

“OVIDIUS” UNIVERSITY OF CONSTANȚA
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THESIS SUMMARY

PAULINE MISSION –

***NATURE, STRATEGIES AND
CHALLENGES***

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About Saint Apostle Paul was written a lot and still is also today. But, no matter how much would be written, this will never be superfluous, because, on the one hand, the Christian teaching owes a lot to the efforts of this great Apostle, and on the other hand, because the rich personality of Saint Paul seems inexhaustible, is always alive, always timeless in the Christian life.

Thus, in the present work we are not trying to repeat from these searches, nor to support them, nor to criticize them, considering that many works from the richly consecrated literature of Saint Apostle Paul we used, and on the contrary, we try to add and contribute – in the extent in which we will succeed –, at defining, delimiting, specifying and systemizing the most known and – we consider – sufficiently representative information, that refer at the missionary ministry from the early church, in the exceptional light of personality and ministry of Saint Apostle Paul.

The mission appears yet from the early age of the Church, as an existential appropriation of it, and the essential coordinates of the *Christian mission*, according to the great missionary command from the end of the Matthew's Gospel (28, 19-20) are: evangelism: “*going, teach all nations*”, (*Matthew 28, 19*); the sacramental embodying in the ecclesial body of Christ, in which we participate at the communion life of the Holy Trinity: “*baptizing them in the name of Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*” (*Matthew 28, 19*); the inducement to persevere in the righteous faith (1 Timothy 1, 10) in holiness, witness and service: “*teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you*” (*Matthew 28, 20*).

It is incontestable that Saint Paul has a missionary conception that might be removed especially from the *Pauline Epistles*, and from the *Book of Acts*, if this can be conceived as essential service through which the Church makes the Redeemer known in the world. But, a *missiology* that might be conceived in this regard, does not cover or form, the most important part of the *Pauline missiology*, but, the necessity of living a *Pauline missiology* results even from the actual state of the field research.

The mission is a service so important in the Church's economy that we can state that through it we can define in the most general and full way the entire service of our Savior, as the first and only sent by the Father.

Concretely, *the Christian mission* is a saving call addressed personally to all people by the Savior and its realization has a triple update: *liturgical-sacramental, mystic – ascetic* and *socially – community*. It identifies with the real communication of life, holiness, love and existent unity in a supreme way in the Holy Trinity, the ultimate foundation of existence and model through excellence of the Church's life.

A contemporary clarification of the faith teaching about the mission is for the Orthodox Church not only an intern necessity, didactic and pastoral, but also a catechetical and missionary duty. On the one hand, the Church feels the need to think continuously and personally the basic truths of its faith, and on the other hand, the Gospel has to be interpreted in each age, for every situation, for each generation. The Orthodox Church has thus own reasons to explain, to tempt and preach the faith that was given to the saints, once and for all (Judas 3), to all that are in its bosom, to all that prepare to enter, to the ones that are still outside it.

The problem is that in the Orthodox Church, wasn't realized a systematization of the missionary learning, with a broad acceptance in the Christian world, and in this direction we want to try through the present work, the building of some theoretical premises, restricted, for now at the Pauline mission, but sufficiently useful so that it can be used to a subsequent synthesis for the entire church.

Referring to the contemporary Orthodox Theology, and exactly in this problem, the Father Prof. Dr. Ion Bria was saying yesteryear that “*until now it does not exist a clear and concise Theology that would express the actual missionary practice of the Orthodox Church. Such a deliberation and systematic presentation it is more necessary today*”¹. And this more so as they are found not only missionary testimony is crucial for the mediation in time and space of the Tradition, but also that this apostolic service is a source of inspiration for the theological thinking. Theology, which is nothing but the articulation in the verbal expression of the Church's expression, cannot be indifferent in the way that the Church exercises the work of the Gospel preaching and building of the Body in Christ in the time and place in which is sent².

Between the Savior's mission – *first sent* – and the Christian mission there is both similarity and difference. *Similarity* because in Christ and all missionaries work the same Holy Spirit, after the same single plan and will of the Father and with all the power “in heaven and on

¹ Father PhD Ion Bria, *Contra sectarismului*, in *Ortodoxia*, year XLII (1990), no. 3, p. 184.

² Idem, *Curs de Teologie și practică misionară ortodoxă*, Geneva, 1982, p. 1.

earth" of the Savior. *Difference* exists in the area of preaching which extends, and if the Savior was sent only to the Hebrews: "*I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.*" (Matthew 15, 24), the apostles were sent equally to the Hebrews: "*Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans; Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel.*" (Matthew 10, 5-6) but also to all nations from all the houses and all ages: "*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age, Amin*" (Matthew 28, 19-20).

