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## Is Pentecostalization the New Reformation? The Causes and Consequences of the Contemporary Pentecostalization of Christianity

**Abstract:** The main aim of this article is to present the most important elements of the process of global pentecostalization of Christianity as a new Reformation, and to analyze selected phenomena of religious life, characteristic for new forms of understanding and experiencing the Christian religion in the planetary dimension. Pentecostal religiosity is characterized by speaking in tongues, miracles, exorcisms, healings, television evangelism, and megachurches. You must understand now the origins and growth of Pentecostalism, looking not only at the philosophical and theological aspects of the movement, but underlining also its enormous influence on the social and political life in many countries of the world.

**Key words:** Pentecostalization, Pentecostal Reformation, new Reformation, desecularization, The Gospel of Wealth, Pentecostal movement, Pentecostal religiosity

### Introduction

A book entitled *The Pentecostal Reformation. The Calm Before The Storm* was published in 2013 in the United States of America<sup>1</sup>. It was written by Ashley Neil Smith, an American Christian theologian of the young generation, who was awarded a doctoral degree in 2010 at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton,

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. N. Smith, *The Pentecostal Reformation. The Calm Before The Storm*, South Hamilton 2013.

Massachusetts. This seminary is one of the best-known evangelical academic centers in the USA. Numerous religious researchers around the world very often refer to the papers prepared by the Center for the Study of Global Christianity, which has been functioning within the seminary for several dozen years.

Some academics claim that the Center from South Hamilton should be regarded as the most credible research center which monitors trends in demographic development of all Christian denominations around the world and provides the source of extremely valuable empirical information on the subject of Christianity worldwide. The research conducted by academics from the Center for the Study of Global Christianity are interdisciplinary in nature – they combine such fields of knowledge as theology, demography, sociology, ethnography, anthropology, linguistics or missiology. The Centre has at its disposal a substantial data collection concerning the past, the present and the future of Christianity in every country around the world.

When it comes to the book published a few years ago by Ashley Neil Smith, it is its title that draws attention above all. Over the past few years it would be difficult to find another academic or journalistic publication around the world, the title of which would so precisely document significant changes undergoing at present in Christianity on all continents. The most important process, which should be regarded as a real revolution today, is the global pentecostalization of Christianity, defined by some researchers as the Pentecostal Reformation, the new Reformation, the African Reformation, the Reformation belated for five centuries or the Reformation moved 500 years in time<sup>2</sup>. Global Christianity is currently undergoing the calm before the storm. In this context the storm constitutes the symbol of new disputes, conflicts and divisions between the followers of this religion. It is difficult to tell today how deeply the new Reformation will affect Christianity in the next decades and centuries.

What is the specific nature of the global process of pentecostalization? What is the Pentecostal Reformation *de facto*? Can we indeed speak of the new Reformation nowadays? Why after 500 years from Martin Luther's revolution do we have a new global conflict among the followers of Jesus Christ today? What are the causes and effects of pentecostalization? What is desecularization? What might the Christian religion look like in the third millennium?

The main aim of the article is to present the most important elements of the process of the global pentecostalization of Christianity as the new Reformation as well as the diagnosis of the chosen phenomena of religious life, characteristic of the new forms of understanding and experiencing the Christian religion in numerous countries around the world.

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. Kobyliński, *Il ritorno del diavolo e la pentecostalizzazione del cristianesimo*, "Rivista Teologica di Lugano", 2017, vol. 22/1, pp. 181-192; J. E. Tishken, *A Brief History and Typology of the African Reformation*, "Nova Religio", 2009, vol. 13/1, pp. 4-10; E. Botha, *The New Reformation: The amazing rise of the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement in the 20th century*, "Studia Historiae Ecclesiae", 2007, vol. 33/1, pp. 295-325; A. H. Anderson, *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the 20th Century*, Trenton 2001.

