

**UNIVERSITY„OVIDIUS” FROM CONSTANȚA**  
**FACULTY OF ORTHODOX THEOLOGY**

Research field:

***THEOLOGY***

Discipline

***MISSIONOLOGY AND ECUMENISM***

Title of the PhD thesis:

**THE MISSIONARY ROLE OF THE ORTHODOX  
CHURCH IN THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION  
OF CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE**

*Thesis advisor* **Univ. Prof. Gheorghe ISTODOR, Ph.D.**

*Ph. D. student:* **Luscanov (Matei) Daniela**  
**CONSTANȚA**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

<b>A. ARGUMENT.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>B. NEED OF THE TOPIC .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>C. CURRENT STATE OF RESEARCH .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>D. RESEARCH METHODS .....</b>	<b>13</b>

### **Chapter I**

#### **KEY MILESTONES FOR CHILDREN EDUCATION IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURE.**

#### **MISSIONARY ISSUES.....14**

##### **I.1.Familia as education factor ..... 16**

I.1.1. Need for education.....16

I.1.2. The purpose of education according to didactic books ..... 24

I.1.3. Methods recommended in the didactic books in educating children ..... 29

I.1.4. Duties to parents ..... 30

##### **I.2. The child - the focus of the education mission in Greek-Roman world .....33**

I.2.1. The ideal of the Greeks and Romans education ..... 37

##### **I.3. Old Testament Revelation Grounds. Missionary issues..... 41**

I.3.1. The penalty - an educational method for correcting children at Jewish people..... 48

I.3.2. The ideal of education in the Old Testament..... 49

I.3.2.1. Educating children to respect their parents ..... 55

##### **I.4. New Testament Revelation Grounds ..... 58**

I.4.1. The child - the focus of parental concerns. Missionary perspective ..... 64

### **CHAPTER II**

#### **THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION .....71**

II.1. Fundamental principles of religious education ..... 82

Histrocentric Principle: Jesus Christ is the true Teacher ..... 85

##### **II.2. Jesus Christ - the Supreme Teacher ..... 96**

II.2.1. Educational methods used by the Saviour Christ ..... 107

##### **II.3. Christian educator personality ..... 113**

##### **II.4. The priest, as a guide of souls ..... 123**

II.5. The relationship between spiritual counselling and school counselling ..... 134

### **Chapter III**

#### **ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY IN CHIDLREN EDUCATION.....141**

##### **III.1. Chronological aspects of children's education ..... 145**

##### **III.2. Virtues of the Christian family and its role in children's education ..... 153**

III.2.1. Obedience.....153

III.2.2. Prayer in children's lives ..... 155

III.2.3. Educating children temperance ..... 160

##### **III.3. Concerns regarding religion in school ..... 167**

III.3.1. Lack of fair assessment of the religion class. Missionary Perspective ..... 184

III.3.2. Asserting consciousness of the educator factor .....	188
---	-----

## **Chapter IV**

### **MODERN AND POSTMODERN CHALLENGES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. MISSIONARY EVALUATION.....190**

#### **IV.1. Sin and vice. Poison for child education and becoming.....190**

##### IV.1.1. Family Immigration - a pest in children education and harmonious development.....202

#### **IV.2. Youth age between traditional values and modernity and post modernity temptations...210**

##### IV.2.1. Psychological significance of the youth age in Orthodox Christian perspective. Missionary issues.....213

#### **IV.3. Secular temptations of youth ..... 222**

##### IV.3.1. Suicide.....222

##### IV.3.2. Sexuality between exacerbation and blessing ..... 226

##### IV.3.3. Education and eroticism ..... 230

##### IV.3.4. Addiction challenges. Church and drugs scourge ..... 235

###### IV.3.4.1. The role of information in preventing drugs consumption.....239

###### IV.3.4.2. Drug consumption prevention ..... 240

###### IV.3.4.3. Drugs - a multiple sin..... 243

###### IV.3.4.4. The main causes of drugs consumption ..... 244

###### IV.3.4.5. The mission of the church to fight drugs consumption ..... 247

##### IV.3.5. Violence and its causes ..... 257

#### **IV.4. The effect of television and Internet on the child/young man brains.....260**

## **Chapter V**

### **FAMILY, CHURCH AND SCHOOL - BENEFICIAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION TRIAD. MISSIONARY PERSPECTIVES ..... 267**

#### **V.1. The mission of the Christian family in the becoming of the young man .....267**

#### **V.2. The contribution of the Church to the Christian education of children ..... 275**

#### **V.3. School - essential factor in education ..... 278**

## **Chapter VI**

### **MISSIONARY MEANS AND SOLUTIONS ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH EDUCATION NOWADAYS ..... 282**

#### **VI.1. Concrete ways of involving children and young people in religious life.....291**

### **CONCLUSIONS.....302**

Religious education is an originary fact of life and starts with the man.

