

## **WEST's Shameful Contribution to Mission in Poland**

The Wales Evangelical School of Theology (WEST) recently released a [response](#) to what it described as a 'scurrilous article full of baseless insinuation', making the surprising claim that the article's author 'gives no evidence of false teaching by the WEST lecturers' and 'does not mention the long list of esteemed ministers and missionaries that have been trained at WEST'. While it is true that the author has indeed not done these things, and that doubtless one could draw up a list of esteemed ministers and missionaries who trained at WEST, the above statements are surprising in the light of [information](#) which has been available for some time about two WEST graduates currently working in Poland. However, since the page reporting this information was assembled in a somewhat piecemeal fashion over many months and the information to which reference is now being made may not be immediately apparent to all readers, the following statement aims to provide clarification and updated information.

The two WEST PhD graduates concerned are currently working at the Evangelical School of Theology in Wrocław (EST [EWST in Polish]). [EST defines evangelicalism](#) as an 'interdenominational movement which arose within conservative Protestantism at the beginning of the 20th century' and explains the word 'interdenominational' by adding that evangelicals are present 'in all Protestant denominations as well as in the Roman Catholic Church'. EST's Rector may be heard repeating the second of these absurd claims in English [in a video available online](#). The seminary's commitment to the contemporary ecumenical movement is in evidence on every hand; it is seen, for example, in the introductory words of the Rector at [one of a series of meetings](#) held as part of the 2013 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity organised jointly by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches. It would be hard to imagine warmer praise or an expression of more fulsome support for the Week of Prayer and its ethos. Many examples exist, too, of [EST's active support for interfaith dialogue](#), giving force to the seminary's brazen claim to be a [promoter of ecumenism and interreligious dialogue](#). Another disturbing feature of EST is the [very substantial support it has lent to the homosexual lobby](#).

Some readers may protest that presenting EST in this way is an attempt to establish 'guilt by association', or may fall back on the excuse – so inappropriate in this context – that 'we don't practice secondary separation'. While the above facts do nonetheless constitute important background information, they are far from being the strongest objections which can be advanced against these two products of WEST's ministry. Reference was made at the beginning of this article to WEST's implicit suggestion that there is no evidence of false teaching among ministers and

missionaries trained at WEST. Let us then proceed to look at the two representatives of WEST's theology who are at work in Poland.

The first of these is Piotr Lorek. WEST seems to have a [high opinion](#) of him. We do not share that opinion. In a [paper on the Apostle Paul's view of hell](#) published in EST's peer-reviewed theological journal, Mr Lorek concluded that 'Paul probably thought that the existence of unbelievers ends with their physical death', dismissing several of Paul's epistles as 'deuteropauline' (see English abstract at the end). Are we to understand from WEST's response that there is 'no evidence of false teaching' here? Leaving aside the question as to what exactly it is that PhD candidates at WEST learn from the 'theological heavyweights' named in the response, it is imperative to state quite unequivocally that evangelicalism in Poland has no need for this false teaching or this false teacher.

Mr Lorek is not only a lecturer at EST, he was Director of Biblical Studies from 2005 to 2006 and since [2007 has been Academic Dean](#). This means that he does of course give his unqualified support to the seminary's ecumenical activities. Evidence of this support is too abundant to be listed in full. As an example, in a later section of the [video referred to earlier](#) documenting a meeting held during the 2013 ecumenical Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Mr Lorek himself can be seen interpreting for the visiting professor from Northern Ireland. Viewers can also watch as another lecture is delivered by a Roman Catholic priest.

The other WEST graduate currently working at EST is Sebastian Smolarz. WEST seems quite [proud of this former student](#), too. Once again we take the opposite view. Readers are asked to note that EST has for years been listing him as a [member of faculty](#). The seminary has never listed him as a 'guest lecturer', 'visiting lecturer', 'temporary lecturer' 'part-time lecturer' or 'not-really-very-closely-connected-with-the-seminary-at-all lecturer' as one of us was once somewhat misleadingly – to say the least – given to understand. He is in fact the lecturer responsible for the courses on 'Introduction to the Old Testament' and 'Old Testament Theology' – no small commitment at what is after all a theological college – and regularly acts as [supervisor for student dissertations](#). Lest there should again be cries of 'guilt by association' and 'he doesn't have to practice secondary separation', it is important for readers to understand that the reason why Mr Smolarz fits in so well at EST is because he is himself an active and committed ecumenist. Why else would an ecumenical seminary have appointed him to the key position he holds and retained him for so long? As one example of many which could be given, readers' attention is drawn to a series of meetings held in January 2012 to mark the ecumenical Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Firstly, Mr Smolarz agreed to address the [meeting held on Monday 9 January](#) (and Mr Lorek on the Thursday). This meeting was held at EST.

Secondly, [Mr Smolarz agreed to give a reading at an ecumenical service held the same week on Saturday 14 January](#). A full list of other ecumenical dignitaries participated on both occasions.

Another deplorable example of the spiritual adultery committed on a regular basis by this esteemed minister trained at WEST is his participation on 17 January 2013 in [a meeting for interfaith dialogue](#) hosted by the Papal Faculty of Theology in Wrocław. Mr Smolarz is clearly visible in photographs 2 and 6 (page may take up to 30 seconds to load properly; scroll down to bottom to see photographs). A [video made at the event](#) shows Mr Smolarz at 00:50 for example, with a close up view at 02:50.

Supporters of WEST may respond by saying that WEST cannot be held responsible for the actions of its graduates after they have completed their studies. On the other hand one is bound to ask how it is that five years of Biblical study in Wales at WEST's supporters' expense is not effective against the erroneous views Mr Smolarz holds, or why both he and Mr Lorek feature in WEST's roll of honour. Indeed, direct responsibility certainly does continue to be borne by the British church which has been [financing Mr Smolarz for many years](#), a church which claims to [subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith](#). One can hardly imagine the framers of Chapter 25.6 taking such an enthusiastic part in services held to mark the Vatican's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. So [as we have asked before](#), who's telling the truth? Or more pertinently, who's not telling the truth? Whatever the case may be, it is clear that the criticisms levelled against WEST are very far from being 'baseless', and it is even more clear that the evangelical cause in Poland has absolutely no need of such 'help'. These two contributions of WEST to mission in Poland are shameful, ruinous and desperately need to be reversed.

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