This may explain why, formally, we say that Saint Apostle Paul is "the apostle of nations", as if it were only of the nations, although he was sent in mission without discrimination at the Hebrews and nations. In reality, restricting his service only to the sphere of nations was strictly an aspect of conjuncture, available only for the period of beginnings, when his anti-Christian fanaticism memory was still alive. The Pauline mission yet does not cease once with the repose of the apostle in the Lord, because he continues to serve through his epistles to all the people attracted to the belief in Christ.

It is true, the Christian teaching was exposed in its general points in the Holy Gospels, but, the one that interpreted, systemized and applied through its own thought and life, the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ at the social realities, spreading in the since world, was the Saint Apostle Paul, the most untired missionary and the most authentic genius Christian, despised almost in the same way in which was glorified by the devout guests of his scriptures³.

As Saint Apostle Paul himself admits that "*is the apostle-type. If Saint Peter is the good shepherd, which feeds the flock entrusted to him, because he loves God; if the virginal apostle and evangelist John reveals us the mystery of the eternal birth of God's Word, Saint Apostle Paul is above all an apostle. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews ... to the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some*" (*I Corinthians 9, 20-22*). *That's why he is so hard to be pictured*"⁴.

For Saint Apostle Paul the mission wasn't a problem that needs theoretical discussions, being more a way of life. For the Christian life Saint Apostle Paul created the model through his entire apostle ministry. Only further the theoretical aspects were contoured the theoretical

³ Deacon PhD Grigorie T. Marcu, *Originea și originalitatea teologiei pauline*, in *Revista Teologică*, year XXX (1940), no. 11-12, p. 545.

⁴ Father Ioan Georgescu, *Actualitatea Sf. Ap. Pavel*, in *Vestitorul*, year XIII (1937), no. 12-14, p. 119.

aspects that depicted concepts, principles, methods, nature, strategies and challenges of the Pauline mission. Saint Apostle Paul did not speculate upon the mission but made mission, leaving us to depict and understand the methodological structure behind this ministry.

According to the relation with its Head (Lord Christ), the Church must be alive, working and dynamic, and the dimension that gives consistency to the Church of Christ is the missionary one.

The communist and atheist regime end in '89 did not manage to destroy the Church, but by the amputation of the missionary dimension of the Church, it has managed its removal from the public life, and isolating its servants or transforming them in real "outcasts" of the society.

Once with the unchaining from '89, the Church received the reentry possibility in the social life and rebuilding, suitably creating a framework for living and manifesting by the will of God. Far from being benevolent, the context from '89 eliminated outspoken atheist censorship, offering even opportunities, but, it also produced undesired effects like the edict of tolerance from 314 from Mediolan, through the fact that it eliminated also all the sectarian initiatives, amoral and immoral, anarchical etc.

These polarizations of the internal but especially international contemporary missionary context were summarized masterly by His Beatitude Father Daniel:

- On the one hand, the secularization and, on the other hand, the thirst for holiness and, on the other hand, the thirst of holiness or authentic spiritualization;
- On the one hand, the sectarian phenomenon, proselytism and the religious fragmentation and, on the other hand, the ecumenical search of unity;
- On the one hand, increasing poverty and, on the other hand, accumulation of wealth and profit;
- On the one hand, the forms of humiliating the human dignity through violence, moral crisis, pleasure obsession and, on the other hand, the multiplication of the humanitarian institutions;
- On the one hand, the religious syncretism and theological relativism and, by reaction, the intensification of the religious fundamentalism on the other hand;

- On the one hand, the globalization and, on the other hand, the multiplication of the nationalist attitudes and inter-ethnical conflicts.⁵

Therefore, a new situation which asks imperatively that the Church through its mission should adapt itself to the new challenges, to prepare servants, professors, missionaries, that can be competent in managing the present situation.

If under the atheist communist dictatorship the Church's mission was malevolent assimilated with "religious propaganda", and the missiology, as discipline, had to enter in the composition of other theological disciplines to survive, in the present it is imposed that the mission, vocation and imperatively of the entire Church, to recover its authentic pastoral theological understanding, and to resume the place it deserves between the other theological disciplines, and the change of ecclesial living – both for the hierarchy and for the believers – it had to realize itself based on the Christian teaching, by the patristic and neo-patristic paradigm, answering in the same time also to the new challenges (bioethics, UFO's etc.) with which the Holy Fathers did not confront.

