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**Title:** Pastoral counselling of multi-religious families based on examples from Bielsko-Żywiec diocese

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**Citation style:** Budniak Józef. (2014). Pastoral counselling of multi-religious families based on examples from Bielsko-Żywiec diocese. "Ecumeny and Law" (No. 2 (2014), s. 61-73).



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## Pastoral Counselling of Multi-Religious Families Based on Examples from Bielsko-Żywiec Diocese

**Keywords:** ecumenism, ecumenical ministry, dialogue, family, multi-religious

There are two tasks which ecumenism faces; one of them is to restore the unity of Christians, and the other — to reconstruct the unity in the “Roman Catholic Family itself.” It is the work of renewal and reform of the Church, so that “her life gave a truer and distinct testimony of what Our Lord had taught us, and what He had established and the Apostles handed down to us.” In the course of history, the term ecumenism, as well as all of its variations, has become blurred and has got many meanings and connotations. Nowadays, in an adjective ecumenical, three intertwined concepts can be found: universal-missionary element of a global scale; everything that concerns the Church, and finally, issues concerning families belonging to different denominations.

In one of his pastoral letters written on the occasion of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Bishop Tadeusz Rakoczy said that “ecumenism is a vocation to make individual Christians united. Those who were baptised are obliged to unite and not divide [...]. The one who rejects ecumenism, does not accept the Lord’s Prayer, [...] that all may be one.”<sup>1</sup>

The sociocultural processes in Bielsko-Żywiec diocese cannot be discussed without taking into consideration the specific historical background of that region. This diocese has considerable merits as far as the ecumenical movement is concerned, and its beginnings in Cieszyn Silesia go many centuries back. However, history shows that the character of

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<sup>1</sup> *List z okazji Tygodnia Ekumenicznego*, 8.1.2003. In: the author’s private archives, ref. JB E/03.

religious relationships was quite remote from today's picture marked by mutual respect, tolerance, brotherhood and engagement in common devotion to the faith. "There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart. For it is from the renewal of inner life of our minds, (28) from self-denial and an unstinted love that desires of unity take their rise and develop in a mature way"<sup>2</sup> (DE, 7).

On 9 May 1992, during the canonical assumption of the bishop's office in Bielsko-Żywiec diocese, Bishop Tadeusz Rakoczy expressed his gratitude towards the representatives of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession for their presence during the celebrations. On this occasion, he offered them "sincere and fraternal ecumenical cooperation in the diocese in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. I hope, we will only look at the things which unite us. May the grace of God Almighty support our efforts to build unity."<sup>3</sup> Thus, ecumenism found its place in the works of the newly nominated bishop, who called his programme "the hermeneutics of the heart."<sup>4</sup> In this, he referred to the decisions made by the Second Vatican Council which developed the concept of the "hierarchy" of truths" (DE, 11) and presented it as a hermeneutic rule of interpreting faith's dogmas existing in the Roman Catholic Church. On the one hand, the rule can play a significant role in rebuilding communion between Churches and Christian Communities. On the other hand, it does not mean the change of the deposit of faith but looking for new, fuller forms of expression.<sup>5</sup>

From the point of view of the ecumenical reflection, Christians must learn to distinguish between the deposit of faith and the way of formulating the truths of faith.<sup>6</sup> Here comes the need for the proper hermeneutics understood as an art of interpretation and proper tradition of the truths in Scripture and Church documents, that is liturgical texts, council documents, writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, documents concerning the teachings of the Church, as well as documents and writings concerning ecumenical issues.<sup>7</sup> Hermeneutics is not only the skill

<sup>2</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II: *Decree on Ecumenism "Unitatis redintegratio"*, 21.11.1964. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* [further: AAS] 57 (1965), pp. 90—107.

<sup>3</sup> "Słowo Księdza Biskupa Tadeusza Rakoczego podczas ingresu do katedry św. Mikołaja w Bielsku-Białej." *Kwartalnik Diecezjalny* [further: KD] 1 (1992), p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> IOANNES PAULUS II: *Litterae Encyclicae "Ut unum sint"*, 25.5.1995. AAS 87 (1995), pp. 473—517, n. 38.

<sup>6</sup> PONTIFICIUM CONSILIUM AD CHRISTIANORUM UNITATEM FOVENDAM: *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, 25.3.1993, n. 181 — [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_25031993\\_principles-and-norms-on-ecumenism\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_25031993_principles-and-norms-on-ecumenism_en.html).

