord is truly professed and preserved, together with other sacred things [i.e., sacraments – W.K.], there is the place of the right Church".⁸¹ The sacraments he mentions (baptism, marriage, the Last Supper "and numerous others"), are compatible with the catalogue of Catholic Church sacraments, hence Janusz T. Maciuszko writes about the "(crypto)reformativ" attitude of Rej who does not want to openly contest the Roman teaching.⁸²

The translator, which is stressed by the cited researcher, rejects Rhegius' term of the "true Church" for the adjective "uniform" (equal, immutable). According to Maciuszko, that resignation should be attributed to Rej's belief that all Christians will be united, most probably in Evangelical faith, or else the term "true" has not been used for censorship reasons.⁸³ We can also point to yet another possible interpretation, which is very close to the abovementioned ecclesial declaration. It seems that that Rej wanted to stress even more, probably being influenced by Melanchthon (and maybe Bucer),⁸⁴ that a firm and unanimous

⁸⁰ Ibidem, fol. 45rec. As already mentioned, this is how the majority of then Evangelical theologians, including Łaski, defined the Church community, cf. Kowalska-Kossobudzka, "Jana Łaskiego pojęcie," p. 100.

⁸¹ *Catechismus*, fol. 46rec.

⁸² Ibidem, fol. 46rec.; cf. Maciuszko, *Mikołaj Rej*, p. 105; Leszczyński, op. cit., pp. 70–71.

⁸³ Maciuszko, *Mikołaj Rej*, p. 104.

⁸⁴ Cf. R. Keen, "Political Authority and Ecclesiology in Melanchthon's *De ecclesiae autoritate*," *Church History* 65 (1996), pp. 1–14; W. van't Spijker, "Bucer's Doctrinal Legacy as Formulated in his Last Three Wills and Testaments," *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 3 (2001), pp. 162–164; P. Matheson, "Martin Bucer and the Old Church," in: *Martin Bucer. Reforming Church and Community*, ed. D.F. Wright (Cambridge and New York, 1994), pp. 6, 13–15; see also: Maciuszko, "Poglądy religijne," pp. 306–307.

community of Christians united by the Holy Spirit is a fact, although Christ's Kingdom had not been fully revealed yet, as can be read in the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*. When put in the context indicated by Melancthon, the term would have an anti-Catholic meaning. As has been proven by Janusz T. Maciuszko, Rej rejects the clear declarations of Rhegius who quotes the Augsburg Confession and condemns veneration of saints. However, Rej's definition of the Church, although ambiguous at times, is reformative in general.

It is clear from further statements when the master states that, in spite of efforts by the Catholic Church, "it cannot surround Christian gatherings with a fence".⁸⁵ The master agrees that in a "real" church there are also those who do not follow Christ's teachings. They, however, are a sort of wild weed and will be pulled up by the Good Host (Matthew 13:3), though we are also reminded that God will not abandon "saints and those elected by God". "Dissenters", however, will not be saved, and these include those who do not follow God's laws, the Gospels and do not take the sacraments, and so this does not *ex definitione* include Lutherans.⁸⁶

We should also agree with Janusz T. Maciuszko in stating that Rej formulated his thoughts in such a way as to aid the distribution of his work. Hence, we should be even more impressed by the skill with which he adapted the original. It is also worth noting that when around 1548–1549 the catechism was produced using the Helen Ungler typography, its author/adaptor was already excommunicated for avoiding financial obligations due to the Cracow collegiate of St. Anne.⁸⁷

Jan Seklucjan (Jan from Siekluki, Seclucian, Seclucianus), a contemporary of Rej's, renowned for promoting Lutheranism across the Polish Kingdom,⁸⁸ postulated his ecclesiastical views in his *Declaration of Faith* (1544), and then the catechism (published in 1547, 1549

⁸⁵ *Catechismus*, fol. 46ver.

⁸⁶ Ibidem, fol. 47ver.–48ver. of the unique copy BJ (sign. Cim. 219), reprint from ca. 1548–1549, no title page; Maciuszko, *Mikołaj Rej*, p. 86; Universal Short Title Catalogue, ustc.ac.uk/index.php/record/241486. I compared it with the first edition published by F. Pułaski, *Catechismus to jest nauka barzo pożyteczna każdemu wiernemu krześcijaninowi, jako się ma w zakonie Bożym a w wierze i w dobrych uczynkach sprawować: 1543 r.* (Kraków, 1910), pp. 62–66.

⁸⁷ W. Urban, Z. Kłosińska, "Kłątwy przeciwko Rejowi," in: *Et haec facienda et illa non omittenda*, pp. 559–566.

⁸⁸ J. Seklucjan, *Wybór pism*, ed. S. Rospond (Olsztyn, 1979), pp. v–xi.

[actually in 1548] and 1568).⁸⁹ These works were used for didactic purposes. Although the *Declaration of Faith* focuses on promoting Lutheranism, the publishers of this source are of the opinion that the definition of the Church is more suited to "the spirit of the faith of Reformed churches than the Lutheran community". They stress that, according to Luther, Christ created his church based on the faith of Peter, while Seklucjan held that the Church which is led by Christ (1 Cor 6:19; Eph 5:23; Col 1:18) was in turn "firmly based on the Holy Scriptures",⁹⁰ hence Christians have no right to make any changes to it. As evidence, he cites Augustine's writings against the Manichaeans. Seklucjan's position is therefore largely, as indicated, very close to the Reformation views of the time and seeking a direct inspiration therefore appears to be cognitively of little use.