Religion is the best way to awake spirituality in man and since education is a function of the spirit, then religion provides the foundation and the goal to any discipline in our education, because science, culture were born from religion, as the terms cult-culture show. Therefore, all human activities, like the man himself, originate from the creative act and Revelation.

Religious values have an integrative character that integrates and unifies all the other values coherently comprised by human consciousness. I have shown in this paper that the teaching vocation of the priest comes from the vocation for the priesthood, because our Messiah, Jesus Christ, is the perfect teacher, and the priest is called to teach in His name and, even more, Jesus Himself teaches through him.

In the present study I studied the relation Church-School-Family. It came out that the Church and the school are the foundations of our national culture because the Romanian people is Orthodox since its birth as a nation. And our Romanian school developed in the atmosphere of the Orthodox Christian pedagogy since its birth in the porch of our ancestral Church. So, the Church produced the school, inspiring faith, hope, love, devotion and manhood during the life struggles and temptations, and the school in its turn, produced science that defended and strengthened the Church as a firm foundation of the building of our nationality. We can affirm that the mission of the Church and the mission of the school do not exclude each other, but are interrelated, mutually reinforcing, tending to interfere in our time.

Given the interdependence between School and Church and mutual stimulation, I have highlighted the importance of a good communication between the priest and religion teacher.

In Chapter I, I talked about the importance of family as education factor and I reminded that in terms of religion, the education need stems from the fact that man was not created perfect, but perfectible, with a mission to constantly work to his perfection. The need for education was strong and significant following the fall of the forefathers into the sin of disobedience. Having lost the help of grace, the man fully felt the need for a means of correcting his life to a happier state. And man found this means in training and developing his personality through education. Here I emphasized also the idea that before God and society, parents have the double duty of ensuring material conditions and permanent care for the formation and personality development of their children, because personality is not acquired through heredity, but it is the result of an organized and unceasing activity of both educators and parents. The education received in the family lay a complete and perfect healthy development of the child's personality. But the duty of parents to educate young offspring is as tough as it is difficult. The most important duty of parents in education is to cultivate spiritually the development of children, "For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold"(Prov. III, 14-15). Who rejects this debt not only neglects the good relations with the children, but commits a great injustice to them and society. Therefore, the Saint Scripture disapproves and condemns such parents:"An evil nurtured man is the dishonour of his father that begat him: and a *foolish* daughter is born to his loss." (Sirach XXII, 3).

In subchapter I.I.1, referring to the need for education, I have emphasized that parents who have children and give them their body should also contribute as much as they can to their spiritual rebirth. If parents cannot provide this spiritual formation, they must request the help of the confessor priest and other faithful teachers because each in their way, by their example, must help the spiritual rebirth of children. Because when they become spiritual people, no law nor coercive method is requested. Spiritual mastery is above human powers and the grace of the Holy Spirit will work through the spiritual man to justice and understanding with the others.

All this is possible through a spiritual formation which is done through the sacraments that have an important role in the formation of religious sentiment and prayer which should start at age two, when the notion of God will build in the child's mind, as the source of all goodnesses and of good.

At sub-chapter I.I.2 when I talked about teaching comprised in the teaching books, I reminded that it provided for human society to demand that its members be trained, lovers of justice, honest, hardworking, and courageous, peace lovers, helping mind, modesty, etc. All these virtues are not acquired by birth but by education. Therefore, parents should cultivate virtues in children very early, to spare no effort in their educational activity and be fully aware that every stone placed at the education building is a stone placed at the family happiness and prosperity of society.

In this regard, parents should arouse in the hearts of to their children their love of learning and create all the possibilities for developing their intellectual disposition. Achieving this goal is recommended in the teaching books by the advice "Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge" (Prov. XXIII, 12) and elsewhere intellectual instruction is praised in the words "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold (Prov. III, 13-14). I showed how teaching books advise parents to educate children in the spirit of justice, because justice feelings develop closely related to intellectual instruction. Proverbs Book reckons that only the wise cannot love and know justice: "They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge" (VIII, 9). Justice is praised in the highest degree by the teaching books, as it is the foundation of a good social cohabitation.

Here I showed that within the moral and social education parents should arise the love for work into the soul of their children showing them by good examples that work is the only way to earn what is necessary for the existence and for their advancement and perfection. In the didactical books the urge to work and its exaltation is on almost every page. He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread; but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding. (XII, 11), because He that is despised, and hath a servant, is better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread. (XII, 9). The authors of didactic books so much praise the work as it is the environment where it is possible to achieve personality, is the only mean by which we can create material and spiritual goods, because without work there is no wealth and prosperity, but only regression and decadence.