## Pentecostalization

In recent years the number of Christians who belong to various Pentecostal communities has grown very rapidly in the whole world. It is worth emphasizing at this point that in the Polish language the term “zielonoświątkowy” is synonymous to “Pentecostal”. The first Pentecostal congregations came into existence in the United States of America in 1901 on the ground of other Churches and religious associations, deriving from Martin Luther’s Reformation. The contemporary Pentecostal movement can be defined as a trend in Christianity, the most important characteristics of which is a strong emphasis on the action of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians. From a theological point of view, the Pentecostal movement is first of all a new form of experiencing a personal relation with God among believers. As a religious movement it surpasses denominational categories and presents itself as a manifestation of the special act of God within Christianity in the whole world.

What does the novelty of the Pentecostal religiousness consist in? How are Pentecostals different from Christians of other denominations? The members of Pentecostal communities to a certain degree questioned the traditional Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant theology, thus partially creating their own vision of religion and morality. It is their conviction that all extraordinary phenomena, such as e.g. miracles and healings described in the Bible might occur with the same frequency today if the members of Churches, communities or prayer groups believe fervently enough. In this case we can speak of the so-called miraculous religiosity, the essence of which is a miracle as the foundation of religion in the first place. The representatives of Pentecostalism are convinced that also in the 21<sup>st</sup> century spectacular indications of the activity of God’s power are present in the lives of Christians, similarly to the times of the Apostles.

Since the end of the last century we have observed the so-called Third Wave of Pentecostalism or the transformation of the Pentecostal movement into neo-Pentecostalism. The novelty of the Third Wave religiousness is based on a stronger emphasis on the topic of the healing power of the Holy Spirit and using the Internet, radio and television to preach the Gospel. The modern-day neo-Pentecostalism makes use of the electronic media and contemporary marketing strategies for evangelical purposes. At present various forms of healing which come from God are increasingly becoming the essence of religious experience for the members of neo-Pentecostal communities<sup>3</sup>.

It is worth emphasizing at this point that the Third Wave neo-Pentecostal religiousness generally conveys sacred content to the believers not through the Bible – as the Classical Pentecostalism used to do it, referring to the interpretation of the Holy

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. A. E. McGrath, *Christianity’s Dangerous Idea. The Protestant Revolution. A History from the Sixteenth Century to the Twenty-First*, New York 2007.

Scripture in the spirit of Martin Luther – but through various holy symbols, such as anointing with sacred oil, laying on of hands, burning pieces of paper with prayer requests, various forms of exorcisms, removing evil spirits and the like. A change in the attitude towards folk piety is extremely significant in the Third Wave movement. Why is it so?

For the Classical Pentecostalism in the first half of the 20th century, folk piety constituted a form of religious syncretism and was very critically assessed as something negative and harmful, whereas for the contemporary neo-Pentecostalism folk piety plays a crucial positive role. Therefore, in Pentecostal communities on all continents we can nowadays encounter numerous elements taken from local natural religions, e.g. the understanding of the presence of evil spirits and their influence on people's lives and different kinds of methods of setting human beings free from every form of evil.

For the first decades of its existence, the Pentecostal movement developed very slowly and had few followers. Rapid changes concerning the popularity of Pentecostal communities around the world came about in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, the real Pentecostal demographic revolution has occurred since the end of the last century. Over the last 20 years, the Third Wave of the development of the Pentecostal movement has led to an unusually intensive process of the global pentecostalization of Christianity, referred to as the new Reformation by some researchers. What does the contemporary pentecostalization of the Christian religion consist in?<sup>4</sup> "Pentecostalization (Polish: *Pentekostalizacja*, German: *die Pentekostalisierung*, Italian: *pentecostalizzazione*) denotes a proliferation of different kinds of *stricte* Pentecostal communities and the process of a gradual transformation of many other Christian churches and religious associations into one universal form of Charismatic Christianity around the world. The dynamic and worldwide process of the pentecostalization of Christianity is often referred to as "Charismatization" of the Christian religion or the birth of Pentecostal, Charismatic or Evangelical Christianity"<sup>5</sup>.