The reformer admits that real Christians can even be found in Rome. If the Roman bishop teaches from "the Moses' pulpit and the Holy scriptures" then he should be heeded as "if he were God himself". This is how he treats Luther and other preachers, seeing as "not the evil person, but for the Holy word do I have to follow all good and true learning".⁹¹ In his catechism, Seklucjan sees the Church as all those who believe the Good News, who partake of the sacraments, but also those who confirm their faith by doing good deeds. The faithful are truly the "holy, living Church of Christ, [– –] brotherhood and holy priesthood and the body of Christ",⁹² which echoes the view about the priestly community of all those who have been baptised. The real Church, founded on the Good Gospel, can be known "by fruits and deeds"⁹³ (Mt 7:16), as shown by the first parents when they believed God's announcement about Christ's victory – Saviour and head of the Church – over Satan. The false Church – as in the papal church – replaced the Word with human inventions, abandoned the Holy Communion under two kinds. Seklucjan

⁸⁹ Idem, *Wyznanie wiary chrześcijańskiej*, ed. H. Kowalska, S. Rospond (Warszawa, 1972; Biblioteka Pisarzy Reformacyjnych, no. 10); idem, *Catechismus to iest nauka naprzędniejsza y potrzebniejsza ku zbawienyu o wierze krzescianskiej* (Królewiec, 1547, copy Cracow, Czartoryski Library [Biblioteka Czartoryskich, hereafter: BCz], sign. Cim. 1880), n.p.; idem, *Catechismus to iest krotka a prosta (starej wiary chrzescianskiej) nauka powtore wydana* (Królewiec, 1549; copy Warsaw, National Library [Biblioteka Narodowa, hereafter: BN], sign. SD XVI.O.6247 adl.), n.p.

⁹⁰ Idem, *Wyznanie wiary*, pp. ix–x.

⁹¹ Ibidem, pp. 11–12.

⁹² Seklucjan, *Catechismus*, n.p.

⁹³ Ibidem, n.p.

rebukes shepherds who “having ignored their office, lead and proclaim the church for themselves, devouring the capital of the impoverished living Church, and the living Church then suffers in poverty fallen down on the ground”, such men are “worse than predatory wolves”. He then demands that instead of looking after the lavishly decorated temples the needy should be looked after (“you dress Christ Our Lord in the poor that are His”⁹⁴). And so we are dealing with a lecture on Lutheran ecclesiology which belongs to the broader field of reformers emerging from the same time as Seklucjan himself. One can also discern echoes of long-standing criticisms of the Church as a corporation set in social realities of the time, proclaimed by numerous supporters of the evangelical ideal of the community of the poor.⁹⁵

We should also recall here the contribution to the evangelization in a Lutheran spirit of Jan Sandecki-Malecki, also connected with Königsberg (Królewiec). Seklucjan and Malecki, sharing the same goal, the protector and typographer, as authors of catechisms, remained in a creative conflict. Presenting his *Credo*, both in the small catechism proclaimed in 1545, as well as in the 1547 edition, Seklucjan repeats the traditional Catholic formula of the “holy Christian church”. Malecki amends this as the “holy Christian gathering”, and corrects the “communion of saints” (*świętych obcowanie*) to the “commonality of saints” (*świętych pospolstwo*), which seems to more aptly present Luther’s intentions (the church as a gathering of the faithful, rather than an institution).⁹⁶ And yet, opinions about this topic must have been divided at the court in Königsberg. Eustachy Trepka, the Polish translator of a popular catechism written by Johannes Brenz, an eminent reformer and follower of Luther, who used his talents to serve Prince Albrecht, recalls the “holy Christian Church, and thus universal, the abiding communion of saints”.⁹⁷ The work represents

⁹⁴ Ibidem, n.p.

⁹⁵ Cf. Świeżawski, op. cit., pp. 46–47.

⁹⁶ *Druki mazurskie XVI w.*, ed. S. Rospond (Olsztyn, 1948), pp. 22, 38; A. Lenartowicz-Zagrodna, “*Defensio verae translationis corporis Catechismi in linguam Polonicam, adversus calumnias Joannis Secluciani* Jana Maleckiego – przekład wraz z komentarzem,” *Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne. Seria Językoznawcza* 38 (2011), pp. 130–133.

⁹⁷ *Catechismus to iest zupełna nauka chrześcijańska przez Jana Brenciusza z pisma prorockiego i apostolskiego zniesiona, który możesz dobrze małą Biblią nazwać* (Królewiec, 1556), fol. 122ver.–137rec.; no title page (BO, sign. XVI.Qu. 3191). For further information, see: Korzo, “W sprawie,” pp. 184–186; eadem, “Przyczynek,” pp. 12–14.

Lutheran orthodoxy, while the translator explains to the reader certain complexities, which are evidence of the difficulties the author of the translation had to contend with.⁹⁸

Faith in the one Church of Christ, “the gathering of the faithful and the communion of saints”, one body brought together by the Holy Spirit and ruled by the Holy Word, was also expressed by the author of the *Minor Catechism* published in Brest under the auspices of Mikołaj II Radziwiłł, most likely between 1553 and 1554. This church is a community intended to “make true use of the sacraments”, aware of the importance of the salvation secured by Christ’s death, living in the one spirit, one knowledge, faith, hope, and love. Christ redeemed sins for all man through his death on the Cross, and in this context the author points to the importance and gravity of the sacraments for the Church. It is therefore a general reformatory position. There follows a short lecture about the doctrine of justification through faith in a rather Lutheran format.⁹⁹ Meanwhile, ecclesiological issues are not systematically discussed in the *Larger Catechism*, which adds to the *Smaller Catechism*.