In the sub-chapter 1.1.3 I talked about the methods the didactic books recommend for educating children.

For good success in their educational activity, parents should use certain methods and means some of which we find also in the didactic books. Using these methods and means parents will succeed in mastering the nature of the child, to carve it daily strengthening the normal relations in the family and perfecting its social role.

Firstly, the didactic books recommend that in dealing with children, parents have to have an irreproachable behavior, so that they will not notice any discrepancy between their word and their actions. Through her wise counsel will be able to determine the committing of good and therefore lead them to the right and light path of life (Prov. IV 10-11, XX, 7).

I mentioned here that after the teachings of the Gospel Holy parents have a saint duty to care for the good upbringing of children, because children are the most delicate beings and need material and spiritual help. Savior loved children and called them the heirs of the kingdom of God (Matthew XIX, 14). This is why he ordered parents to let the children come to Him and advised them to have souls just as innocent as children's (Matthew, XIX, 3). Hence, parents need to lead their children to Christ, and this can be achieved only through special education.

And in the Christian family relationships between parents and children are the same the didactic books of the Old Testament recommend with some improvements the Savior brought. If in the Old Testament the commandment of love was applied only in Hebrew people, in the New Testament Christian love extends to all peoples, as St. Paul says that before God there is neither Jew nor slave nor master, nor male nor female, for you are all one in Christ (Gal, III, 28). From this statement it appears that parents in the Christian family broaden the sense of love and honoring the neighbor to children to embrace not only those of a nation with them but all people everywhere, because all are created by God and so are all of the same heavenly Father. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine... says Savior (John XVII, 10), and St. Paul teaches that all who are called Christians are the same people because the same Christ is the God of all of them (Rom, X, 12).

I concluded this subchapter by saying that these teaching books contain more and various useful tips for parents in terms of their relationship with their children. I can conclude from the above that the Saint Scripture and particularly teaching books contain principles and guidance for education.

Also, in Chapter I, I highlighted the debts of children to their parents and the debts of the parents to their children, as they are shown in the teaching books. Parents must also give their children love, care the bodies of their children, providing them with basic needs, but the greatest care of the parents must be directed to their children souls. I emphasized the idea that parents have the right to enjoy the highest appreciation from their children, because their endeavour full of sacrifice they provided and the great responsibility they have in the educational process that begins in the family.

The most remarkable feeling and at the same time the most sublime that children have to provide to their parents is the feeling of love, and this love springs from the special feelings the parents knew to

cultivate in their children's souls. The love of children for their parents is characterized by obedience, honesty, helpfulness. The idea that children have the duty to obey the parents is expressed in the book of Proverbs: "keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother, Bind them continually upon thine heart" (VI, 20-21). Children should obey their parents not only because they made them, but because they care for their growth and their labour has no other purpose but to prepare a future as happy as possible for them. All actions of parents and all good advice that parents serve in the work of educating children will remain fruitless if not respected and applied in life by children. That is why in the book of Proverbs there is the following advice for children: "Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old". (XXIII, 22).

The child must be confident that the advice they receive from their parents only aim in making good and that through obedience that attaches to him, expressing a feeling of contentment and joy, for "father of the righteous and the exultant She gave birth to a wise he was glad" (XXIII, 24). Also, the child must know that listening to the advice of their parents will get them spiritual and material goods, it will lead to happiness and it will ensure a long life (Prov. IV, 10). In this sense the book of Proverbs says: " For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee." one who never forgets parental advice (III, 2).

The child must be confident that the advice they receive from their parents only aim in making good and that through obedience that attaches to him, expressing a feeling of contentment and joy. I highlighted the idea that parents should enjoy a great honour from their children, besides obedience. This is closely related to gratitude that children must show to parents for the endeavours made in their upbringing and education. Honouring parents as commandment stated in the Decalogue can be done by permanent care of children not to upset their parents for no reason whatsoever, not to injure and not to give raise the opportunity for their prestige to be slandered.

Also in the chapter I have shown that the ideal of the Greek and Roman education begins to resemble the ideal of a civilized people. Let us not forget that the diaspora was especially strong in Rome. For the Jews, the Roman aristocracy receives the necessary impetus, precisely because they were the ones that dealt specifically with child. Maxima of rabbis who used to address fathers with words such as: "Better destroy temples, then take your children away from teaching"- was undoubtedly known in Rome. To place the child above the temple – they, who following the Law of Moses had no right to swear on temple - meant to offer everything, sacrificing yourself for him to get up as high as possible.