The essence of the global process of pentecostalization is creating new Pentecostal communities and transforming other Churches and religious associations into one syncretic form of Charismatic Christianity around the world. As a result of the process of pentecostalization – especially in Africa, Asia or South America – new communities,

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<sup>4</sup> At this point I would like to emphasize that in 2015 I coined a new Polish word "uzielonoświętkowienie", which is a synonym of pentecostalization. I did not encounter such a term in the Polish language myself beforehand. In connection with the fact that in Poland we are referring more often to "zielonoświętkowcy" than Pentecostal Christians, the category of "uzielonoświętkowienie" seems to be more understandable for the Polish people than pentecostalization. Of course, the notions of pentecostalization and "uzielonoświętkowienie" can be used interchangeably. Maybe in the future other phrases referring to pentecostalization and "uzielonoświętkowienie" will be created in Polish.

<sup>5</sup> A. Kobyliński, *Etyczne aspekty współczesnej pentekostalizacji chrześcijaństwa*, "Studia Philosophiae Christianae", 2014, vol. 50/3, pp. 93-94.

religious associations, prayer groups or Pentecostal sects have appeared<sup>6</sup>. The process of profound transformation on the level of the preached doctrine undergoes also within numerous traditional denominations. The global process of the pentecostalization of Christianity occurs today on all continents and concerns Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Anglicans, the members of episcopal communities, evangelical Christians and the like.

On 25 January 2017 an extremely interesting article on the subject of the future of ecumenical dialogue was printed in the Vatican daily paper "L'Osservatore Romano". The author of the text is Juan Fernando Usma Gómez, the Bureau Chief of the Western Section of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. This important representative of the Holy See claimed explicitly in his article that the "pentecostalization of Christianity is a fact"<sup>7</sup>. In many countries more and more researchers are analyzing various aspects of this process, which is radically changing the nature of global Christianity. Interesting books and articles are being written about pentecostalization around the world. This issue is discussed at international academic conferences, workshops, trainings and in research projects.

It is worth noting that new forms of Pentecostal religiousness have also poured in the Catholic Church in Poland. An increasing number of Catholics in Poland is drinking exorcised water, using the oil of joy or exorcised salt, experiencing the so-called falling under power during church services (slaying in the Spirit, hypnosis, trance, auto-suggestion). They are focusing excessive attention on exorcisms and the activities of evil spirits, experiencing hysterical laughter during prayer meetings, which is called Toronto Blessing and the like.

In March 2016 the media in Poland broadly informed about a school retreat in Leszno near Poznan. About 700 children participated in them. During the church services some under-age persons fell to the ground, shook, screamed. Priests, catechists and teachers witnessed these dangerous "religious" practices. After the retreat ended,

<sup>6</sup> Cf. A. Kobyliński, *The Global Pentecostalization of Christianity and its Ethical Consequences*, "Chicago Studies", 2016, vol. 55/2, pp. 98-118; Idem, *Suoremeniproblemi globalne pentekostalizacijekršćanstva*, "Obnovljeni Život", 2016, vol. 71/4, pp. 435-447; Idem, *Globálnapentekostalizáciakršćanstva a jej etickédôsledky*, "Studia Aloisiana", 2015, vol. 6/3, pp. 33-45; Idem, *Le dimensionietichedell'odiernapentecostalizzazione del cristianesimo*, "Rivista Teologica di Lugano", 2015, vol. 20/2, pp. 207-228; Idem, *DieglobalePentekostalisierung des Christentumsundihreethischen Konsequenzen*, "Forum KatholischeTheologie", 2015, vol. 31/3, pp. 198-214; Idem, *La globalpentecostalización del cristianismo y sus consecuenciácéticas*, "Revista Teológica Limense", 2015, vol. 49/3, pp. 345-380.

