

The OPEN LETTER
from three Evangelical Churches in Poland
concerning the Sejm's manner of proceeding with the resolution draft to commemorate the 500th
Jubilee of the Reformation

The Speaker of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland(RP):

Mr. Marek Kuchciński

The Parliamentary Club Nowoczesna

Parliamentary Club PSL

On behalf of the Evangelical-Augsburg Church in RP, the Evangelical-Reformed Church in RP and Evangelical-Methodist Church in RP, we appreciate the initiative of the parliamentary clubs of PSL and Nowoczesna as well as the Convent of Seniors of the Sejm concerning the resolution on commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation occurring in 2017 (the parliamentary printed matter 2133 of 14th of December 2017). However, we request the withdrawal of the submitted motions.

Representing our Churches, we extend gratitude to the President of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda, who assumed the Honorary Patronage over the Central Celebration of the Reformation Jubilee, which took place in Warsaw on October 26-29, 2017. We also give thanks for participation in the solemn Jubilee session at the Royal Castle. In the address delivered on that occasion, President Duda emphasised that his presence during the celebration testifies to the community, closeness and brotherhood which connect all Poles. He reminded as well that Evangelicals permanently recorded their presence in the history of the Polish state and nation.

We thank the Senate of the Republic of Poland for the resolution of the 1st of February 2017 commemorating the 500 years of the presence of Protestants on the Polish soil.

We thank the Sejmiks of Silesian, Lower-Silesian and Warmian-Masurian Voivodships for adopting jubilee resolutions. We also attach great significance to the fact that the local self-governments of some of the cities and towns actively joined the celebration of the Reformation Jubilee, appreciating Evangelicals' contribution to the development of culture, industry and education in their regions.

We direct our cordial thanks to the Roman Catholic Church, which celebrated the 500-year Jubilee of the Reformation together with us – both abroad and in Poland, owing to which, the event was held in the spirit of ecumenism, love and brotherhood. We have in mind both Pope Frances with His presence at the Jubilee celebration in Lund, Sweden, and the Primate of Poland, Rev. Abp. Wojciech Polak, who was a member of the Honorary Committee of the celebration in Poland and took part in many events of the Year of Reformation. Among the representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, present at the celebrations in different dioceses and cities and towns, there were the clergy headed by bishops as well as academics of the Catholic colleges, organizing and co-organizing conferences and symposia.

We are grateful to the Churches of the Polish Ecumenical Council and other Christian Churches in Poland for their presence and accompanying us in the Reformation Jubilee Year. We hope that jubilee meetings allowed us to get to know each other better, make friends, talk about difficult matters, break the prejudice and learn from each other. We wish ourselves that what was worked out successfully for years of the ecumenical dialogue in Poland should serve the further approach.

In the context of the aforementioned events, with disappointment, we have received the course of debate on the resolution draft to commemorate the Jubilee of 500 years of the Reformation which took place during the session of the Sejm on the 14th of December 2017.

We do not want that manner of debating on the legacy of the Reformation in the Sejm of the Republic of Poland!

Advent and Christmas are for us, Christians, a special period of time in which the biblical message reminds us of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Saviour, carrying the peace of God to all people of good will. Let His message be the example to follow for all of us.

Andrzej Malicki
Superintendent of the Evangelical-Methodists in the Republic of Poland

Jerzy Samiec
Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical-Augsburg in the Republic of Poland

Marek Izdebski
Bishop of the Evangelical- Reformed Church in the Republic of Poland

The Open Letter was adopted on the 15 of December 2017 by way of unanimously passed resolution at the joint session of: the Synod of the Evangelical-Augsburg Church in RP, the Synod of the Evangelical-Reformed Church in RP and the Council of the Evangelical-Methodist Church in RP