I also showed that Greek and Roman education lacked emphasizing of the religious-moral ideal in a child's life. This ideal will be the ultimate target Jewish child will run towards since early childhood, as I presented in my work.

As we mentioned, the Jewish child is the central point in the lives of parents, they were trying to do everything for him. The child was seen differently only when he was instructed by his father or teacher. A child without education had no value in the eyes of adults.

I emphasized the idea that the Old Testament is an educational book by excellence, obviously one of the major concerns of the Israelites was to teach their children firstly the law of God. Therefore, the

Centre of the education was all the divine commandments transmitted through Moses, commandments that not had to be learned in theory, but mostly fulfilled.

I showed that one of the most controversial issues regarding the education of children in the Old Testament is related to the existence of schools. Many researchers asked the question: Where, when, who was teaching children to write during the Old Testament, knowing that clear evidence of the existence of schools come from the late post-exilic period?<sup>1</sup> It was assumed, based on archaeological evidence and the biblical facts that before the post-exilic period there were schools in Israel.

In section I.4.1, referring to the child as the centre of parental concerns, I highlighted the fact that they are the vast dimension of life for parents and their mission and task remains to some extent the sacrifice mission. Therefore, children must be the joy of parents' life who are happy as far as they see the happiness of their children. In this so important issue, of children's education, parents are first responsible, and children need parents' educational intervention, and this is not only a duty but a right of the parents that cannot be replaced within the family.

The educational process of the parents against the great importance of their life towards begins, one might say, with childbirth. The child develops under the influence of parental education, which is not carried out on an "empty" place. The child is born with certain natural predispositions, which are the prerequisites his mental development that is formed and developed - based on native predispositions - in the work process, the process of education and training.<sup>2</sup>

In Chapter II I showed the role of religious education in the education of children and youth today and have revealed that the long Communist period and the lack of religious and moral education led Romanians away from God. Looking objectively at the Romanian society at the beginning of the third millennium, we cannot but note with sorrow that in the Romanian society it is manifested today: disbelief in God and doubt to faith; religious indifference and formalism; the fruits of total lack of religious education of youth, spouses and children (generally pre-1989 generations, but also for the next generation after 1989); forgetfulness and blaspheming God; alienation from Church, of prayer, penance and the sacraments; sectarianism and apostasy (in virtue of human rights proclaimed by sects and by their well-supported and tenacious proselytism) abolition of the sacred purpose of the Christian family, the family facing many problems, such as: fornication, concubinage, adultery, abortion, pornography, divorce; infanticide, abandonment or sale of children; desire to win easily, without work; prostitution and fornication beyond nature (homosexuality, paedophilia, etc.); alcoholism (drunkenness) with all its violent consequences, the consumption of drugs and hallucinogens; hatred and revenge between parents and children, between siblings, between relatives, which lead to unimaginable violence; the consequences of committing rape, murder, perversion,

---

<sup>1</sup>Some researchers think that the synagogue is the first educational school institution in Israel (D.F. Payne, *Education*, in "Biblical dictionary" Publishing House "Christian Book", Oradea 1995, p.368. The beginnings of the school education are considered also the era of Jesus, the son of Sirah, it was assumed that there were 250 years before the school organisation made in the year 63 before Christ by the great priest Josua Ben Gamala (James L. Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel*, in JB.L, 1985, P.612.

<sup>2</sup> According to the *Premisele naturale ale dezvoltării psihice, în Psihologia copilului preșcolar*, (Natural assumptions of psychic development in the pre-school child psychology), Bucharest, 1970 (Collective work, under the edition of prof. Al. Roșca and Al. Chircev, Cluj-Napoca), p.20



robberies, thefts; invasion of a part of the press and some TV stations with pornography, obscenity, vulgarity (which is unfortunately available to everyone: students, young, adults); invasion of magazines, pornographic images and movies glorify sexual perversions and inversions; "young" music that makes the apology of drink and "fun" without limits, etc; witchcraft, occult practices, Satanism, and so on; no mercy for the disabled, the poor, the orphans, the elderly and other disadvantaged categories; concern for what others have done (gossip, slander, lies, false witness, slanders); loss of hope in the face of the hardships of life and suicide, worrying phenomenon lately for the Romanian society; confusion, especially by young people, of freedom with libertinism: "I do what I want when I want and how I want" without forbiddance, without limits; lack of respect from some students for their teachers and their indifference to the "Book" ("What good is it to me?"); introduction of alcohol and drugs in the schools, increasing the acts of discipline, increasing juvenile delinquency, insolence and extreme extravagance.