From the start we would like to specify that, regarding the motivation of the addressed subject, the choosing of the *Pauline Mission* as study subject in the thesis was determined, firstly, by his timeliness and importance, both in the social life and the Church. The rich and diverse missionary aspects sit today in the center of the theologians', philosophers' and scientists' concerns. After one by one the main philosophical and scientific discipline was metaphysics, the theory of knowledge, sociology, psychology, philosophy of culture, today through the opportunity of the globalized context and intense ecumenical dialogues it is intensely approached *missiology*.

To analyze and investigate the *mission* as live and determined dimension of the Church, we chose to start showing in what context was born and how it manifested – historically speaking – the Christian Church's mission, and the most suitable way to make this presentation is from the perspective of a genius apostle, and the most suitable for defining the Christian mission, and namely Saint Apostle Paul.

We propose to realize in this paper a more systematic exposure of the Christian mission – nature, challenges and strategies – through the correct presentation of the most representative

⁵ † Daniel, Metropolitan of Moldova and Bucovina, *Misiunea teologiei ortodoxe astăzi*, in *Studii Teologice*, year XLVIII (1996), no. 3-4, p. 11-12.

Christian missionary – Saint Apostle Paul, in the hope that it will be useful to all the Orthodox missionaries, for the support of the ecumenical dialogue, for the more large curdling effort of a systemized theology of the mission. Equally we hope to be useful and righteous to the Christians that will work to enrich their level of Christian-Orthodox knowledge and living, and to the teachers and specialists interested of this essential dimension of our church.

The originality of our approach results also from the multidisciplinary treatment of the Pauline mission, from the biblical, patristic, philological, ethical and philosophical perspective.

By choosing the subject “PAULINE MISSION – NATURE, STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES”, we weren’t preoccupied to rebuilt the missionary doctrine of Saint Apostle Paul as a historical relic with a value of curiosity or antique, but wanted firstly, as much as possible, to put ourselves in the place of Saint Paul, to see through his eyes, to think like him, doing all these in a way in which we can help others to really appreciate his missionary clairvoyance and concerns.

The novelty that this paper brings in the theological Romanian space is, on the one hand, in the fact that the subject chosen was realized in a relatively vacuum regarding the systemized Pauline missiology, the contributions of the Romanian theologians forming only premises in a more general effort, and on the other hand in the difficulty of creating and specifying a Pauline mission. This last aspect is self-understood, because the writings of Saint Paul offer us a sum of missionary data with the help of which it can be created the system of the Pauline mission, but does not offer us the system itself, because Saint Paul did not aim to write theological treaties, but by his occasional epistles, he wished to create a flux of new life -*εν Χριστῷ*.

This, especially because in history, the objective of the Orthodox mission didn’t had the priority of conquering new geographical frontiers, but rather, of keeping the people in faith, in a permanent historical continuity. This is why, in Orthodoxy, from the missionary perspective, the accent isn’t put any more on the Gospel preaching work among the non-Christians, exception being yet some territories, like the African continent, posing a particular importance today the mission *ad intra*, in which is put the accent on the catechetical and spiritual revival of the believers, that although baptized, do not have any live and constant connection with God, through His Church⁶. However nor the ad extra mission was canceled but on the contrary, in the actual globalized and ecumenical context, the ad extra mission was reinvigorated mainly because

⁶ Father PhD Student Marius Florescu, *Misiunea Bisericii astăzi*, in *Învierea*, year XX (2009), no. 19 (469), p. 1.

of the unity dialogues and efforts of mutual sharing of the excellent exegetic and missionary accomplishments realized in the Christian community by their renowned theologians mainly as preamble for the pre-synodical pan-Orthodox Conferences for the preparation of the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodoxy.

In a recent study regarding the ecumenical movement, it is stated that: “In a pluralist world, we can only promote Orthodoxy by dialogue. As such, it is inevitably the contact and dialogue. This is why, it is important to use the dialogue and cooperation to stress out the values of the Orthodoxy. If we lose our identity, if we dissolve, when we communicate, of course that this can be a risk”⁷.

Here is why, a missionary theology we consider of having a biblical foundation, when it is understood by reporting to the entire Holy Scripture, and on the most justified patristic and neo-patristic interpretation. Generally, the mission, must be understood based on the testimony of the Old and New Testament about the saving work of God in the history of mankind, about the meaning of man’s life in communion with the eternal God, and in this regard “*the biblical foundation of the mission extends to the totality of God’s Word*”⁸.

The data which can be gathered about Saint Apostle Paul, outside his missionary work, presented by Luke in the Book of Acts, and in the sphere of his epistles are few.