This is a similar position to that adopted by the author of an anonymous catechism which was issued by Jan Daubmann’s Königsberg-based typography in 1536. The Church “gathered from Christ in mercy” is, it would seem, an echo of the teachings of Calvin about the Church as Christ’s Kingdom, in which discipline is man’s response to God’s mercy.¹⁰⁰

The cantional declared in Nieśwież in 1563 contains two catechisms, out of which the *Wtóry katechizm szerszy dla więtszych i ćwiczeńszych dziełek* (Second Catechism expanded for bigger and gifted adolescents) is a rare find today, as a copy of one of the Basel editions.¹⁰¹ The original was published between 1525–1530 as written by Johannes Oecolampadius, a renowned scholar. His catechism was fundamentally

⁹⁸ For further information about the translator, see K. Kolbuszewski, *Postyllografia polska XVI i XVII w.* (Kraków, 1921), pp. 44–57.

⁹⁹ *Katechizm brzeski*, ed. F. Pułaski (Warszawa, 1908; Collectanea of the Krasieński Ordination Library, no. 1), pp. 10–11. Other sections of the catechism focus primarily on Lutheran sacramentology, see Leszczyński, op. cit., pp. 75–76; cf. Avis, *Luther’s Theology*, p. 105; V.-M. Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology. Ecumenical, Historical and Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL, 2002), pp. 41–49.

¹⁰⁰ [Cantional], Library of Silesia, Cieszyn Museum, fol. D v rec.f. See Y. Kim, *The Identity and the Life of the Church. John Calvin’s Ecclesiology in the Perspective of his Anthropology* (Eugene, OR, 2014), pp. 156–188.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Korzo, “Przyczynek,” pp. 7–25.

reworked and expanded by Oswald Myconius in 1544, who had once worked with Ulrich Zwingli in Zurich. According to Myconius, the real Church is led by the Word of God and makes use of the sacraments as set out by Christ. Reducing the importance of rites and recalling St. Augustine, Myconius claims that the inner sign of belonging to the Church is the fear of God, which could be inspired by the teachings of Bucer. Comparing Myconius' lecture with its Polish version suggests that its author faithfully communicated the ecclesiastical position of the Basel pastor.¹⁰² In the first, catechistic part of the cantional all we have is a quote from the appropriate article of the *Credo*.

An extensive lecture on Evangelical-Reformed ecclesiology was included in a catechism by the afore-mentioned Paweł Gilowski. In it, we can encounter two separate threads: presentation of the Church as visible and invisible, and furthermore – a uniquely expanded – refutation of Catholic teachings.¹⁰³ One Church is a gathering in the heavens “composed in the name of everlasting glory”, while the second is still here “battling on Earth”.¹⁰⁴ In line with the Sandomierz Agreement it also reminds us that God's will is that the Church cannot be “imprisoned” in one place or connected with a single person:¹⁰⁵

For it is not hailed as the papal Church, nor Wittenbergian, Auspurgian, Genovese, Tigers or of Constantinople, but Christ's, Christian, not Lutheran, Zwinglius, Calvinist, but Christian.¹⁰⁶

This church thrives on the Holy Gospel, the sacraments of baptism and the Last Supper, and these are “certain and undoubted signs” of the real Church. This is a general Reformation position, in step with Calvin's teaching for whom the fundamental task of the Church was to preach the gospel, hence the doctrinal aspect was of secondary importance.¹⁰⁷ Gilowski refers directly to the teachings

¹⁰² Ibidem, p. 15. For the fear of God in the teachings of Bucer, see B. Lugioyo, *Martin Bucer's Doctrine of Justification. Reformation Theology and Early Modern Irenicism* (Oxford and New York, 2010; Oxford Studies in Historical Theology), p. 233, passim.

¹⁰³ Gilowski, op. cit., fol. 252rec.–264rec. The author's unapologetically negative stance on the Catholic tradition is critiqued by A. Kawecka-Gryczowa, “Spory o ‘szczyrą prawdę’,” *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 23 (1978), p. 228.

¹⁰⁴ Gilowski, op. cit., fol. 253ver.

¹⁰⁵ *Konfesja sandomierska. Transkrypcja i komentarz językowy*, ed. K. Długosz-Kurczabowa (Warszawa, 1995), pp. 132–135.

¹⁰⁶ Gilowski, op. cit., fol. 255rec.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. P.J. Naudé, “Why is a Multiplicity of Confessions Particular to the Reformed Tradition?,” *Acta Theologica* 20 (2014), pp. 39–41; see: Kowalska, “Przejrzani

of this reformer, stressing that the Holy Church of God is a community of the elect, who are united in the Holy Ghost. He takes his teachings from the New Testament (J 17; Mt 20; Thes 3), hence "not all the world, but from the world whole that people are chosen as the holy Church, those who have the one faith, one spirit and are certain of their destiny".¹⁰⁸ The Church has always brought together the good and the bad, but "in the final harvest" God will tell the healthy seeds from the fallow. Men become saints not through their deeds, but through being bathed in the blood of Christ. Every Christian has the duty to proclaim the sanctity of the Church through "pious living [– –], seeing as faith without actions is dead".¹⁰⁹ We therefore have here the basic elements of the ecclesiology of Reformed churches.