<sup>7</sup> *Ekumeniczny wymiar formacji pastoralnej*. Trans. S. RABIEJ. Opole 1998, no. 11.

to interpret texts. It is not only the art of explaining and reinterpreting formulas and documents from the past. Both understanding and interpretation concern also real human beings who believe in a different way, live according to slightly different rules and follow their own way to the ultimate fulfilment. Ecumenical hermeneutics is first of all hermeneutics of individuality, which lets you go beyond your "own" truth only. It helps you try and understand the other "as yourself" (see Mt 22, 39).<sup>8</sup> Thus, it can be described as community hermeneutics.

According to John Paul II, "aspiration for unity must be present in everyday life of the Churches and Church Communities, as well as in the individual faithful,"<sup>9</sup> but particularly in families belonging to different religions.

In January 1993, Bishop Tadeusz Rakoczy addressed his first ecumenical pastoral letter to the faithful of his diocese on the occasion of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. In the letter, he pointed out to the duties of the Christians, and how vital it is for all followers of Christ to understand that the unification of churches is a fundamental, and yet extremely effective sign of reconciliation in multid denominational families, between people and nations. The contemporary world continually calls the divided Christians to pray and work for the sake of the unity. The Ordinary emphasised that all representatives of different Christian communities living in his diocese compose one family. He also encouraged people to pray for the unity, to ask the "Holy Spirit to support our Churches with its power and help us to open our hearts to the breath of his life-giving grace."<sup>10</sup> If we want to strengthen the bonds between the Catholics and the Protestants in this specific region, we must encourage them to join in common actions and in everyday cooperation in the parishes and diocese; to emphasize the necessity of the dialogue of love and truth; to learn about other spiritual traditions and share them. On the common way to the unity, the recommendations of the Second Vatican Council are followed. The Council paid its attention to the faithful by saying: "[...] the stronger their bond with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is, the easier will they be able to deepen their fraternity" (DE, 7).

In his letter for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January 1998, Bishop Rakoczy, addressing the faithful, asked them to become the champions of unity, which should be manifested in such gestures as reach-

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<sup>8</sup> W. HRYNIEWICZ: *Hermeneutyka w dialogu*. Opole 1998, p. 17.

<sup>9</sup> JAN PAWEŁ II: "Skarb w glinianych naczyniach." *OsRomPol* 3 (2003), p. 18.

<sup>10</sup> T. RAKOCZY: "List do wiernych w związku z Tygodniem Ekumenicznym." KD 1—2 (1993), p. 23.

ing out to the neighbours, apologizing, forgiving.<sup>11</sup> These words were his appeal to become open to other man. He also showed the necessity of dialogue and the unity of hearts in the prayer which should lead us to the full communion between Christians.

## The Church on its way to reconciliation

What is the role of the Church on the way to reconciliation? The bishop gives the answer in another ecumenical pastoral letter in January 2004, saying that we believe in “one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church.” “The Church is the visible sacrament of the redemptive unity, and from its very nature — a tool of peace. The division of Christianity, arguments between sisters and brothers in faith are against the nature and the mission of the Church. This situation demands that the Christians show more and more engagement in the work for the unity. It is our duty because we have had the task from the Apostles down to the present day, through all the generations of Christians.”<sup>12</sup>

How peculiar the Cieszyn region is in this respect, is best shown in the character of John Paul II’s visit in Skoczów on 22 May 1995. Before John Paul II celebrated the Holy Mass on the hill called Kaplicówka (Chapel Hill), he had paid a visit at the Holy Trinity Evangelical church. In his speech dedicated to the clergymen and congregation of two Churches, he said: “The region where we are right now, I mean [...] Cieszyn Silesia, is known in Poland as a place of special ecumenical testimony. For ages it has been a place of harmonious coexistence between the members of the Catholic Church and the Evangelical Church, and their intensive ecumenical dialogue. The dialogue which is carried out with a deep conviction that so much joins us — that we are joined by a common faith in Christ, and by our common Motherland. Today’s meeting with you is a perfect opportunity to express my gratitude that the ecumenical dialogue is permanently developed and deepened, and that it is reflected in many forms of constructive cooperation: both on the diocesan level and in parishes.”<sup>13</sup>

In this diocese the problem of mixed religions has certainly a different dimension than in other parts of the country. Much earlier than in

<sup>11</sup> The author’s private archives, ref. nr JB E/98.