The first source in studying the mission of Saint Apostle Paul are actually his Epistles (I Thessalonians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans, Colossians, Ephesians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus). Also, the most trusted historical information can be taken from the Book of Acts, (in which are presented five missionary trips of Saint Apostle Paul) or from other New Testament writings (James, 2 Peter). These different groups of documents do not have yet a fully recognition, because the field specialists still discuss the authenticity of some Pauline Epistles, and as if the epistles of which authenticity was recognized, would not suffer, later, interpolations. We did not take into account the debates upon which there isn’t any consensus not even in the confession where it appeared. For example there are still discussions on the objectivity of the apocryphal, and if they give us or not reliable information, that can be proof independent of the ones presented by the New Testament, and these probably will have to

⁷ Daniel, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, *Confessing the Truth in Love. Orthodox Perceptions of Life, Mission and Unity*, Basilica, Bucharest, 2008, p. 231

⁸ Senior, Donald C. P. and Carroll Stuhlmueller, C. P., *The Biblical Foundations for Mission*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999, p. 3.

be thoroughly analyzed case by case all. Anyway, the secondary literature of Saint Apostle Paul and his writings are vast and there isn't any complete bibliography. Actually, we didn't even believe it is possible, given the pace in which appear consecrated works of this extraordinary exponent of Christianity⁹.

Therefore, from the many works of Saint Apostle Paul, we tried to approach in this thesis, only the ones in a strong relation with his mission (committed with priority among the nations), after the conversion committed on the road of Damascus. Evidently, because of the grand personality and rich ministry of Saint Apostle Paul, there were written numerous works consecrated to a much extended palette of New Testament biblical themes, both in our country and abroad. Regarding the missionary work of Saint Apostle Paul, there were written explicitly and implicitly, as main or secondary theme, numerous articles and studies on an academic level, from which we used in this paper, only a small portion, of the many that have been available, an entire list being particularly exposed in the References of the work¹⁰.

⁹ Hans Dieter Betz, art. *PAVEL*, in Freedman, David Noel, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, (=ABD), (New York: Doubleday) 1997, 1992. 5:186.

¹⁰Thus, in our country we know the next approaches: Father Prof. Gheorghe Hostiuc, *Principii didactico-pedagogice și misionar-sociale în epistolele pastorale ale Sfântului Apostol Pavel*, Ed. George Tofan, Suceava, 2010; Father Prof. Vlad Sofron, *Principii misionare și sociale în Epistolele Sfântului Apostol Pavel*, *Studii Teologice*, year (1955), no. 5-6, pp. 285-304; Father Prof. Vasile G. Ispir, *Sfântul Apostol Pavel ca misionar*, *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, year (1944), no. 1-3, pp. 42-61; Father Prof. Dr. I. C. Beldie, *Însoțitorii Sfântului Apostol Pavel în misiunile sale*, Ed. Imprimeria Chișinău, Chișinău, 1940; Diac. Prof. Emilian Vasilescu, *Epistolele Sf. Apostol Pavel. Idei misionare și sociale*, *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei*, year XLV (1969), no. 10-12, pp. 599-607; Gh. Petru, *Misiune și evanghelizare, în Teologie și viață*, year LXXI (1995), no. 1-3, pp. 84-122; Prof. Deacon Nicolae Nicolaescu, *Ideile dogmatice și misionare ale epistolei către Coloseni*, în *Mitropolia Olteniei*, year V (1954), no. 4-6, pp. 152-161; Iar dintre cei străini amintim: Charles Augrain, *Paul, Master of Spiritual Life*. Cork: The Mercier Press, 1967; Jurgen Becker, *Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles*. Louisville: Westminster, 1993; J. C. Beker, *Heirs of Paul: Paul's legacy in the New Testament and in the Church Today*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991; David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. NY: Orbis, 1991; Louis Bouyer, *The Spirituality of the New Testament and the Fathers*. A History of Christian Spirituality. Vol I. Trans. Mary Perkins Ryan. 1968. Kent: Burns & Oates, 1986; Raymond E. Brown, & Fitzmyer, Joseph A. & Murphy, Roland E. (Eds.) *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1990; Jose Comblin, *The Meaning of Mission*. NY: Orbis, 1977; Philip A. Cunningham, *Jewish Apostle to the Gentiles*. Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1986; Michael Downey, (Ed.) *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*. Articles: Milligan, Mary. "Apostolic Spirituality"; Principe, Walter H. "Spirituality, Christian"; Kealy, Sean P. "Spirituality for Mission"; Cadorette, Curt. "Third World, Spirituality of"; Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993; James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*. London: A & C Black, 1993; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *According to Paul: Studies in the Theology of Paul*. NY: Paulist Press, 1993; Gerald F. Hawthorne, & Martin, Ralph P. & Reid Daniel G. (Eds.) *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Article: Meye R. P. "Spirituality". UK: Intervarsity Press, 1993; Martin Hengel, & Schwemer, Anna Maria. *Paul Between Damascus and Antioch: The unknown Years*. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1997; Joseph A. Komonchak, & Collins, Mary & Lane Dermot A. (Eds.) *The New Dictionary of Theology*. Article: Wolski Conn,