Following the main path of the Reformation, Gilowski proclaims that the instruction Peter was given to "tend to my flock, [– –] shepherd my sheep" (J 21:15–19) can be interpreted solely as the order to proclaim the Good News and considers excessive any sort of drawing of conclusions about any authority. In addition, in contrast with the Catholic interpretation of Jesus' words (Mt 16:18), the Son of God intended to create a church on the strong faith of Peter, but not on Peter himself – for he was only a man. He also ascribes this interpretation to Beda and concludes that building "upon persons" leads to Christians becoming divided, something we read about in the Pauline *Epistles*. And yet, in spite of this clear presentation of the Church of a living faith, Gilowski's vision is not uniformly optimistic, because the universal Church should more likely be associated with Jerusalem, seeing as "that is where our bishop Jesus Christ had his cathedral". And yet Jerusalem was taken by Muslims, hence "also in Rome first there was paganism, then Christianity, and now there is blasphemy and idolatry, and what will follow – that is something to be feared".¹¹⁰

Gilowski remains close to the teachings of Luther and Calvin also when he tries to explain the sanctity of the Church, and criticises attempts to create a community formed only of those free of sin. He points to all those who, having abandoned their previous fellow faithful, gathered in Raków in order to live in a way they thought pious,

i wybrani," passim; S. Piwko, *Jan Kalwin. Życie i dzieło* (Warszawa, 1995), pp. 120–153.

¹⁰⁸ Gilowski, op. cit., fol. 254rec.

¹⁰⁹ Ibidem, fol. 259rec.–260rec.

¹¹⁰ Ibidem, fol. 254ver.–255rec.

in prayer, far from a corrupt world, hence presenting this world with a “sanctified” front.¹¹¹ And yet, they quickly came to see the error of their decision. This was the same approach adopted by hermits and monks who, apart from superficial appearance, were not in any way different from ordinary folk. At the same time, however, he approves of the decision to cut off from the false teachings of Rome, which he explains through Christ’s instruction: beware of false prophets (Mt 7:15).

The idea of the “true” church was also concisely expounded in the catechism edited prior to 1581 by the senior of the Lithuanian Reformed Church Stanisław Sudrowiusz.¹¹² Prayers titled *Prośby pospolite o potrzeby zboru krześciańskiego* (Commonplace Pleas for the Needs of the Christian Fellowship) he repeated following the afore-mentioned Königsberg Catechism or the Nieśwież Catechism (both printed around 1563).¹¹³ They remind us of the teachings about the universal Church united through the Holy Spirit, hence about the congregation “scattered all over the world, in which the laws and the salvation through the teachings of the [Holy] Son sounds and is preserved without all the secondary human interjections”. The prayers further aimed at the Almighty, so that he would keep the false shepherds far from his Church, replacing them with the faithful ones, appears to echo the conflict with Antitrinitarians.¹¹⁴

In the canticle chapter titled *Songs about the Holy Congregation* we find reminders about the teachings of Christ’s Church, which replaced the Israelite Synagogue. The Church is the Lord’s bride, who is in turn ruled over through the Word,¹¹⁵ while the Holy Spirit informs the bride – the Church – about its duties. This is not, of course, an

¹¹¹ Gilowski’s evaluation is supported by contemporary historiography, see: S. Two-rek, “Raków w okresie ‘nieustającego synodu’ (1569–1572),” in: *Wokół dziejów i tradycji arianizmu*, ed. L. Szczucki (Warszawa, 1971), pp. 67–75; Campi, op. cit., p. 296 (on Calvin’s criticism of “the Church of the saints”, as advocated by the Anabaptists).

¹¹² [S. Sudorowiusz], *Katechizm albo krotkie w iedno miejsce zebranie wiary* (Wilno, 1600). I relied on the Jagiellonian Library copy that lacks the title page (BJ, sign. Cim. 901), dated 1600 by the authors of *Catalogus librorum saeculi XVI qui in Bibliotheca Jagellonica Cracoviensi asservantur*, vol. 4, ed. M. Malicki et al. (Baden-Baden, 2003; Bibliotheca Bibliographica Aureliana), p. 303. Korzo (“W sprawie,” p. 179) discusses differences between the Cracow copy and the 1594 as well as the 1600 editions. I also made use of the latter (BK, sign. Cim. 0.341).

¹¹³ [*Cantional*], fol. C viii ver. – C ix rec.; cf. Kawecka, op. cit., pp. 128–129.

¹¹⁴ [Sudorowiusz], op. cit., fol. C₄ver.–C₅ver.

¹¹⁵ Ibidem, fol. I xviii ver.

original thought, seeing as, back in 1523, Ulrich Zwingli taught about the Church as a flawless bride of Christ, subject to the strengthening influence of the Spirit though here the influence came mainly from.¹¹⁶ These texts were also known to Polish and Lithuanian Evangelicals from at least the start of the 1560s.¹¹⁷

The Church was compared to a "new vineyard", planted in the place of "the vineyard of Israel", moved there from Egypt by the Lord. However, because "the thorns have multiplied", he has replaced it with another communion, and sanctified it with the blood of the Saviour. Evidently, the stress is placed on the New Testament's mentioning of the coming of Christ and living among sheep, giving them protection from destructive elements, much like Noah's Ark had done in the past. The Church continues the work of Christian councils from the times of the Apostles. A sense of threat is shown here *expressis verbis* as arising from enemy crowds, but also as awareness of being part of the Lord's fold, which defends itself against the Anti-Christ. "A small herd" (Luke 12:32) dutifully accepts persecution as a deserved act of God and at the same time, strong through "certain faith", believes in Christ's protection.¹¹⁸ This sort of presentation of a besieged community which resolutely tries to defend Christ's teachings can be found in other evangelical hymn collections of the time, starting with *The Songs of Holiness and Piety* by Jan Seklucjan (1547) and *The Songs of God's Glories* (1558) by Jan Zaremba.¹¹⁹ Their future systematic analysis should also take into account the tradition of the suffering of the early Christians, late mediaeval religiosity, which was strongly inspired by the Lord's Passion, and the influence of Lutheran hymns.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Cf. Campi, op. cit., pp. 292–294; Avis, *The Church in the Theology*, p. 46; Kärkkäinen, op. cit., pp. 53–54.