<sup>7</sup> "Nell'anno della commemorazione comune dei 500 anni della riforma di Lutero – stwierdza Usma Gómez – non mi sarà facile attirare l'attenzione sulle relazioni tra cattolici, pentecostali ed evangelicali. Eppure sulle vie del mondo è mille volte più probabile che un cattolico incontri – o si scontri – con un pentecostale o un evangelico che con un luterano. La »pentecostalizzazione« del cristianesimo è un dato di fatto che ci pone di fronte a un modo di essere cristiani con una spiritualità – culto, musica e devozione – un approccio missionario e una forma teologica – testimonianza – propri, con i quali entriamo in contatto direttamente o indirettamente più sovente di quanto possiamo immaginare", J. F. Usma Gómez, *Nel dialogo con pentecostali ed evangelicali. L'unità si fa camminando*, "L'Osservatore Romano", 2017, vol. 20, p. 6.

there was no public statement, formulated from the perspective of the Catholic theology, which would point out that the form of the Lenten retreat in Leszno was inappropriate. Quite the opposite – in many statements the Catholic nature of these kinds of church services was emphasized. It means that new forms of Pentecostal religiousness are already a permanent component of the Catholic piety in Poland. Retreats similar to the one in Leszno are organized in hundreds of Polish schools and parishes. “It seems that the process of profound changes in our religiousness has advanced rapidly since 2007. Why is it so? Because back then many orators and evangelizers, who over the past ten years have spoken in churches, at the stadiums, on television and the Internet to millions of inhabitants of our country began to be invited to Poland from other continents. The best-known figures are Gloria Polo from Colombia, James Manjackal and Jose Maniarambil from India, Maria Vadia from the USA, John Bashobora from Uganda, Myrna Nazzour from Syria, Italian clergymen Antonello Cadeddu and Enrico Porcu, who are currently working in Brazil etc. How can we define the teachings of these persons? It is most often a syncretic Christian religiousness, based on profound pentecostalization, which is accepted unquestioningly in Poland by many priests, clerical students, nuns or laypeople”<sup>8</sup>.

The topic of pentecostalization is gradually permeating the public opinion in Poland. In the years 2016-2017 this issue was discussed by the Commission on the Doctrine of the Faith at the Polish Episcopal Conference. Earlier on, in 2015, two important decrees of the Polish Episcopate appeared, which were a specific reaction to the fact that Pentecostal religiousness was permeating the Catholic Church. Documents introduced a ban on practicing the so-called gateway confession and inter-generational healing. Where did those strange, slightly shamanic, religious practices in Poland come from? They are certainly the consequence of the global process of pentecostalization.

The gateway confession concentrates on the activities of an evil spirit in our life. It is based on indicating the so-called gateways, that is ways in which the evil spirit allegedly enters under our roof. While preparing for the gateway confession, the believers focus on finding all situations that allowed evil spirits in their life. Such gateways are also looked for in the life history of your ancestors – this is the concept of generational sins and inter-generational healing. The essence of the teachings – rooted in anthropology and African cosmology – is the belief that evil spirits might enter our life by listening to rock music, getting a tattoo or reading “Harry Potter”.

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<sup>8</sup> A. Kobyliński, *Egzorcyzm nad Polską i pentekostalizacja*, “Do Rzeczy”, 2017, vol. 27, p. 66.

## Desecularization and religious syncretism

Where should we find the reasons behind the current religious revolution? How to rationally explain the global process of the pentecostalization of Christianity? Researchers from numerous countries indicate various social, religious, political or cultural causes. Certainly the process of globalization or the development of the electronic media is meaningful in this context as they enable at present an increased flow of *inter alia* content of religious nature. Also the attractiveness of the Pentecostal religiousness plays a significant role. The proposition of the Pentecostal movement refers to the basic human needs: health, forgiveness, happiness, fulfillment, healing. The American Prosperity Gospel as well as Health and Wealth Gospel have become an extremely important element of this new religiousness. According to them, health and material success are an expression of God's blessing. The professed religious content as well as modern and effective forms of mass media attract millions of people around the world who become the members of Pentecostal communities.