Regarding the content of the work, we mention that for realizing the objectives we proposed, we organized the speech of the thesis in *two large parts*, each one of them being divided in a few *chapters*, in turn being subdivided in *subchapters*.

The paper begins with this Argument, in which we developed the necessity of treating this subject and its importance in the New Testament studies. Also, we sketched the state of the current research from the field, the objectives we considered, the timeliness of the subject and the practical utility of our research, and also the synthesis of the main parts.

Therefore, *the First part* refers to the theoretical aspects, used methods and the context that characterizes the mission in the early church, in the reference ministry period of Saint Apostle Paul, and which personality, ministry and missionary teachings we sought to present in *Part two*. Taking into account the aspects of the first part, part two isn't only practice but together, theory and practice. And all these statements we sought to expose in a more systemized form.

More exactly, the material of First part, being preparatory of the developed things in Part two, was structured between chapters, as follows: Chapter I. Theoretical perspective – in which we make a concise presentation of the advantages and limits of the used method in the paper together with historical information which we appreciated as useful, regarding more the historical-critical method and namely, information about sources, problems about hermeneutics, risks of the outdated lectures and modern perspectives of the historical sociology.

Then we went to Chapter II – The context, with the delimitation of the external context of the Jewish people in which happened the Pauline mission, where we considered the connections between the great powers and their legacies contemporary with Saint Apostle Paul, and also we made a diagram, of the social structure, to raise awareness upon the economic and social aspects

Joann "Spirituality"; Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1990; Joseph Komonchak, et al. (eds). *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*. Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993; Joseph Komonchak et al. (eds)., *The New Dictionary of Theology*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1990; Louis J. Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology*. NY: Orbis 1988; Romano Penna, *Paul the Apostle: Wisdom and Folly of the Cross*. Vol I & II, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991; George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*. USA:Moody Press, 1972; Pierre Pourrat, *Christian Spirituality*. Vol I. Trans. W. H. Mitchell, S. P. Jacques, D. Attwater. Westminister: Newman, 1953-55; Karl Rahner, et al. (eds). *Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology*. New York: Herder & Herder, 1968; Michael Collins. Reilly, *Spirituality for missions*, NY: Orbis, 1978; E. P. Sander, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977; James A. Scherer & Bevans, Stephen B. *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization*, Vol I, Basic Statements 1974-1991, NY: Orbis 1992; J. Verkuyl, *Contemporary Missiology: An Introduction*. NY: Eerdmans, 1978.

and especially, we considered the religious aspects alongside the philosophical ones characteristic to the Greek-Roman Empire (and namely *Features of the public and domestic cult; Popular mysteries and beliefs; Divined beings and the cult of the emperor in the Greek-Roman antiquity*; alongside a concise presentation of the stoicism, epicureanism, middle-Platonism, and ended with the gnostic synthesis and associated problems). We have completed the first part with Chapter III in which we highlighted the biographical Profile of Saint Apostle Paul, showing the sources and chronology that concern the activity of Saint Apostle Paul, and also the general information about education, conversion and apostleship of Saint Apostle Paul.

The second part I started with Chapter I – About the Mission, chapter that is oriented exclusively towards the delimitation and defining of the mission: *Conceptualization; Monotheism and Truth; Religion and Mission; Christian Mission – at nations and in Israel*, by *The 12 apostles*; and particularly *The Mission at Saint Apostle Paul*, I considered it an important subject in the paper's economy, reason for which I extend it and presented the journey of Saint Apostle Paul: *From the Pharisee to the Apostle of nations; Nature and strategies of the Pauline mission; together with the internal Interpretations of the Pauline mission: Purpose, Content, Target*.

And being the subject of this work we developed the concept of mission, presenting *The Mission as metaphor*, trying a reminder of several metaphors widely used in the Holy Scripture (*Representation metaphor, agrarian, architectural, of kinship and relationship, sacerdotal*).

For the closure we firstly exposed the preliminary conclusions at the second part due to its net missionary character after which we ended the entire work presenting the reasoning and ideas that conclude the paper.