¹¹⁷ Kawecka, op. cit., pp. 129, 132–133; [*Cantional*], fol. H i ver. – H v rec. For another edition of the songs dated 1564, see M. Malicki, "Nieznany dotychczas polski katechizm kalwiński ze zbiorów Biblioteki Księcia Augusta w Wolfenbüttel," *Biuletyn Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej* 43 (1993), pp. 52–53.

¹¹⁸ [Sudorowiusz], op. cit., fol. C₆ver. – C₇rec., K i – K vi.

¹¹⁹ S. Rospond, "Wstęp," in: J. Seklucjan, *Wybór pism*, pp. xxii–xxiii; J. Seklucjan, *Pieśni duchowne a nabożne* (Królewiec, 1547; copy BN, sign. SD XVI.O.6249 adl.), pp. 92–93; J. Zaremba, *Pieśni chwał boskich*, ed. B. Brzezińska, A. Kawecka-Gryczowa (Kraków and Warszawa, 1989; Monumenta Musicae in Polonia. B Series, Collectanea Musicae Artis), pp. 8–9; P. Artomiusz, *Cantional albo pieśni duchowne* (Toruń, 1587; copy BCz, sign. Cim. 1579 I), fol. I 13 – K 16.

¹²⁰ The scope of such studies is detailed by: J.Z. Lichański, "Pieśni kancjonałowe – problemy atrybucyjne i redakcyjne. Wybrane przykłady z tzw. Kancjonału

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the sense of threat expressed in song, along with the awaiting of consolation in the time of ordeal, took on relevance in the social realities of the time. And so it is not surprising that Krzysztof Kraiński not only repeated (with some changes) the *Songs of Church* in his canticle, but also added to them comments which support the importance of these lines for his Church.¹²¹

The *Songs of the Holy Church* bears a similar style, being part of the canticle by Walenty of Brzozowo, issued in 1554 and – in an edited version – in 1569 under the auspices of the Bohemian Brethren. The church appears as a singular community, a “holy city”, the “truth confirmed”, Christ its head and “bedrock”, and “the small flock faithful to Christ”, a “tiny herd” which strengthens the unity of faith, mercy and hope.¹²² The elect become new beings through Christ in the Word, a holy community baptised in Saviour’s blood, who after all earthly punishments will be rewarded with sight of the Creator in heaven. There is no salvation outside of the Church, seeing as it is where faith is declared and the sacraments received “to ensure sins are forgiven and life restored”, “for to receive salvation, from sins liberation”.¹²³ This is a position shared by Lutherans, who continued to influence the Brethren. There is no conflict here with the Evangelical-Reformed doctrine.¹²⁴

mazurskiego,” in: *Staropolska literatura dewocyjna. Gatunki, tematy, funkcje*, ed. I.M. Dacka-Górzyńska, J. Partyka (Warszawa, 2015; Staropolskie Teksty Paraliterackie, vol. 3), pp. 102–116.

¹²¹ K. Kraiński, *Kancjonał abo pieśni duchowne* ([Wilno, 1604; after A. Kawecka-Gryczowa, “Wstęp,” in: Zaremba, op. cit., p. 10]; copy BJ, sign. 311276), fol. F ix rec. – F xxxiii rec.

¹²² Walenty z Brzozowa, *Cantional albo księgi chwał Boskich* (Królewiec, 1554; copy BO, sign. 4047), fol. F I ver. – F II; [idem], *Cantional abo pieśni duchowne* ([Kraków], 1569; copy BCz, sign. Cim. 1564 I), pp. 156–157. For more information, see: A. Kawecka, *Polskie kancjonały protestanckie w w. XVI*, MS, Cracow, Archives of the Jagiellonian University (Archiwum UJ), sygn. WF II 505, pp. 62–124; J. Dworzaczkowa, *Bracia czeszy w Wielkopolsce w XVI i XVII wieku* (Warszawa, 1997), p. 43; K. Zwanepol, “The Structure and Dynamics of Luther’s Catechism,” *Acta Theologica* 31 (2011), pp. 400–401; M.A. Korzo, “Spis tento Otázek trojtech’ Łukasza z Pragi. Przyczynek do historii katechizmów braci czeskich i ich roli w piśmiennictwie polskim (XVI wiek – pierwsza połowa XVII stulecia),” *Res Historica* 35 (2013), p. 110, passim.

¹²³ Walenty z Brzozowa, *Cantional albo księgi*, fol. F II ver., F Xrec.; idem, *Cantional abo pieśni*, pp. 157, 163.

¹²⁴ The sacrament of the act of incorporation of man into Christ, see: Piwko, op. cit., pp. 137–142; D.J. Smit, “Calvin on the Sacraments and Church Unity,” *In die Skriflig* 3 (2010), pp. 254–263.

It also follows that only God with His mercy can save humanity from eternal damnation, which as a result of what the first parents had done became a legacy of all of human kind. Alongside the sacraments and the Word, the possession of the keys is discussed extensively, which could be inspired by the relevant teachings of Luther and Melanchthon.¹²⁵

In 1585, the Bohemian Brethren's understanding of the Church was presented by the leader of the community Szymon T. Turnowski.¹²⁶ His exposition, when compared with that of Walenty of Brzozowo, well illustrates the already observed evolution of the Brethren's doctrine from Lutheranism toward the Reformed creed. As an analogy to the "battling" earthly Church of the Reformed Evangelicals we have here the "armed" Church, its completion – triumphant, heavenly Union. The universal church emerges out of the Church of biblical patriarchs and prophets, the Church of Doctors and of that "enslaved by the Anti-Christ's yoke".¹²⁷ This view is close of that of Łaski.¹²⁸ According to Turowski, the Church gathers all those who have amassed over the ages, becomes one body, presided over by Christ the bridegroom. Among the basic signs representing the visible Church, we find the following items, just as in the 1575 *Confession* inspired by Calvin: Evangelic learning, the sacraments and discipline.¹²⁹ Turnowski devotes a lot of space to the question of whether the Church can falter.