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, ref. nr JB E/2004.

<sup>13</sup> JAN PAWEŁ II: “Przemówienie wygłoszone w czasie spotkania z wiernymi w kościele ewangelicko-augsburskim w Skoczowie.” In: *Drogowskazy dla Polaków Ojca Świętego Jana Pawła II*. Vol. 3. Ed. M. CZEKAŃSKI. Kraków 1999, p. 273.

other regions — as Lutheranism came to this area already in the first half of 16th century — members of the Catholic and Protestant churches got married to one another, and that way marriages of people of different religions, generally known as mixed marriages,<sup>14</sup> are formed. As such, they should be treated with special pastoral counselling (CIC, can. 1128). These marriages have a historically established tradition and further generations are raised in the spirit of tolerance and mutual acceptance of the religious diversity. The process of raising in the spirit of tolerance starts from the childhood.<sup>15</sup>

Both the Catholics and the Protestants can rely on each other in hard times. Therefore, no one was surprised when a building of a Catholic church was rented to the Protestants, who in this particular place did not have their own church. Also Protestants are willing to let the Catholics use their church. An excellent example of the latter can be found in Międzyrzecze, where a fire destroyed the Catholic church on 25—26 January 1993.

On 7 February 2006, the diocesan curia in Bielsko-Biała was the seat of a nationwide conference of diocesan chaplains responsible for Catholic families. Father Piotr Jerzy Badura presented the ecumenical situation in Bielsko-Żywiec diocese, paying special attention to the issue of mixed marriages. The speaker emphasised that “such family is a basic school of ecumenism, respect for the other religion, acceptance for other Christians. It is also a way to find the other Church, its history, tradition and doctrine.”<sup>16</sup> The participants of the conference, with great interest, listened to a couple’s (she — a Catholic, he — a Protestant) testimony of their ecumenical life. In their speech, they said: “We are aware of our differences, and we know why they exist, but it is not our task to decide whose fault it is, or to try to solve theological problems. We also know that the division of the Church, which also affects us, is a really painful problem. The desire to repair it has already taken a lot of time, but we trust that one day it will be done according to Christ’s will.” Answering the question what the unity between Churches depends on, the couple said: “Above all, they should love each other and Our Lord; they should

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Codex Iuris Canonici* [then: CIC], can. 1128.

<sup>15</sup> An example of a mixed marriage is the family of the famous ski jumper, Adam Małysz, who being a Protestant himself, got married to a Roman Catholic. The wedding took place in the Protestant church but they decided to baptise their child in the Catholic church as, according to their opinion, the child should be brought up in their mother’s confession because she takes the bigger part in this process. Cf. A. SZARLIK: “Bo ja cię kocham. Wywiad z Adamem i Izabelą Małysz.” *Pani* 9 (2006), pp. 19—21.

<sup>16</sup> A. ŚWIEŻY-SOBEL: “Ekumenizm w praktyce.” *Gość Niedzielny* [Bielsko—Żywiec] 6 (2006), p. 1.

not look for things which divide them but tenderly cherish everything that joins, and not start to criticize from the very beginning.”<sup>17</sup>

If we want to ask which elements in the work of ecumenism, in constructing the unity in multi-religious families, are the most successful, the answer is — the prayer. According to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, “the unity which has so far joined the Catholics with their separated brethren should urge them to a common prayer as it is desirable that they are joined in prayer” (DE, 8). Thus, the most fundamental task for the ecumenical pastoral work is to get involved in the prayer and in that way help the process of unity. In prayer we are closer to Christ and our brothers and sisters. Prayer helps us overcome all obstacles. It helps to create a community heading towards one destination. It unites the disciples of Christ in many aspects — in confessing one faith, in worshipping Our Lord and in fraternal harmony of the God’s family.

## Ecumenical pastoral care of marriages of mixed religions

The mission of preaching the Gospel of Salvation to all creation depends on the testimony the Church gives to the world through her life. On the one hand, the testimony expresses the historical dimension of the Church based on the Apostles’ testimony, on the other hand, it is a clear invitation to faith directed to all who are outside the Church. The meaning of the testimony applies not only to the Church as a whole, but to everyone who believes in God. In fact, it is the Christians who through their holy life are the sign of holiness and unity of the Church. In reality, to fulfill the task, the Christians must show mature faith based on the cooperation with God’s grace. This cooperation leads to the revival of life through penance which assumes humility; through the sense of justice which paves the way to true unity; and through love which is the reflection of Christ’s love full of tolerance, respect and kindness. In such situation, the unity between the disciples and their Lord in love makes the glory and dignity of the Lord real in the world. The first Christians experienced such unity. The unity was already present in the Church, and it became a fact. It was the miracle of the Holy Spirit and it can still be its miracle today if we willingly become the subject of its action.