In the next chapter, Chapter II - Religious, social and cultural parameters of the mission, we continued to delimitate the actual context of the mission in the time of Saint Apostle Paul, concentrating upon some opportunities of the Christian mission regarding some organizational and administrative aspects, like: ethnicity, gender, social structure (*Who were the first converts?; Systems, identity boundaries, Congregations and cult forms*); Associations in the Greek-Roman culture (*Associative – influences structure*); Synagogue structures (*Mission in the synagogues from diaspora; Fearful of God and proselytes – auditorium and prime conversions*); Particular houses (*Domestic structures, Domestic codes (Haustafeln); Domestic structures and Pauline ecclesiology; Missionary function of the particular houses*).

Chapter III – The methodology of the Pauline mission, we assigned it to the theoretical issues further regarding the Pauline missionary methodology, and examined: The geography of the Pauline mission (*Missionary space: “Synagogue”, “Market”, “Amphitheatre”, “Workshops”, “Private houses”; “Urban” and “Rural” in the Pauline missionary strategy; Missionary trips, geographical strategies; Consolidation and expansion*); Systematization of the Pauline missionary program; Collaborators – functions and duties; Tactics and Communication; Institutionalization and leaders; New perspectives offered by the sociology of conversion.

Finally, Chapter IV – The challenges of the Pauline mission, is the examination for the last time of the missionary context but from the perspective of the obstacles, respectively: Internal conflicts (*Legitimation of the Pauline apostleship – Jerusalem and the nations; Apostolic Synod – problems related of interpretation*); External conflicts, (more exactly, those aspects that address to the *Mission and martyrdom*).

We conclude the two parts of the paper with a speech in two stages. In the first stage we present the conclusions that depict through the study of the Pauline mission, in general, but, concise. Therefore, if along the work I presented the previous context, in which the Pauline mission was conducted with opportunities, obstacles and methodological principles, in Chapter V – Attitudes and Preliminary conclusions at the Pauline mission, from the second part, we present yet again, the same context contemporary with Saint Apostle Paul, but, in the perspective of some conclusions, thus, the subsequently context, as a result of the Pauline mission, namely after carrying out the missionary journeys and the clear shaping of the Christian mission effects, and examine the next subjects: *Paul and Judaism – “The New Perspective” upon Saint Paul; Open perspectives of the recent research upon the Pauline mission; Political power and Christianity; Between Church and Empire – Pauline theological synthesis*.

The Final conclusions, as the second stage of the conclusive judgment regards the speech of the entire work, and addresses to our contemporaries. We supported the entire exposure of the paper with a rich Romanian and foreign bibliography, for the most part being specialty papers.

The Church as a mysterious body of Jesus Christ, Head of which He is, as a divine-human institution it carries in history in a Christian responsibility, particular, engaged in a process of promotion, support and capitalization of Christ's Gospel. This reality draws to the Church a missionary profile. Through the Church's mission it is understood therefore “a fundamental aspect of the theandric institution's work, founded by the Savior Jesus Christ,

namely that it is sent in the world, like the Son was sent by the Father to bring through the Holy Spirit to the people the good news of salvation, the Gospel of eternal life”¹¹. The mission expresses the essence of the Church of being sent to make the people that believe in the Gospel of Christ and receive the grace of the Spirit, partakers at the gracious, saving blessing of God¹².

In its various forms of manifesting, the Christian life represents a reflection of the intra-Trinitarian relations; any argumentation of an aspect or another of the theological life invariably leads at using as model the Holy Trinity which becomes the model of the earthly life after the image which the human being was leaven. Indubitable, the motivation of each action of God towards the man as a historical or generic fact, as well as the communion mandate of the unique human nature, is love.

The mission is “the visible form of the Holy Trinity towards the man, updated in the most efficient way by Jesus Christ and left as heritage to His Church, for the salvation of the man. Trinity God reveals Himself to enter in a direct and free relation with the man, sends his Son in the world to bring Him back at the communion sources and gives the followers mission: “As I have loved you, so you must love one another” (John 13, 34 and 15, 17) and “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creation; Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned (Mark 16, 15-16”¹³. From this perspective, “the missionary” is the one that loves his neighbor who he wants to save¹⁴. The mission, apostleship or the sending towards the world evokes the dynamics of Christ’s Church which isn’t a static organism, reflecting a stage in history, but an alive organism which adapts at the life conditions following permanently serving Christ, the unseen head of the body. Having its origins in the sacrifice of Christ, efficient for the entire world, the Church has received His truth through the Apostles, becoming “apostolic”, namely missionary, preserver of the truth revealed directly to the apostles who proclaimed Him: “What was in the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we watched and our hands touched about the Word of Life – and life Has shown and we have seen it and we confess and proclaim the after-life which was at the Father and which was shown to us, what we saw and heard, it is what we proclaim to you, so that

¹¹ Asist. PhD Radu Petre Mureşan, *Misiunea Misologiei. Câteva considerații actuale privind misologia ortodoxă*, in “Studii Teologice”, 3rd series, no. 1, january-march 2006, p. 131.

