

The Idea of the 5th International Religious Studies Congress

It has been 170 years since the establishment of a systematic scientific study of religion, which has been trying to answer questions arising from multiple inquiries concerning self-understanding, needs and relationships with other people and the world around them. It is both a lot and little for the development of science. At that time religious studies became an independent scientific discipline in a theoretical, methodological and organizational sense, found its subject of study, objectives and methods. Although not always unique, because they grow from other scientific disciplines, yet they form a common research field for those who believe in religion.

As congress organizers we are aware that religion is of great importance in the lives of individuals and entire societies. We are aware that religion refers to a variety of theoretical and methodological traditions, as well as empirical and historical-phenomenological, not excluding evaluations and worthwhile judgments. We recognize that it referred to and refers to a wide range of re-flection over religion and religiosity. We would like the congress to be representative for the whole environment, for different orientations and research schools, so that their representatives would like and be able to discuss with one another. At the congress we are looking not only for what divides us, but also what connects us. Let's try to objectify the knowledge of religion.

The title of the congress "Religia w dialogu kultur" reflects this design. It seems that dialogue is the basis of human existence. Religions bring a great potential for dialogue to modern society, they can give deep foundations of dialogue, pointing to the specific sensitivity of the human being towards the other. At the same time, we also remember that dialogue, on the one hand, seems to be common and universal as much as multifaceted, on the other hand, it is still particular and one-sided. There are many types and modes of conduct that can be distinguished, but they are, in its essence, only known, understood, accepted or rejected. This makes it possible to understand it as a reality present in culture and religion.

Such determined theme and emerging questions can not restrict the field of congressional discussions. We want it to be much more problematic, and what will appear in these debates will be a testimony to the diversity of the participants in our meeting. This is what we expect in the context of the debate on the cultural heritage of the Reformation in Europe.

This issue is related to the 500-year anniversary of Martin Luther's speech. Reformation, its historical course in Poland and Europe is important for the main theme of the congress.

Understanding, respect and dialogue have been with our congresses for many years. We felt it in Tyczyn, Poznan, Torun and Gdynia. They were a good opportunity to discuss all topics - including those controversial. We are convinced that a reunion in Torun will fit into these traditions. We invite representatives of all who conduct religious research to participate. It concerns both experienced religionists and those who are just beginning their adventure with religion. We also direct them to people who specialize in other disciplines, and religion and religiosity are just a complement to their research.

On behalf of the Board of the Polish Religious Association I express my appreciation and thanks for taking the effort to organize the 5th International Congress of Religions by the Nicolaus Copernicus University. The university experience in organizing such meetings and its excellent teaching infrastructure will make this meeting a success in every way.

*President of the Polish Society for the Study of Religions
dr hab. Jerzy Kojkoł, prof. AMW*