The fact that we understand this truth is of real importance in the ecumenical pastoral counselling of marriages between the faithful of dif-

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<sup>17</sup> Ibidem.

ferent denominations and their families. It shows that the unity of the Church is based on the “representing” presence of the “Lord’s Kingdom” whose space is still open for the unfulfilled unity. Therefore, the *communio* of the Christian churches is a unity open towards the future. Where the Church will seriously deal with its “temporality,” there such forms of church life will come into being. Consequently, this will let other Christian churches structually partake in it. In that way the mutual acceptance will be socially successful.

As far as the multid denominational families are concerned, we must be aware of the fact that they are families which should be given special ecumenical pastoral care. Therefore, priests of different confessions are requested to cooperate in this field. Their task is to reduce the problems which may arise because of the religious differences. Another task is to strenghten the spouses in their own religious traditons and piety, and to maintain the ties with their respective churches. Moreover, preparing young people for marriage is also of great importance — they must be informed about the difficulties they may encounter in their marriage because of the difference of religions. If they take up the decision to enter into such a marriage, they should be helped to overcome difficulties.

The Church itself highlights a number of ideas how to help these couples. First of them concerns pastoral rules of the mixed marriages counselling, which means they should be based on true cooperation between the priests of both confessions. Their activities should concentrate on strenghtening the spouses in their own religion, and should teach them respect for their partner’s religion. The spouses must be aware that the sacrament (church marriage) which has united them, is the foundation of their life and faith.

Another form of pastoral counselling concerns the issue of agreement in which Church they should enter into marriage and raise children. In that question, the priests should see to it that the celebration of a sacramental marriage is conducted according to the canon form and under provided conditions. It is permitted that in some circumstances the withdrawal of the form can be accepted. The future couple is also free to choose the church in which they may enter into their marriage. It is said that on request of the bride and groom, the Catholic priest may be present during the celebration if the wedding is concluded with a dispensation in the Protestant Church.

As to issue of baptism and raising children, it is said that bringing them up in different religions will be considered a kind of handing down upon them the split of the Churches. It is an argument in favour of choosing only one Church for the holy baptism. The Catholic party should do their best to have the children baptised and brought up in their Church.

Nevertheless, it is said that the parents are responsible for passing along the faith to their children. Their proper behaviour can also be the beginning of the ecumenical dialogue in the family, and they may share “the richness of their faith” with each other. The religious affiliation of the children to the same Church should correspond with their open attitude towards the other Church.<sup>18</sup>

The following rules are vital in the ecumenical pastoral work of families: encouraging the faithful to pray for the unity of Christians and to participate in common services and other forms of parish activities; acquiring more knowledge about respective Churches; reminding parents that a child, despite their affiliation to one of the Churches, should be educated about the spiritual richness of the other Church through participation in celebrations, services and common visits in the other church. There are parishes (e.g. Brenna) in Cieszyn Silesia where the parish priests — Catholic and Protestant — visit the multid denominational families together. First, they pray together, and then, have a discussion on different subjects with the members of the family. The ecumenical ministry understood as such can be a device to strengthen the love between the spouses. Their love, on the other hand, is an example of ecumenical love and a sign of unity for the divided Church. In reality this kind of ministry is a form of faith dialogue in the family.

If we raise the question what criteria should be taken into account when choosing a life partner, among the most important ones are mentioned love and deep affection, then the positive personality traits like kindness, understanding, patience and, last but not least, the faith and mutual trust. These are the values that should characterize each multid denominational family.