The views that have been discussed in this article truly reflect the ecclesiology of Polish and Lithaunian Evangelicals that was formulated in the Sandomierz Agreement and disseminated by preachers.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ Walenty z Brzozowa, *Cantional albo księgi*, fol. F I rec.–F XII; idem, *Cantional albo pieśni*, pp. 156–177.

¹²⁶ *Poznaczenie krotkie niektórych kwestiy o Kościele Bożym* (s.l., s.d.; copy BK, sign. Cim. 2642).

¹²⁷ Ibidem, fol. Arec.–Aver.

¹²⁸ Cf. Kowalska-Kossobudzka, "Jana Łaskiego pojęcie," p. 87.

¹²⁹ This does not, however, constitute Calvin's strict stance, cf. fn. 99; for more information, see: J. Pelikan, *Reformacja Kościoła i dogmatów (1300–1700)* (Kraków, 2010; Tradycja Chrześcijańska. Historia Rozwoju Doktryny, vol. 4), p. 262; H. Gmiterek, *Bracia czeszy a kalwini w Rzeczypospolitej: połowa XVI – połowa XVII wieku. Studium porównawcze* (Lublin, 1987), pp. 94–97; Korzo, "Spis tento Otázek trojjech," pp. 120–122.

¹³⁰ For further information, see R. Czyż, *Obrona wiary w edycjach postylli Grzegorza z Żarnowca* (Warszawa, 2008), pp. 153–161.

Conclusions

In spite of the confessional narratives outlined above, the Catholic and Evangelical ecclesologies remained closely connected – not only because they were constructed upon the Bible and mutual criticisms. Both Catholics and Protestants agreed that Christ is the head of any community led by the Holy Spirit, with the faithful representing the body. People make use of the privileges earned through the suffering and crucifixion of Christ, and so God’s mercy, through the sacraments. The Church community gathers the good and the bad, and through it, in accordance with the Gospel, is how the morality of the faithful is formed.¹³¹ The Church has visible and invisible realities, and there is no salvation outside of it, hence the definition penned by Stanislaus Hosius has a universal meaning and it is worth citing it here:

Ecclesia porro catholica ibi est, ubi est fides catholica. Fides autem catholica ea est, quæ per orbem universum iuxta Christi præceptum eadem semper annunciat, nec vel tempore, vel locis unquam variatur: a qua si quis dissentiat, is catholicus non est, quo singularem quandam opinionem, non unam communem omnium fidem complecti videtur.¹³²

Decisions taken by the Tridentine Council dispelled all doubts and though Hosius repeated after Augustine that it was self-love which divided Christians,¹³³ it was Jacob Ledesma SI who framed the essence of the division when he defined the Church as “the whole gathering of the faithful Christians who remain close and worship Christ,

¹³¹ Disappointment with the praxis of the newly emerging religious communities led to their contestation, as evidenced by the activities of Kaspar von Schwenckfeld, see: G. Waś, *Kaspar von Schwenckfeld. Myśl i działalność do 1534 roku* (Wrocław, 2005; Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis. Historia, no. 129), pp. 123–126, passim; A. Segueny, *W poszukiwaniu prawdziwej wiary. Szkice z historii religii XVI wieku: humanizm, reformacja, spirytualizm* (Lublin, 2009), pp. 107–108.

¹³² “The Catholic Church reaches as far as the Catholic faith itself. Therefore, the Catholic faith remains truly Catholic, as long as it abides by the doctrines of Christ and remains steadfast regardless of time and place. One ceases to be Catholic when one – if only slightly – deviates from the dogma; as a result, such a stray individual is no longer considered a member of the religious community”; Hozjusz, *Confessio*, fol. 30ver.

¹³³ See S. Kozakiewicz, *Stanisława Hozjusza nauka o zbawieniu w Kościele katolickim: rozwój wybranych aspektów eklezjologicznych i soteriologicznych myśli Hozjusza w relacji do osiągnięć teologii współczesnej* (Olsztyn, 2013; Biblioteka Wydziału Teologii Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego w Olsztynie, no. 82), pp. 210–212.

who is the head of the Church itself and the Pope his *vicarius*, meaning his representative on earth".¹³⁴

The legacy of late-mediaeval disputes over the question of the unity of the Church¹³⁵ were taken up *nolens volens* by Protestants. It is shown in the words of Krzysztof Kraiński, who in his song comments quotes relevant works by Augustine, Ambrose, Bernard of Clairvaux. Kraiński has no doubt that the "true" Church is a communion of the elect "who can never perish". And yet although the Roman Church "tainted and broken is, as in faith as it is in customs", then it remains a Church, even if "bad". And yet it is necessary to ask God to bring those who do not know the "correct" learning to the "one flock".¹³⁶ When Paweł Gilowski and Krzysztof Trecy in their introduction to the postil by Grzegorz of Żarnowiec present a pained picture of a Church they claim was torn and suffering at the time, then simultaneously they present it as the only one true and universal Church for all those who hold the Word.¹³⁷ And so they repeat the opinion expressed in the Sandomierz Agreement that not all those in the universal Church are members of the "true sacred community".¹³⁸ Though reformers were united in rejecting the identification of the "Roman" confession with the "genuine" Church, they also did not refuse its followers the protection of God.¹³⁹ It is hard, however, to find such declarations in the aforementioned canticles.¹⁴⁰ As already stated, the only author of a catechism which *explicite* allowed

¹³⁴ *Nauka chrześcijańska albo katechizmik dla dzieciak przez Jakuba Ledezma* (Kraków, s.d.; copy BCz, sign. Cim. 2462 I), fol. 12rec.–12ver.