¹² According to Father PhD Vasile Răducă, *Misiunea Bisericii Ortodoxe azi - provocări, dileme și sugestii*, p. 20.

¹³ Father Prof. PhD Gheorghe Petraru, *Repere pentru o misologie ortodoxă*, in “Teologie și Viață”, 7-12, 2000, p. 293.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 294.

you also can be accomplice, and our accomplice, is part with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. And these we write to you so our joy may be full. And this is the news which we heard from him and proclaim it to you: “that God is light” (John 1, 1-5) and “God is love” (I John 4, 8). The mission has as objective the teaching of the saving truth respectively the Holy Spirit that “Had confessed to them previously about the passions of Jesus Christ and the glories that would follow, it was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, and now this good news has been announced to you by those who preached in the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven” (I Peter 1, 11-12)¹⁵.

In the study “Mission and Christian testimony towards the religious proselytism which is a counter-testimony”, Father Ioan Ică Jr. subsumes a series of theological arguments regarding the Christian mission, that can be reduced to three essential aspects: The sending of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in the world by the Father, the sending of the Apostles at the preaching by Christ, the sending of the Church that, through the invested servants, will conduct the entrusted mission until the end of all ages¹⁶.

In a biblical-dogmatic understanding, the sending of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is an expression of God’s love towards the man, for which the Holy Trinity takes a special care in the perspective of salvation or bringing it back to the “initial state”. The Father, the source of divinity and the unity principle of it, the one that has the initiative of creating the human being, has also the will of its salvation through the Son (John 3, 17 and 12, 47; I John 4, 14 and Luke 9, 55). For the man, the Father does not hesitate in doing anything, until the sacrifice of the Only Son which he “sends” to proclaim His will and love: “For God so loved the world that He gave His One and Only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3, 16). From this perspective, the Trinity is in a permanent mission, because the event of the historical coming of Christ and sending of the Spirit in the world, becomes generic by assuming the fruits of the Trinity’s work by every Christian, through the Holy Spirit. The missionary work unity is perfected in the Pentecost, through which the saving work circle of the Trinity with the world completes, because it starts the indwelling of the Spirit between people. Every “heavenly King” updates the work of the same Holy Spirit in person in which dwells and “cleans it of all impurity”, together with the entire religious community. Christ and the Spirit, the messengers of

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 295.

¹⁶ In the collective volume, *Pastorație și misiune în Biserica Ortodoxă*, Publisher Episcopia Dunării de Jos, Galați, 2001, pp. 28-31.

the Father, send the Apostles further: “As My Father sent Me, I also send you. And with that he breathed upon them, and said: “Receive the Holy Spirit, whose sins you forgive will be forgiven and whose you do not, will remain unforgiven” (John 20, 21-22). Their mission receives saving value, because they proclaim “the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 10, 7), which is gifted exclusively to those that are saved: “Preach the Gospel to every creature. He who will believe shall be saved, and whoever does not will be condemned” (Mark 16, 15-16).

The mission of the apostles becomes the extension of Christ’s mission, which is among them only insofar as they are on the mission: “Go, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have said unto you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28, 19-20). The mission does not end until the end of all ages, until everyone will know the love of God¹⁷.

“The Christian mission given by Christ was becoming at the new Christians testimony of the communion life and love”¹⁸, for what greater proof of love you can show to the neighbor but the caring that he will be saved, to live forever. The apostles and after them the invested and prepared servants for the mission begin to proclaim the new life of love of the Holy Trinity through actual means of spiritual nature, because “they did not have gold and silver” (Acts 3, 6) but from what they had, they gave, from the new life in the Spirit. The large area of the mission it is specified and diversified after the testimony of Saint Apostle Paul, on activity domains: “He gave some to be apostles, others prophets, others evangelists, others pastors and teachers, towards the perfection of the saints for works of service, for the building of Christ’s Body, until all we will reach the unity of faith and of knowing the Son of God, at the state of the perfected man, at the measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4, 11-12). He also left the modalities through which the Church fulfills its purpose in the life of the man: the birth in faith that makes from an unknown, a member of Christ’s Body, because only the one that “baptizes” (Mark 16, 16 and Acts 2, 38) becomes “a new being” (II Corinthians 5, 17), through the growth in faith, respectively the active adherence at the teaching and community life along his entire earthly life, after the main model where the “new followers were persevering in the teaching of the apostles

¹⁷ Father Prof. PhD Gheorghe Petru, *Temeiurile biblice ale misiunii Bisericii*, in “Teologie și Viață”, 1-6, 2003, p. 59.