I pointed out that the school and teachers (educators) have to fight the mentalities of the younger generation and to educate them not in the spirit of exaggerated libertinism, but in the spirit of authentic and genuine freedom, where the true personality of students can be affirmed, the part of students committing and willing to do well. Let us not forget that man is not born „bad”, but he is „bad” because of negative influences. Teachers today have a great responsibility: in this abyss of tests the Romanian society undergoes, our young people and school students undergo, to make them choose the right path that would take them to their professional and spiritual realization.

I stressed that religious education in schools can contribute to the formation of students' behaviour, character and personalities. The Christian value system is a system that has sustained this nation in two thousand years of uninterrupted existence on these lands, in this Europe and in the world.

Religion is a basic discipline rooted in divine revelation, it is a human and divine creation at the same time and, in fact, is a divine creation.

I also showed that religion has a cultural role, as it is a form of spirituality to be known by students. One cannot be considered an educated person, if they do not know their own religious references, anything about the history of beliefs and religions. Knowing one's own religious values is a way of cultural security, of keeping tradition, because where tradition leaves, people existence is in danger. Who wants his people to continue to exist must keep its tradition, consequently, a firm belief the supernatural world can have of this tradition and people. Here I also emphasized the idea that religion in school is important socially. It has the virtue of bringing people together, it creates sustainable links. The Christian religion functions as an integrating spiritual flow, which considers the human formation in the community and by community. Man lives in the social environment and must achieve happiness and Christian perfection by practicing the virtues, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16).

Also in Chapter II, I presented the fundamental principles of religious education, recalling the principle of universality of education which requires that the act of education, particularly Christian education, has access to all people, regardless of age, social or material status, sex or other criteria that could distinguish people among them; the psychological principle that seems to be the simplest

and the clearest. Based on it, education should be carried out with consideration to the soul situation of the listeners, as far as possible even with reference to their individuality considered in its totality that is what binds their thinking, feeling and will. From the same perspective some situations must also be considered such as: age, environment, etc., which are of great significance psychologically and pedagogically. Here I also reminded the principle of intuition which is the source of our accurate knowledge, during our life time. Everything needs to be felt, understood, in order to achieve a clear and complete image and their own sense of surrounding events and phenomena enter the physical and moral reality world.

Also under Chapter II, I showed that Jesus Christ is the supreme educator and with His teaching, Christ remains the reference person for all times. His eternal teaching nature is explained by the fact that teaching is heavenly, not the product of human thought or study in schools. It is the big difference between Christianity and the other religions, which are founded by people, prophets or, most often, pseudo-prophets. Christian teaching is brought by the very Son of God who became man so that people raise up to heaven and glorify God. Here I have also emphasized the idea that the Son of God embodied in the world to reveal the true „face” of man in the middle of creation. Faith in Christ calls us to an endless progress, and this progress is made, especially by the *love-knowledge: of God's, of the peers, of the world.*

Saviour's sacrificial love going up to assuming the whole issue, unrest, human, spiritual and physical sufferings, up to experience of death on the cross.

In sub-chapter II.2.1 I have presented the methods used by Christ the Saviour, including: *exposure, conversation, intuitive demonstration, modelling, cooperation, and the attack of ideas, discovery, thinking, case study, and book study.* In his teaching activity, the intuitive methods prevail, based on the presentation of concrete data and intuitive images. All these methods used by the Saviour Jesus are really helpful today in the religion classes. From the above, it can be seen the methodological complexity of the teachings the Saviour shared. The Apostles, the Church Fathers followed, creating a catechism education, organized from early Christian centuries.

In the subchapter II.3 I showed that the success of the religion class directly depends on the thoroughness of the one who teaches it. Children see religion (in fact, orthodoxy) through the teacher's perspective, because his qualities and flaws are projected good or bad on the matter itself. Thus, students can create a true image of orthodoxy (ineffable beauty!), according to the beauty of the nature of the authentic Professor, or, God forbids, one crooked, false, mediocre, according to the wrongness, falsehood, mediocrity, or, worst, a lack of character of the alleged teacher.

I also sketched some of the basic qualities of the religion teacher, given three dimensions: intellectual, moral and physical. Before that, however, I emphasized that a teacher, like the priest or other educators, on which the character formation depends, is necessarily required to be a person with personality. And we understand, on the one hand, that no one is requested to be a scholar, saint, or genius, in other words, perfect. On the other hand, the genuine educator must, however, prove constant striving towards delineating his personality, to continually strive towards perfection, continually prone to intellectual and spiritual epektasis.