An extremely important factor, which creates an appropriate spiritual and intellectual atmosphere for the pentecostalization of Christianity is the global process of desecularization, broadly discussed in recent years *inter alia* by the American sociologist of religion Peter Berger. Over the last twenty-five years the theory of secularization, created at the beginning of the past century on the basis of solutions developed by Auguste Comte, Emil Durkheim and Max Weber, was refuted. The theory of secularization, which dominated the thinking of the Western world on religion in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, includes a statement that modernization processes around the world as well as the development of science and technology inevitably lead to the birth of atheistic or religiously indifferent societies on all continents.

Since the 1990s many philosophers of religion, anthropologists, historians of ideas or sociologists have clearly spoken of the falseness of such a conviction<sup>9</sup>. The collapse of the theory of secularization nowadays means a greater interest in various forms of religion and an increase in the significance of religious issues in the public domain. The specificity of the contemporary approach to religion in numerous countries is not so much the rejection or undermining its rationality or credibility as the return of different kinds of religious phenomena in a new form<sup>10</sup>. In this context more and more often the twilight of religion is not the case – although this is what the advocates of the theory of secularization stipulated in the last century – but there has been a transformation of its

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. P. L. Berger, *The Desecularization of the World. A Global Overview*, in: *The Desecularization of the World. Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, ed. idem, Washington D.C. 1999, pp. 1-18; J. Mariański, *Sekularyzacja, desekularyzacja. Nowa duchowość. Studium socjologiczne*, Kraków 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. A. Kobyliński, *Odczarowanie świata czy epoka postsekularna? Pobożność ludowa w kontekście globalnej pentekostalizacji chrześcijaństwa*, in: *Pokładamy nadzieję w Kościele*, D. Mielnik (ed.), Lublin 2016, pp. 134-146; A. Kobyliński, *Hermeneutyka nieciągłości i pentekostalizacja. Współczesne metamorfozy religii chrześcijańskiej*, "Teologia i Moralność", 2016, vol. 20/2, pp. 245-261.

basic functions in social life. Contemporary metamorphoses of Catholicism are therefore an element of a larger process worldwide, which concerns shaping new forms of interpretation and experiencing the phenomenon of religion.

Another important reason for the global process of the pentecostalization of Christianity is the current religious syncretism, which concerns also the followers of Jesus Christ. On 31 August 2017 The Pew Research Center, an American research institute with its registered office in Washington, published the results of research according to which Martin Luther's theses no longer divide Catholics and Protestants as deeply as over the last five centuries<sup>11</sup>. American researchers conducted their study from April to August 2017 in 15 countries of Western Europe. How do Catholics and Protestants perceive their own religious denominations nowadays? Are they similar to each other? Are there more differences than similarities between them?

According to research, among Protestants living in the Western European countries 28% claim that there are more differences than similarities between Protestantism and Catholicism and according to 58% the similarities outweigh the differences. When it comes to Catholics, 34% claim that there are more differences than similarities, while 50% represented the opposite opinion. The most surprising results of the research concern the basic Lutheran truth, over which once there were battles, not only theological in nature – namely *sola fides*. Not only the majority of Catholics, but also most Protestants claim that Martin Luther's principle of salvation only through faith no longer applies. Nowadays most Catholics and Protestants unanimously claim that both faith and deeds are needed for salvation. It means that in recent years Catholicism and Protestantism have become alike to a large extent, while past religious disputes, which were the cause of many wars and conflicts, have lost their significance.

Also an important report entitled *From Conflict to Communion*, which was compiled in 2013 by the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity, discusses the blurring of theological differences between separate Christian denominations<sup>12</sup>. The text includes significant theological questions: "How should we therefore remember the history of Reformation in the year 2017? Which content of faith that was the subject of battle between the denominations in the 16<sup>th</sup> century deserves to be kept? Our mothers and our fathers in faith were convinced that there was something worth fighting for, something necessary to live with God"<sup>13</sup>.

