
ACADEMIC LIFE

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BHE 39/2018
ISSN 2544-7899
DOI: 10.14746/bhw.2018.39.13

Interdisciplinary Scientific Conference Evangelical upbringing and education in the 16th and 17th centuries

The idea of organizing the National Conference “Evangelical upbringing and education in the 16th and 17th centuries” came from Protestant circles, and more specifically, it was put into practice by professor of the Christian Theological Academy in Warsaw Rafał Marcin Leszczyński. As a result, the list of organisers of this event had to be opened by the Faculty of Theology of the Christian Theological Academy together with its Faculty of Pedagogy. The following were also invited to join the organisers the conference: Department of Humanistic Foundations of Pedagogy of the Faculty of Education of the University of Warsaw and the B.F. Trentowski Society of Philosophical Pedagogy.

The conference was aimed at recalling the contribution of Protestant education to Polish and European culture of the 16th and 17th centuries, which is a subject rarely addressed not only in academic discourse, but also hardly visible on didactic grounds, even in the contents of the history of education. The realisation of this goal rested on the speakers representing various disciplines of the humanities: history, history of education, evangelical theology, literary studies and others. Such an interdisciplinary perspective was to outline not only the contemporary picture of research devoted to these issues, but above all to bring out areas that have not been explored so far, and thus show the lasting heritage of the Reformation not only on a European but also on a Polish scale.

The conference was held on 17 May 2018 in the assembly hall of the Lutheran Centre at ul. Miodowa 21 in Warsaw, made available to the Christian Theological Academy by the Consistory of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church. The conference participants were welcomed by: rector of the Christian Theological Academy in Warsaw, ks. prof. nadzw. dr hab. Bogusław Milerski, the Dean of the Faculty of Theology, prof. nadzw. dr hab. Jerzy Ostapczuk and the Dean of the Faculty of Education prof. nadzw. Renata Nowakowska-Siuta, who also led the first session and then delivered a paper entitled *Realistic trends of upbringing. Wolfgang Ratke (1571–1635): the birth of didactics as an art of teaching.*

The conference was opened by the paper of ks. prof. dr hab. B. Milerski *Education for maturity in the Reformation pedagogy*. The author briefly introduced the participants to the basic assumptions of Evangelical education on the example of education for maturity. Then ks. mgr Tomasz Pieczko (Christian Theological Academy) in his speech *Shaping the Reformation man* presented the factors forming the Reformed Evangelical, emphasizing education in the spirit of the Helvetic Reformation, which, unlike education flowing from the Lutheran Reformation, is currently a poorly explored area.

The subject of the conference automatically imposed the presence of a block dedicated to the personality of Jan Amos Comenius, whose work is widely researched and propagated in both the international and Polish pedagogy. Therefore, the second session of the conference, led by prof. zw. dr hab. Tadeusz Zieliński (Christian Theological Academy), included three papers devoted to this outstanding teacher and theologian, illuminating his achievements from various research perspectives. The history of education approach was presented by prof. Adam Fijałkowski from the University of Warsaw in his speech entitled *Didactic movement and Comenius on the need to reform humanities schools in the 17th century*. Then ks. dr Manfred Richter (Berlin) in his paper *Education – for which goals? Comenius’ answer: self-command, ecumenism, world peace* focused himself on the modern recipient and outlined the qualities of Comenius’s thought today. Then, prof. Sławomir Sztobryn from the University of Bielsko Biała familiarised the conference participants with the times of the Polish People’s Republic in his paper *Selected issues of reception of the work of Jan Amos Comenius in the Polish People’s Republic*.

However, the particular attention in this session was drawn by the example of research in the field which is rarely undertaken in Polish humanities, presented in the papers of prof. nadzw. dr hab. Dariusz Chemperek (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University) and dr Kamila Szymańska (Regional Museum in Leszno). The first scholar presented school theatre as a medium of education, which was perfectly reflected in the title of his speech: *The school theatre in Leszno run by Czech Brethren and Lutherans in the mid-17th century as a medium of education*. Whereas dr K. Szymańska focused on Lutheran education in Leszno in a speech entitled *In the shadow of the gymnasium. Lutheran education in Leszno in the 17th century*. It should be emphasized that in her research, she also included the classic theme of women’s history, i.e. the girls’ education.

The last session of the conference, dominated by the female sex, was led by prof. dr hab. prof. nadzw. Andrzej Ciężela from the Maria Grzegorzewska University. The first one to take the floor was dr hab. Izabela Winiarska-Górska (University of Warsaw), who presented her research in a paper entitled *Printed translations of the Holy Bible towards the needs of Protestant didactics in the 16th and 17th centuries – pragmatic analysis*. Then mgr Agnieszka Teresa Tys (Christian Theological Academy) in her speech *Evangelical Reformed education in the Małopolska region in the 16th century* illustrated its basic features on the example of the functioning of the school in Pińczów. Then, prof. Urszula Augustyniak (University of Warsaw) summarised her research in the paper *Methods of preparing Evangelical-Reformed elites for public life in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania of the 17th century*. The last one to take the floor was the originator of the whole conference, prof. dr hab. Rafał Marcin Leszczyński (Christian Theological Academy), who presented

the results of his research project carried out at the Christian Theological Academy in the paper: *Philosophical aspects of parenetic and educational reflection in the second book of Mikolaj Rej's "The Image of a Good Man's Life"*.

The third part of the conference, as well as the last two papers from the second session, showed that the subject of broadly understood education does not belong only to research in the field of pedagogy, but it is also the source of fascination for historians, literary scholars and theologians. One could even say that on these disciplines are currently in the period of an "educational turmoil", which implies the legitimacy of interdisciplinary research between the broadly understood history of education and the above-mentioned disciplines of the humanities. The above statements confirm the interdisciplinary nature of the conference, which was not named as such just because of the current "academic fashion". This event also shows that the problems of evangelical education were able to connect representatives of various disciplines, thanks to which it was possible to penetrate this forgotten research area in a much deeper manner.

It should be emphasized that the analysis of conferences¹ initiated by R.M. Leszczyński shows that their main feature is opposition to neoliberalism in the humanities, which is reflected in their organization and structure. This symposium also falls under the above assumptions. For some scientists, the "neoliberal entanglements of education" are obvious². Thus, admission to this scientific event did not depend on the conference fee, which normally guarantees the package: "junk meals", "gala banquet" and the publication of a post-conference publication. In other words, the originator of the conference was not following the model of corporate events. This scientific event was open to anyone who wanted to become acquainted and deepen his or her interest in evangelical education of the 16th and 17th centuries. The topic of the conference itself was not dictated by the requirements of the market, but by goals that may seem useless from its perspective: searching for scientific truth and presenting unfashionable topics in the humanities.

The post-conference papers from this event will be published in journals issued by the Christian Theological Academy: "Studia z Teorii Wychowania" and "Rocznik Teologiczny".

¹ E. Andrysiak, E. Obala, "Sprawozdanie z konferencji 'Paweł Hulka-Laskowski – pisarz, religioznawca, bibliofil i pedagog' (Łódź, 29–30 maja 2015 r.)", *Acta Universitatis Lodzianensis Folia Librorum* 2016, 1/2 (22/33), pp. 203–208. Another interesting initiative of prof. R.M. Leszczyński are the Symposia of the Antiquities and Byzantines Section of the B. F. Trentowski Society of Philosophical Pedagogy.

² Just to be clear, this it is a conscious reference to the title of the book *Neoliberalne uwikłania edukacji* (Neoliberal entanglements of education) by E. Potulicka and J. Rutkowiak.