I emphasized that successful religious education of the child lies in harmonious cooperation of all human factors described above with the Supreme Factor, God. The child will develop normally and become a Christian character, if he meets God, like the Church, in the family and in school. The child will find God deeper, if he feels Him present in the hearts of his educators: parents, priests, religion teachers, etc. Raised and matured with this discovery, he will only depend on his own will to keep clean the moral-Christian character, at which building the conscientious educators laboured with so much dedication.

I also highlighted the role of the priest as confessor, which shows the need for a spiritual father since the age of 6-7 years, the confession has no penitential character but rather pedagogical-catechetical and sacramental. In this regard, the priest confessor fulfils more a role of parent and teacher to Christ, who guides the child with love and care toward a pure and holy life, taught him right from wrong, to avoid sin and practice the virtues, gives a Christian response to its problems and dilemmas.

I emphasized the missionary role of the priest as guide; I emphasized that the management or pastoral activity of souls meet in it in the most complete synthesis, all the powers of the priesthood. The priest working on the faithful by preaching the word of the Gospel to guide by example and advice, to virtue and perfection. Also by the liturgical function of the sacraments rite, it is fulfilled, to some extent a driving pastoral action or spiritual guidance. But the role of the spiritual leader of the priest is in an overwhelmingly measure in administering the Confession Sacrament or times of crisis, when the soul who repents is deeply upset and tormented not only a religious duty, but also a deep psychological need for regeneration. Then he is more willing and more inviting for guidance. In this respect I further showed the role of the priest in forming student's personality. It requires a profound knowledge of the dynamics of personality development, which considers the characteristics of physical and mental development at different age stages. Then, through a certain orientation, the guidance of the priest seeks the perfection of the person through the incarnation of good in that person.

I showed the priest's mission in fighting against students' behavioural deviations, here I first made a social-psychological presentation of the phenomenon and terminological delimitations to deeper understand the role of the priest.

I emphasized that the priest in his mission as spiritual adviser must be a good psychologist, but must also know those of the spirit, not just the soul. A confessor goes to the essence, to the last depth, reporting everything to the teaching of the Gospel.

In Chapter III, I approached family from the socio-pedagogical perspective, as a possible risk factor in the development of behavioural deviations, and the Orthodox Christian family which, according to God, has the main responsibility to train and educate the child.

In Chapter IV, I reminded another risk factor for the occurrence of behavioural deviations, it is the formal and informal group, i.e. the environment outside the family, that is, friends. Here we showed why pre-adolescents and adolescents resort to harmful groups and how to intervene, according to the Orthodox view, to prevent and solve the crisis situations. In connection with these groups I

highlighted violence and its causes, where an important source of its growth is the Internet and poor quality television productions, disseminating mediocrity and deviant, delinquent and even criminal behavioural models. Then I talked about erotism that plays a special role in general human crisis. I showed the main causes of erotism as - television and the Internet - that send totally strange and hostile messages to Orthodox Church teaching. So children may develop abnormal sexual sensitivity model, which marks their entire life. I highlighted the involvement of the priest in the family and in school, to prevent such anomalies and, if still occurred, spiritual therapy to relieve this passion.

Also in Chapter IV I talked about the negative consequences of immigration which are reflected in deviant behaviour, decreased school performance, physical and psychic degradation of the child. All these are caused by the lack of control, of education, of positive models, by communication problems, difficulties to adapt, care failures, overloading with tasks.

I also offered solutions to prevent the negative aspects of children's life when their parents left to work abroad.

In subchapter IV.2.1, I showed the psychological significance from the perspective of youth age from Orthodox Christian perspective and the fact that the purpose of the religious education is precisely to lead man on the road of life and to return the lost "back home". Church is dealing with man, from childhood up to the transition from this life. It is the continuous factor of the education, of building the human being. Man cannot lack religious values, because they come natural to him and would essentially break the human being. If education is done in a Christian spirit, meeting the psychological stages, it cannot fail.

In the subchapter IV.3, I showed that the Church considers suicide a serious sin. It is an offense to God, as principle of life. Suicide contradicts Christian teaching about man. Christian anthropology shows us that man is created by God to His image and endless resemblance to Him.

The self-murderer mocks God's gift. He no longer sees God as his protector and has no hope for deliverance. Given that many suicide cases occur among young people in times of physical or moral suffering, I tried to give a theological interpretation of suffering, showing also its spiritual implications. Interpreted spiritually, we can say that for some, suffering is a punishment of their sins and their attitude should be one of acceptance in silence, humility. We can talk also of the grace function of suffering. God's punishment is always pedagogical; it is a call to repentance. When man does not feel rebuked by the word of God, he is called by Him to repentance by other means. I also highlighted that diseases are not always consequences of sins as the Jewish concept was. Sometimes it is a test of faith, a „temptation” permitted by God to verify our virtue.