According to the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity, blurring former theological differences is also connected with a strong expansion of Pentecostal

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. Five Centuries After Reformation, *Catholic-Protestant Divide in Western Europe Has Faded*, available at: <http://www.pewforum.org/2017/08/31/five-centuries-after-reformation-catholic-protestant-divide-in-western-europe-has-faded/> [retrieved on: 12.01.2018].

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Od konfliktu do komunii. Lutersko-katolickie wspólne upamiętnienie reformacji w 2017 roku*, Dzięgielów, 2017. This document is also available in seven languages at the official website of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

<sup>13</sup> *Od konfliktu do komunii*, op. cit., footnote 12.



and charismatic movements all over the world. "It was them that turned our attention to new aspects of Christianity, thus making former confessional disputes seem outdated. The Pentecostal movement is present in many Churches in the form of charismatic movement and thus creates new space of community over denominational borders, thereby opening new ecumenical possibilities, but at the same time – involving additional challenges".

## The future of Christianity

The Pentecostal movement emerged in the United States of America at the beginning of the last century. In 2000 the Pentecostal communities around the world had 100 million believers. A rapid development occurred in the last dozen or so years. At present it is estimated that there are 600-800 million Pentecostal Christians. Already in 2025 a billion followers will belong to Pentecostal communities<sup>14</sup>. Furthermore, when it comes to actual churchgoing and not only church affiliation, even today Pentecostals are the largest Christian denomination<sup>15</sup>. Studies conducted by many researchers clearly indicate that Christianity on all continents undergoes revolutionary transformations, which can be compared with the results of Martin Luther's Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. "The development of Pentecostal communities amazes with its suddenness. In many countries Catholic congregations do not survive the "competitiveness" of the Pentecostal communities, which spring up like mushrooms. Not to lose followers, Catholics adopt Pentecostal methods of evangelization, which many times have proved to be very effective. Unfortunately, very often it leads to the transformation of Catholic congregations into Pentecostal ones. The most significant misfortune of the Church takes place in Latin America, which at the beginning of the

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<sup>14</sup> "Today it is growing at a rate of 52,000 a day or 19 million a year (estimate by mission expert David Barrett, quoted in Christianity Today 1988). Approaching in excess of 580 million adherents worldwide (...), it is after Roman Catholicism, the largest Christian tradition. It finds expression in a variety of forms, from small village churches to mega churches, the largest being that of the Yoi Do Full Gospel Church, founded by David Yonggi Cho, with an estimated weekly worship attendance of 240,000. At the current rate of growth, some researchers predict there will be 1 billion Pentecostals by 2025, most located in Asia, Africa, and Latin America" (E. Botha, op. cit., p. 296).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. D. Ageboyin, *A rethinking of prosperity teaching in the new Pentecostal churches in Nigeria*, "Black Theology", 2006, vol. 4/1, pp. 70-86; A. Anderson, *An introduction to Pentecostalism: Global charismatic Christianity*, Cambridge 2004; T. J. Steigenga, *Politics of Spirit: The Political Implications of Pentecostalized Religion in Costa Rica and Guatemala*, Lanham 2002; G. W. Harper, *Philippine tongues of fire? Latin American Pentecostalism and the future of Filipino Christianity*, "Evangelical Review of Theology", 2002, vol. 26/2, pp. 153-180; S. M. Burgess, *Pentecostalism in India: An overview*, "Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies", 2001, vol. 4/1, pp. 85-98; A. Droogers, *Globalisation and Pentecostal success*, in: *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America*, ed. A. Corten, R. Marshall-Tratani, Bloomington 2001, pp. 41-61; A. Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost: The spirituality and experience of Pentecostals and Zionist/Apostolic churches in South Africa*, Pretoria 2000.

20<sup>th</sup> century was almost 100% Catholic. Today only half of the inhabitants of that continent belong to the Catholic Church"<sup>16</sup>.