¹³⁵ For further information, see: Pelikan, op. cit., pp. 85–155; Świeżawski, op. cit., pp. 46–56.

¹³⁶ [*Cantional*], fol. C xi ver. – C xii rec.; Kraiński, op. cit., fol. F ix rec. – F xxviii rec.

¹³⁷ Grzegorz z Żarnowca, *Postilla albo wykłady ewangelii niedzielnych* ([Wilno], 1597; copy BO, sygn. 51734), fol. A₂ver.–A₇rec. For more information, see: J.T. Maciuszko, *Ewangelicka postylografia polska XVI–XVIII wieku* (Warszawa, 1987), pp. 116–136; Czyż, op. cit., pp. 12–33. For further information on the one and undivided Church in the ecclesiology of Calvin, see: Piwko, op. cit., p. 122; Smit, op. cit., pp. 247–269.

¹³⁸ *Konfesja sandomierska*, pp. 131–149.

¹³⁹ The complex problem of the attitude of the Reformers towards the Catholic doctrine discussed by Avis, *The Church in the Theology*, pp. 36–44, esp. p. 42: „the Reformers can be found to say both that Rome is and is not the Church”. See also Pelikan, op. cit., p. 209.

¹⁴⁰ Their decisively and unanimously anti-Catholic stance is highlighted by Kawecka, *Polskie kancjonały*, pp. 52, 71, 116.

the possibility of learning real knowledge outside of his own confessional camp, specifically in Rome, was Seklucjan, though Mikołaj Rej also stresses the ubiquitousness of the Word. The ways of theologians belonging to both camps parted when they began to interpret the New Testament principles. And yet it is not impossible that awareness of such a shared foundation helped some lay individuals to identify their religiosity with avoidance of doctrinal contrasts. This is how it might have been in Cracow in the second half of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth.¹⁴¹

The Roman Church of the sixteenth century called upon its doctrinal deposits of the generations, which was to be the source of the conviction that the Pope and his hierarchies are the successors of the Apostles. According to this learning, the authority of the Church is based on the Scripture and Tradition dating back to the times of the first Christians. Evangelical theologians referred to these same events from New Testament times, though to them Traditions which are not in conflict with the Scripture can only be known in the works of the Fathers of the Church, at best.¹⁴² For both sides a specific actuality was to be found in the comments from Augustine which documented the times the Church was being defended from the false interpreters of the Scripture. These differences are perfectly illustrated by Krzysztof Kraiński:

We do not erect such new things as to destroy the old. But that which we see being useful to the construction and to the retaining of the rule of the sacred union in the house of God, we do following the holy doctors.¹⁴³

The definition of what the Church is was not hotly debated by Polish and Lithuanian Protestants, seeing as it did not belong to the realm of controversial topics, such as the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ W. Kowalski, "Eschatologiczne poglądy mieszkańców Krakowa doby reformacji," *Nasza Przeszłość* 109 (2008), pp. 5–34; cf. J.T. Maciuszko, "Bariery dialogu międzywyznaniowego w XVI i XVII wieku," in: *Sztuka i dialog wyznań w XVI i XVII wieku*, ed. J. Harasimowicz (Warszawa, 2000), pp. 27–36.

¹⁴² Meller, op. cit., p. 191; Czyż, op. cit., pp. 154–155.

¹⁴³ K. Kraiński, *Katechizm z naukami y pieśniami* (Kraków, 1609; copy BJ, sign. 311281), fol. 5; see also: S.H. Hendrix, *Tradition and Authority in the Reformation* (Aldershot, 1996).

¹⁴⁴ Kawecka-Gryczowa, op. cit., p. 228; for further information, see: U. Augustyniak, *Konfesja sandomierska. Wstęp historyczny* (Warszawa, 1994), pp. 20–25, and D. Petkūnas, "Wilno 1585 Colloquium – Lutheran and Reformed Discord

It was much more difficult to explain to the faithful why they belong to a community which includes those of other congregations and states within the Universal Church linked by faith whose rules were the subject of detailed theological debates.

In order to accept this sort of knowledge, abstract for ordinary auditors, there was a need for strong faith built upon a communicative presentation. In pastoral practice, such presentation was probably reduced to a listing of Rome's mistakes and the reasons for why they would be rejected.¹⁴⁵ This sort of learning, based mainly on negation linked closely with lectures about unity of faith, did not however create an image which would effectively compete with a vision of the universal Church as disseminated by the Catholic clergy. Assuming that gaps in theological knowledge and the need to perfect the skills of preaching, sometimes from the ground up, generally limited the effectiveness of how persuasive individual priests might be, irrespective of confessional affiliation, we ought to conclude that Catholic priests found themselves in a better situation. They did not present the universal Church, which they talked about through explanations of the *Credo*, exclusively in terms of a clearly defined community of those who were united in the true faith, but more about a social group: saints (looking down upon the faithful from church walls), the dead (who were to be honoured in prayers), the elderly (demonstrating faith through effective gestures and prayers). Besides, there were worldly spiritual leaders educated abroad or at least in Cracow, who talked to their plebeian parishioners about popes and bishops who were favoured by God. Benedykt Herbest, aware of these pastoral realities, accurately summarised the opponent's ability in a battle over the souls of common folk: "You beat upon a god-fearing peasant to stray from the true wisdom of the Universal Church, but you will do him no harm, heretic".¹⁴⁶ The followers of the "true" faith were painfully reminded of the correctness of these perceptions

over Sacramental Theology in Lithuania," *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 49 (2005), pp. 17–34.