In sub-chapter IV.3.2, I highlighted the great responsibility the tutor, the teacher of religion, the parents and the confessor have for teens regarding sexual education. If the priest tells him that carnal relations before marriage as well as its hidden practices, are sins, even very serious sins, and on the other hand, someone else inoculates them the idea that such relations are normal, natural and even necessary –of course, the child will have a big dilemma. The young must be guided to listen to the voice of his conscience and pray because prayer masters instinctive drives.

The Christian teaching about the body, man responsibilities toward his body as a place of the Holy Spirit, who must dwell in us to take part to joy, should also be emphasized. I talked about the fact that in the manifestation of the sexual instinct, man must not seek only pleasure. God planted the sexual instinct in man, in order to perfect the unity of spouses and to perpetuate the human species. If only pleasure is searched for, it means we deal with passion, and passion ignores the purpose, the finality.

The passionate man, broken inside away from God, seeking only pleasure from sexual union, as sole purpose.

I also highlighted the negative effects of addiction to pornography and erotic messages on young people. I concluded this sub-chapter by saying that the triad Church, Family and School should move in the direction of cultivation of higher feelings in children on conception about love, its role in an individual's life, from religious-moral perspective.

The duty of those involved is to take care of instincts awaked in students. In this area, first of all, attention should be removed, not focused. Sexual instincts are, by nature, quite conscious and should not be designed in the cerebral hemispheres, because once attention is awaked in the subject, imagination is working, curiosity and desire ignite and reason can no longer be able to withstand.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, the best education in sexual matters is a full education of character and the best training is to highlight the inexhaustible force the spirit has to have power over body desires and moods.

Also in chapter IV on drugs and fighting against them, I gave several definitions of the terms used, the main drug categories, why students get to take drugs and the possibility of priest intervention in preventing this scourge. In crisis situations the priest may interfere together with his family and specialists: the psychiatrist and the psychologist, because the body and psychic and the soul are affected. I emphasized that the Church, especially by its clergy has the power to fight against drugs, particularly for saving drug addicts, the very position that it must have the one trapped in by this evil, because the Church has the obligation to reach the sick. Or, the junkie is such a sick person, physically and mentally. Drug addiction is his illness, an addiction that, as shown above, is finally homicidal. I showed that those who became victims must be assisted, guided, helped. It is here especially the work of specialists but also of those from other segments of society. Obviously, the Church has an important role in their salvation. The concern that must be shown to drug consumers does not pass on a secondary plan against the care for those who can reach them. The victimized is, when discovered, under the supervision of habilitated authorities, while the potential victim has a dangerous and endangered freedom. I emphasized that the priest, either as a teacher of religion, but especially as a priest, should help the school in its endeavour to form a youth as moral as possible, a youth who has a healthy belief with clear benchmarks on an ethical level. Let us not forget that the danger of increasing the drug consumers is quite possible in school, among students. The school is perhaps the most vulnerable place in terms of winning over potential consumers. The student is more

---

<sup>3</sup> F.W. Foerester, *Școala și caracterul: problemele morale ale vieții școlare, (The school and character: the moral problems of the school life)* Bucharest, 1940, p.73

exposed given his lack of experience, by misunderstanding of the phenomenon of emancipation, through rebelliousness displayed by hiding frustrations, sensitivities associated with anxiety moods. In this sub-chapter I have also showed that the Orthodox Church in a modern and secularized society must adopt an attitude of commitment and service to the world, not resignation before world's problems. In this regard, it must have a live report with the society. Church should not be focused only on the Holy Mass and sacramental life, but also to assert unequivocally the responsibility for the life of the world.

The therapeutic power of the Sacraments should be exercised on the whole world in distress. The Church cannot remain indifferent to human suffering. It should provide means to fight against evil and the possibility of salvation and immortality. The Church can reach the heart of contemporary man, so spiritually ill, by giving him the Bread of Life.

In sub-chapter IV.3.5 I came back to another issue regarding deviant behavioural risks, which originated in the uncontrolled consumption of information produced by the media, an important source of these risks can be found in poor quality television productions that disseminate mediocrity and deviant, delinquent, even criminal behaviour "models".

From all the studies so far (over 1,000 studies and articles) it was found that violence in the media is one of the most important causes of violence in the real world. From most researches made, it comes out that violence on TV has the following effects: it facilitates aggression and antisocial behaviour, it develops insensitivity to violence or victims of violence, it intensifies the perception of viewers living in a dangerous world where they can become victims. Here I also showed the researches made by Center wall (reference author aiming long-term effects of TV violence) show that long-term exposure to television is a factor causing nearly half of homicides in the USA. Thus 10,000 murders could be prevented annually if television has less violent programmes.