## Ecumenical ministry in the light of the Evangelical Church of Augsburg Confession

What is the experience of the ecumenical ministry in the Evangelical Church of Augsburg Confession? Unfortunately not good, the same concerns other Churches. The formal and legal basis for the ecumenical ministry should be appropriate regulations in *Zasadnicze Prawo Wewnętrzne Kościoła Ewangelicko-Augsburskiego* (*Fundamental Inner Law of the Evan-*

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<sup>18</sup> *Wiara, modlitwa i życie w Kościele Katolickim. Uchwały I Synodu Diecezji Katowickiej 1972—1975*. Katowice-Rzym 1976, pp. 235—238.

gical Church of Augsburg Confession) and in *Pragmatyka Służbowa Kościoła Ewangelicko-Augsburskiego* (Official Practice of the Evangelical Church of Augsburg Confession).<sup>19</sup> In *Zasadnicze Prawo Wewnętrzne Kościoła Ewangelicko-Augsburskiego*, there is no article to be found about the ecumenical ministry.

In *Pragmatyka Służbowa Kościoła Ewangelicko-Augsburskiego*, there is a chapter entitled “The Ecumenical Activity,” with two subsections: “Serving the Church’s Unity” and “In Holy Communion (*communio in sacris*).” Except paragraph 187, the others refer to liturgical practice and theological responsibility for ecumenism. Paragraph 187, which does not mention the ecumenical pastoral activities at all, reads as follows: “The Evangelical Church of Augsburg Confession in the Republic of Poland encourages its clergy to be open, honest and ecumenically sagacious. It encourages full tolerance and respect for the Christians of other religious beliefs, in the neighbourhood relations, in church activity, in religious education, in preaching, in publications and ecclesiastical press. We expect the same from our ecumenical partners.”

It can be assumed that the record about ecumenical ministry can be found in the chapter “The Sacramental Ministry of the Church,” in the subsection “The Holy Baptism,” in § 74. It says about the godparents: “Godparents should be members of the Evangelical Church of Augsburg Confession, or members of a Church which we are in altar and pulpit community with; it is allowed that one party is of another Christian confession.”

Prior to administering baptism, the Lutheran priest is obliged to have a pastoral talk with the child’s parents and godparents, which should be regarded as a form of ecumenical ministry. The chapter “Ministry of Marriage and Family” also says about the form of ecumenical ministry in the subsection “Marriages of Various Confessional, Religious and Ideological Affiliation.” This form refers only to actions connected with entering into a marriage. In the case of mixed marriages, the role of the Lutheran priest is limited and further care of such couples depends only on the personal ideas and responsibility of the local priest. According to Fr. Marek Uglorz, PhD, a professor at the Christian Theological Academy in Warsaw, “priests have not been provided with pastoral role. Everyone who thinks that anything concerning the ecumenical ministry could be drawn from *Pragmatyka Służbowa Kościoła Ewangelicko-Augsburskiego*, is mistaken. In the chapter ““Towards the House of Mourning””, we will not find any

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *Zasadnicze Prawo Wewnętrzne Kościoła Ewangelicko-Augsburskiego*. In: *Zbiór przepisów prawnych Kościoła Ewangelicko-Augsburskiego w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*. Bielsko-Biała 1999, passim; *Pragmatyka służbowa Kościoła Ewangelicko-Augsburskiego*. W: *Zbiór przepisów prawnych...*, passim.

references to ecumenical actions, though it often happens that during the funeral of a Lutheran, we have to address a member of the other Church with some comforting words.”<sup>20</sup>

The ministry of families of different religions depends on the local priest who “has to find an adequate Roman Catholic partner, or a partner of any other Church involved. Thus the ecumenical ministry should be the subject of special care of the priests of the Churches parishes of which are in the same environment if the ministry is to be carried out in a responsible and honest way, and free of any suspicions of crypto-mission. A pastoral construction of a common house where all tenants feel the responsibility for its future should take into consideration not only the ecclesiological models which are special for each religion, but also fulfill specific pastoral targets typical for all Churches. These targets, which integrate not only people, but are integrated theologically and ecumenically, can bring blessed fruit which may save the children of God and make them happy.”<sup>21</sup>

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There is still a long way to go for the ecumenical ministry of the multid denominational families before it becomes a fully-fledged unit in the pastoral work of the Churches. There is a constant need for ecumenical education, for learning the Church’s teachings, for information about the achievements in the ecumenical dialogue. Tolerance, respect, acceptance, humbleness and love, and common testimony are values which are indispensable in the pastoral counselling of religiously mixed families. These values should continually be developed in multid denominational families, and in due course the families will become “fundamental schools of ecumenism.”

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. M.J. UGLORZ: “Duszpasterstwo ekumeniczne w Kościele ewangelicko-augsburskim.” In: *Ekumenizm w duszpasterstwie parafialnym*. Ed. J. BUDNIAK. Katowice 2007, p. 45.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem.