According to studies conducted by many researchers, every 10 hours around the world a new church, religious association or sect is founded. Springing up like mushrooms, new religious communities, which are separate subjects in the doctrinal and legal dimension, are often in the Pentecostal character. Unfortunately, the Christian religion is globally undergoing deep disintegration and fragmentation – it is becoming more and more Pentecostal<sup>17</sup>.

In 1900 there were 1,600 Christian denominations, that is different kinds of churches, religious associations and sects. 100 years later this number grew to 34,000 separate subjects. In 2012 already 43,000 Christian denominations existed around the world. It could be assumed that at the end of 2018 there might have been about 50,000 different kinds of churches, religious associations and sects in total on all continents – the overwhelming majority of them Pentecostal. The results of pentecostalization are clearly visible in Brazil. Until recently this country was almost completely Catholic. Today Brazilian Catholics constitute about 50% of the inhabitants. Soon Pentecostal Christians will be the largest religious denomination in Brazil<sup>18</sup>.

When it comes to the predictions concerning the development of global Christianity by 2050, we should pay attention to a report by American researchers, which was released at the beginning of 2016 in the *International Bulletin of Mission Research*<sup>19</sup>. The authors of this study reveal that in 2014 the number of Christians who work in Latin America was larger than the Christian population on the European continent. As far back as 100 years ago there were six times more Christians in Europe than in Latin America. In 2025 in Africa there will be the largest number of Christians: from 628 to 700 million. In 2050 also Asia will outnumber Europe regarding various Christian denominations.

According to the analysis of the current religious and demographic trends, in 2050 there will be 80% of all Christians in the world on the three continents of the Global South, i.e. in Asia, Africa and Latin America, whereas in 1900 this group

<sup>16</sup> A. Kobylński, *Egzorcyzm nad Polską i pentekostalizacja*, op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. J. Kangwa, *Pentecostalisation of Mainline Churches in Africa: The Case of The United Church of Zambia*, "The Expository Time", 2016, vol. 127/12, pp. 573-584; R. Akoko, "You Must Be Born-Again": *The Pentecostalisation of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon*, "Journal of Contemporary African Studies", 2007, vol. 25/2, pp. 299-315; D. van der Merwe, *From Christianising Africa to Africanising Christianity: Some hermeneutical principles*, "Stellenbosch Theological Journal", 2016, vol. 6/2, pp. 559-587.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. M. Eirich, *Pentekostalisierung des Christentums. Einordnung und katholische Ausformung*, "Catholica: Vierteljahresschrift für ökumenische Theologie", 2017, vol. 71/2, pp. 140-152.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. T. M. Johnson, G. A. Zurlo, A. W. Hickman, P. F. Crossing, *Christianity 2016: Latin America and Projecting Religions to 2050*, "International Bulletin of Mission Research", 2016, vol. 40/1, pp. 22-29.

constituted only 20%<sup>20</sup>. When it comes to individual countries, in 2025 the largest amount of Christians will live in China – 200 million. Studies reveal that in 2030 in the Middle Kingdom there will be as many as 250 million Christians. The overwhelming majority of them will be Pentecostal Christians, whose teachings about life success and wealth as a sign of God's blessing ideally corresponds to the contemporary mentality of Chinese society.

## Conclusion

The studies conducted by various researchers have clearly shown that the global process of pentecostalization leads to revolutionary changes in a large number of Christian communities around the world. Undoubtedly, the consequences of new religious trends nowadays can be compared to the results of Martin Luther's Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The situation of the global Christianity at present is the calm before the storm. It is difficult to predict how deeply the new Reformation will affect Christian communities in the nearest decades and centuries. The pentecostalization of Christianity will make the religious life of Jesus Christ's followers in the future significantly different from the forms which were practiced for the last two millennia<sup>21</sup>. At this stage of analyses concerning pentecostalization, the following four conclusions can be drawn.