¹⁸ Father Lect. PhD Dan Sandu, *Teologia și practica misiunii în Biserică azi. O tratare comparativă*, in „Analele științifice ale Universității «Al.I. Cuza» Iași” (new series), VIII, Publisher Universității, Iași, 2003, p. 47.

and fellowship, the breaking of bread and in prayers" (Act 2, 42) and in the end in the faith communion, respectively the loyalty towards the tradition, because "Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever" (Hebrews 13, 8), He is with us until the fulfillment of the promise (Matthew 28, 20), and therefore the Apostle of the Gentiles warns: "Do not yourselves carried away by foreign teachings, the ones of any kinds!" (Hebrews 13, 9).

The mission means, therefore, the sharing of the Trinitarian love life yet from the time of the earthly life, having as actual visible means the Word of the Gospel and the grace giving Mysteries, through which works the Spirit of Truth¹⁹.

"The Christian mission means the proclamation of the Gospel in the world, the Gospel of salvation, of God's kingdom, which represents in the same time also the new life brought to the world by embodying of Jesus Christ the Savior. The first that proclaims the kingdom of God is Christ the Savior, the messenger of the Father"²⁰. After Christ the Savior, the ones that preach the Gospel, the ones that receive this power at the Pentecost – of preaching the Gospel and setting up churches – are the Apostles, and after them the bishops and priests – the sacramental hierarchy of the Church, in that it has to extend in time and space as long as it will be humanity under the sky. Therefore, the mission is an essential activity of the Church. The Church is the space of presence and work of Christ in the Holy Spirit. In this perspective "the missionaries do not make a mission with power from itself, but their work is a godly mandate from Christ Himself the Risen One, the Lord of the Church"²¹. As Andrew J. Kirk²² shows, "the mission of the Church can be understood depending of Christ's Resurrection, of which witnesses we are in in the Eucharist, on the Pentecost, of which beneficiaries we are in the Eucharist and of Christ's Resurrection, Which we accompany and at Which glory we participate through the Eucharist. This is, before all, a mission of community, a mission of communion because the community must reflect the love" «Love one another, by this shall all men know that you are My disciples» (John, 13, 34; 15, 12, 17)".

The Christian life has understood and expressed itself as the Church in a monolithic meaning. Thus, "Europe was a compact Christian space. Starting with the modernism, with the

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 48.

²⁰ Father Prof. PhD Gheorghe Petru, *Misiologie Ortodoxă. I. Revelația lui Dumnezeu și misiunea Bisericii*, p. 52.

²¹ Father Prof. Vasile Răducă, *Teologia pastorală și misiunea Bisericii*, Studii Teologice, no. 3, 2005, p. 88.

²² Andrew J Kirk, *The Mission of Theology and Theology as Mission*. Valley Forge, Pa. and Leominster, Herefordshire: Trinity Press International and Gracewing 1997, paul Father Prof. PhD Gheorghe Petru, Repere pentru o misiologie ortodoxă, p. 300.

era of absolutist reason that was refusing the religious belief, with the atheist ideologies, with the technocratic scientism that diminished the man's addiction conscience for the divine, we assist at a dechristianization process, of secularization as a denial of God. Paradoxical, the Western world that sent missionaries at the non-Christians to convert them to the Gospel, this actually being the classical meaning of the mission, the external mission, sees itself confronted in its own house with the problem of dechristianization, of relativity of the revealed absolute truth of the Gospel. It raises thus, the question of an internal mission, for those at home, for their re-evangelism and re-Christianization, with the visible testimony for Christ and His Church the testifying act in a pluralist world”²³.

In conclusion the mission is itself the heart of the Church. If it does not exist a mission, the Church either exists, and the Orthodox one especially, is engaged in a missionary responsibility with the purpose of opening and concretizing the salvation of the believer, him also engaged in its turn through the free exercise of will in the process of passions' shunning and consecration through the synergic cooperation with the deified divine grace.

²³ Father Prof. PhD Gheorghe Petraru, *Paradigme conceptuale moderniste și post-moderniste și impactul lor asupra teologiei și misiunii Bisericii*, p. 48.

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