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## Pastoral Counselling of Multi-Religious Families Based on Examples from Bielsko-Żywiec Diocese

### Summary

The area of Bielsko-Żywiec diocese is inhabited by about 50,000 members of the Evangelical Church of Augsburg Confession. This fact has indisputable merits in the ecumenical movement, especially in pastoral counselling of marriages of different Christian denominations. In Cieszyn Silesia, the beginnings of the movement go many centuries back. Nevertheless, history shows that the religious relationships were totally different from the present ones, which are full of respect, tolerance, brotherhood, and engagement in the common faith testimony. The Catholic and Protestant Churches have a shared ecumenical activity, where the first place is reserved for the pastoral counselling of multi-denominational.

There is still a long way to go for the ecumenical ministry of the multid denominational families before it becomes a fully-fledged unit in the pastoral work of the Churches. There is a constant need for ecumenical education, for learning the Church's teachings, for information about the achievements in the ecumenical dialogue. Tolerance, respect, acceptance, humbleness and love, and common testimony are values which are indispensable in the pastoral counselling of religiously mixed families. These values should continually be developed in multid denominational families.

JÓZEF BUDNIAK

## Prêtrise des familles multiconfessionnelles à l'exemple de la diocèse de Bielsko-Żywiec

### Résumé

Le terrain de la diocèse de Bielsko-Żywiec est habité par une société de presque cinquante mille personnes appartenant à l'Église évangélique de la Confession d'Augsbourg, ce qui a de grands mérites pour l'activité œcuménique, et surtout pour celle liée à la prêtrise des mariages de différentes appartenances religieuses. En Silésie de Cieszyn, ce mouvement a été commencé il y a quelques centaines d'années. Néanmoins, l'histoire montre que le modèle des relations confessionnelles était tout à fait différent de celui d'aujourd'hui qui se distingue par un respect mutuel, la tolérance, la fraternité et l'engagement commun visant à témoigner de la foi. Les Églises catholique et évangélique exercent ensemble une activité œcuménique où la première place occupe la prêtrise des familles mixtes.

Il faut encore beaucoup de temps et d'efforts avant que la prêtrise œcuménique des familles multiconfessionnelles ne devienne un élément de l'activité pastorale des Églises qui jouirait de tous ses droits. Il est nécessaire d'assurer une éducation œcuménique continue ainsi que de chercher à connaître l'étude sur les Églises et sur les acquisitions dans le domaine du dialogue œcuménique. La tolérance, le respect, l'acceptation, l'humilité

lité et l'amour ainsi qu'un témoignage commun sont bel et bien les valeurs indispensables dans la prêtrise des familles de différentes appartenances religieuses.

**Mots clés :** œcuménisme, prêtrise œcuménique, dialogue, famille, caractère multiconfessionnel

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## La pastorale delle famiglie multireligiose sull'esempio della diocesi di Bielsko-Żywiec

### Sommario

Il territorio della diocesi di Bielsko-Żywiec è abitato da quasi cinquantamila membri della Chiesa evangelico-augustea; ciò ha meriti rilevanti per il movimento ecumenico ed in particolare nella pastorale dei matrimoni di persone di diversa appartenenza confessionale. Gli inizi di tale movimento nella Slesia di Cieszyn risalgono ad alcuni secoli fa. Ciò nonostante la storia mostra che il modello delle relazioni tra le confessioni era distante dall'immagine contemporanea caratterizzata dal rispetto reciproco, dalla tolleranza, dalla fratellanza e dall'impegno nella testimonianza comune della fede. Le Chiese cattolica ed evangelica conducono un'attività ecumenica comune dove al primo posto si trova la pastorale delle famiglie miste.

Davanti alla pastorale ecumenica delle famiglie multireligiose c'è ancora un lungo cammino da fare prima che diventi una particella con pieno diritto dell'attività pastorale delle Chiese. Occorre un'educazione ecumenica continua, l'acquisizione della conoscenza dell'insegnamento sulle Chiese e sulle conquiste nel dialogo ecumenico. La tolleranza, il rispetto, l'accettazione, l'umiltà e l'amore nonché la testimonianza comune sono i valori necessari nella pastorale delle famiglie di confessione diversa.

**Parole chiave:** ecumenismo, pastorale ecumenica, dialogo, famiglia, multireligiosità