First of all, it should be noted that the contemporary pentecostalization of Christianity is *de facto* the new Reformation. We can speak of the Pentecostal Reformation or the new Reformation especially over the last 20 years, when a rapid development of neo-Pentecostal communities has transformed the face of Christianity around the world. In this context it is difficult to comprehend almost total concealment of this issue within the commemoration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation in 2017. Obviously, there is a number of fundamental differences between Martin

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<sup>20</sup> *Yearbook of International Religious Demography 2015*, B. Grim, T. Johnson, V. Skirbekk, G. A. Zurlo (eds.), Leiden – Boston 2015; *Yearbook of International Religious Demography 2014*, B. Grim, T. Johnson, V. Skirbekk, G. A. Zurlo (eds.), Leiden – Boston 2014.

<sup>21</sup> "The twentieth century began with the birth of extraordinary expansion of Pentecostalism. Over the past century, this movement and its subsequent waves introduced a new form of Christianity whose growth astonishes even the most optimistic observer. (...) Harvey Cox, in his 1995 study of Pentecostalism, announced that Pentecostalism was a new Reformation in the Majority World. Peter Jenkins projects that Pentecostals will exceed one billion by 2050. Within the century, Pentecostalism has risen from obscurity to dominion in global Christianity. An important center of Pentecostalism's global footprint lies in Africa. Pentecostalism projects a vision that captures the imagination of Africans, especially of West Africans. (...) In the past three decades, West Africans have embraced this new form of Christianity to the point that Paul Gifford characterizes the movement as a paradigm shift. (...) One of the most important consequences of this paradigm shift pertains to its influence on non-Pentecostal churches" (R. Arnett, *Pentecostalization: The Evolution of Baptists in Africa*, North Charleston 2017, pp. 1-3).

Luther's Reformation and the new Reformation, but the common ground uniting these processes are their results – revolutionary transformations in Christianity around the world. It seems that the researchers are right when they claim that the consequences of the Pentecostal Reformation will be more significant than the results of the Reformation which began in Germany in 1517.

Secondly, the process of the pentecostalization of Christianity concerns *inter alia* Poland, where we can indicate many manifestations of the new Reformation, which is changing our religious life very profoundly<sup>22</sup>. The Pentecostal beliefs and practices are adopted in towns and villages in Mazovia, Lesser Poland or Podlasie. More and more Catholics in Poland are participating in prayer meetings, which are Pentecostal in nature, drinking exorcised water, using the oil of joy or exorcised salt, experiencing the so-called falling under power during church services (slaying in the Spirit, hypnosis, trance, auto-suggestion) or are excessively focusing their attention on exorcisms and the activities of evil spirits.

Thirdly, there is an urgent need in Poland to conduct broad interdisciplinary research on the phenomenon of the pentecostalization of Christianity. It is difficult to rationally explain the fact that currently in Poland the sociology of religion *de facto* does not analyze the sudden transformations which have taken place in the Polish religiousness over the last 10 years. Profound religious changes among the followers of Jesus Christ are first of all the consequence of the process of pentecostalization. The causes and effects of the global pentecostalization of Christianity should become the subject of detailed academic research *inter alia* within the sociology of religion.

Fourthly, the pentecostalization of the Christian religion has a substantial influence on the ecumenical movement. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century a completely new situation concerning the relations between various Christian denominations is the case. In Poland this problem is marginal for the time being, but it should be assumed that the challenges connected with the process of pentecostalization in this respect will become more and more important. Swiss cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, very often speaks of the profound influence of the pentecostalization of Christianity on ecumenism. The statements of this important representative of the Holy See deserve attention and should be taken into consideration *inter alia* by philosophers and sociologists of religion, studying the causes and effects of the global pentecostalization of Christianity.

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. *Religia potrzebuje rozumu*, Marcin Żyła's interview with Father Andrzej Kopyliński (ed.), "Tygodnik Powszechny", 2015, vol. 49, pp. 28-31.