¹⁴⁵ As recorded in the visitation of the year 1582, the order of the day was to focus rather on the teaching of "the simple things", see *Akta synodów różnowierczych w Polsce*, vol. 3: *Małopolska 1571–1632*, ed. M. Sipayłło (Warszawa, 1983), p. 58, passim. This was also the subject of the introduction to: *Katechizm albo krotkie w jedno miejsce zebranie powinności krześcijańskiej* (Wilno, 1594; copy Uppsala University Library, sign.: Obr. 65:232; mkf BN 35481), fol. 5ver.

¹⁴⁶ Herbest, op. cit., fol. 89rec.

on a daily basis. According to the testimony of Józef Konarzewski, the archdeacon of Włocławek, the subjects of his neighbour, the Calvinist Hieronim Rzeszowski, owner of the peripheral Lesser Poland Kosowo, asked that priest for pastoral care. They were unable to say, however, what they had been taught by the evangelical minister hired by Rzeszowski, although the latter personally supported his efforts.¹⁴⁷

This sort of zeal and religious indifference were not uncommon. It is certain that Polish Protestants were characterised by awareness of their belonging to the universal Church, the “house of a living God, built of living and spiritual rocks, as if it were a solid building”.¹⁴⁸ Certain Cracow testaments attest to this, having been penned in subsequent years.¹⁴⁹ Protestant postyllography (collections of sermons), as well as the congregational practices known to us, do however suggest that preachers were mostly focused on explaining “the fundamentals of a real and living faith”.¹⁵⁰ “Honest faith”, supported by detailed descriptions of the kingdom of the “Roman Beelzebub”¹⁵¹ did not always survive the clash with that which was seen in the Eternal City. Ludwik Kromer, a Cracow councillor, who visited Rome prior to 1575, admitted years later:

although even in Cracow there is some form of devotion being practiced, though not so sudden charity and loving acts, and yet no less bountiful fruits and medications of spiritual gifts, heavenly treasures untold. No less of preachers excellent and teachers grand. Seeing such pioussness, such mercy, such striving for the salvation of mankind, willy nilly I had to admit that this was the fold of that Good Shepherd. Thereby aware of my own mistakes, with the grace of He who doesn't want the death of the sinner, I returned to the path in which, striving towards an end, I believe fully that in my Holy vows and my unflinching hope I will remain.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷ *Catholici et sectarii concertatio*, fol. A_{iv} ver.–B rec., C_{ver}–C_{ii} rec., C_{iv} rec.–D_{rec}; for further information, see W. Urban, *Chłopi wobec reformacji w Małopolsce w drugiej połowie XVI w.* (Kraków, 1959), pp. 136–139.

¹⁴⁸ *Konfesja sandomierska*, p. 136.

¹⁴⁹ Kowalski, op. cit., pp. 14–16.

¹⁵⁰ *Akta synodów*, vol. 3, pp. 57–68; Maciuszko, *Ewangelicka postyllografia*, pp. 29–148.

¹⁵¹ *Catholici et sectarii*, A_{iii} rec.–B rec.

¹⁵² Kromer, op. cit., n.p. The author is mentioned in Z. Noga, *Urzednicy miejscy Krakowa*, [vol. 2]: 1500–1794 (Kraków, 2008; Spisy urzedników miejskich z obszaru dawnej Rzeczypospolitej, Śląska i Pomorza Zachodniego, vol. 3, fasc. 1), by the index.

The language of texts analysed hereby, though always precisely and exhaustively defining the opponent through definitions of good and evil of the time, is rarely aggressive, and never coarse or jocular, as in the anti-Catholic creations of Rej and Marcin Krowicki.¹⁵³ In the social reality of the time, the rapid growth of polemical writings, rather pragmatic in character, which includes catechisms, was unavoidable. The above observations lead us, however, to conclude that on a broader scale controversial theology, which dominated in the religious teachings of the time, brought more harm than good in propagating knowledge about the relations between God and humankind.¹⁵⁴

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Abstract

The article discusses how the notion of the Church was understood and explained by authors of sixteenth-century Polish Catholic and Evangelical catechisms. Teaching of the constitution of a church was a basic pastoral duty and part of the rudimentary knowledge provided to the faithful. Six Catholic catechisms of the years 1553 to 1600 and thirteen Evangelical ones, which were published between 1543 and 1609, constitute the main source base, the latter manuals being penned under the influence of Luther, Melanchthon as well as South-German and Swiss theologians. Following the Tridentine programme, the Catholic authors present their Church as unified under the Pope's authority and the only inheritor of the works of the Apostles.

The veracity of its teaching is testified to with God's unnatural interventions. The Protestant authors explain the basically coherent, relevant ideas of the Reformation's protagonists. They teach about "the visible and outward Church", which is manifested by all those congregations that are fed by God's pure Word, and where the sacraments are duly administered. There is also "the inward and invisible Church", which the faithful confess in the *Credo*. It comprises all disciples of Christ, who is the only head of His Church. Thus, the teaching on the Church presented in the Evangelical sources that are employed belongs to the mainstream of sixteenth-century Protestantism and aptly illustrates the reception of Evangelical theologies in the Kingdom of Poland and in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In the analysed sources, arguments for the veracity of the Church are always supplemented with the refutation of contradictory standpoints through reference to the Bible and the Church Fathers, mostly to Augustine. Despite strong polemical tone, the Biblical grounds of the Church could contribute to communication and understanding between Christians of antagonistic denominations, and this could sometimes result in conversion. The explanation of ecclesiological rudiments was easier for the Catholic clergy, who referred to tradition and emotions, while Evangelical pastors could not ignore the abstract concepts of the "veracity" and "spiritual connectedness" of Christians, which were more difficult to render to the laity.

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