As regards the effects of violence on children and adolescents, the correlation studies show that for children in the grades I-IV, there is a strong link between the aggressive behaviour of the child and the number of violence scenes seen on television and computer. Experimental studies found out an increase of the aggressive behaviour following exposure to TV violence.

I concluded, saying that one can say that prolonged exposure to violence on television or the computer, is one of the causes of aggressive behaviour, crime and violence in the society. Evidence coming from both laboratory studies and everyday life. TV violence affects people of all ages, of both sexes, at any socio-economic and intelligence levels. The effect is not limited to children who are already exposed and become aggressive and is not limited to a single country. It cannot be ignored that the same conclusions on the relation between TV violence and children aggression in several studies in different countries are obtained. The causative effect of TV violence on aggression cannot be denied or removed because it is a vicious circle in which TV violence makes children more aggressive, and they get to see more violence to justify their conduct.

I emphasized that only watching TV, without taking into account the source of information affects both the cortical activity and the power of the soul leading to a serious impairment of the will. Man is deformed to warning anthropological thresholds in all its existential components, which shows that

TV induces serious anthropological mutations. If we take into account the TV information sources then we can see the harm on the most important component of a human being, the emotional – moral one. We showed that internet aggression on children is also reinforced by the facts, testimonies, truth and indisputable medical evidence. At a significant conference of the American Psychiatric Association held in New York, the Internet addiction was included on the list of diseases that require the same approach as alcohol addiction, drug and computer games. Therefore, the excessive use of Internet is a drug, a tangible harm.

In Chapter V I presented the family, the church and the school as a beneficial triad of Christian education. I showed that the first thing that is expected of parents of young children is to understand the needs and discover how they can be fulfilled. First, children need to be loved, to feel safe, to feel closer to mother and father, be given emotional warmth and comfort, to feel wanted and understood. It is not sufficient to only meet the physical needs of food and care. Many children stagnated from growth or even died, despite adequate physical care for the sole fact that they were deprived of love. It is very important in the development of the qualities of the child to create an environment in which he feels good and in emotional security. This can be done when the parents have a very close relation with the Church, with a confessor priest, when they go to the Mass every Sunday and they pray daily, when they avoid conflicts through wisdom, calling God's peace on their family.

In adolescence, which is the hardest age, the parental care for children is higher, until they keep them in school and the children get married. Then parents should do everything they can to help them, to protect them from harmful groups, and what they cannot do, because it exceeds their power, they should entrust to Almighty God through many prayers and a pure life.

Referring to Church's contribution to Christian education of the child, we showed that on a Christian education plan, the Church is essential, by its treasured means: the doctrine, the moral, the canonical discipline and the cult. Basically, among all of these, the divine cult is the nearest means of religious education, as the doctrine, the moral and discipline (good order) are "taught" to the common Christian, most often, also by divine cult, where, once with the holy offices, teaching words, preaching and catechesis are performed, that are so important in enlightening the mind of the believer.

We also talked about child education in the Church that began before he was born through the mothers who conceived the child in the womb and will address with increasing solicitude the protection of the Church: they will confess and commune regularly, always searching advice from the confessor on a private prayer time schedule, they will participate as often as possible to religious services.

Referring to the role of the Church in Christian education for young people, I emphasized that we must take into account the fact that many of our young people are victims of superstition, of older and newer sects, the so-called parapsychological phenomena, due to ignorance in faith, ignorance explained on one hand by the lack of personal concerns, on the other hand the lack of a systematic catechesis performed by the servants of the Church. I also showed that to prevent this phenomenon, it is necessary to reconsider the teaching services concerns without neglecting, of course, the other two dimensions, sanctifying and pastoral. We realize that the current means of catechesis are not a novelty in the pastoral-missionary service (we know a significant number of priests who use them), but we

advocate their intensification and generalization, adapted, of course, to specific, local situations. It is understood that these means are not the only means that can help to illuminate faith, but experience showed that they proved very effective.

In terms of school as a key factor in education, we took into account three realities: the school as an institution, the religion teacher and the student. With a special focus on the religion class, I thought to follow certain aspects with priority: ensuring an appropriate status, in terms of legislation, not left to the discretion of factors not aware of its importance, to no longer be considered a secondary discipline, associated with physical education and drawing (although these disciplines have their undeniable importance!). At the same time, its place in schedule should no longer be arbitrated (at the end of the hours when fatigue is maximum, or when some students are tempted to go home), but at a suitable psychological time, putting together an analytic syllabus in line with the real possibilities of teaching-learning, a stable programme with a balanced taxonomy. One suggestion I consider is beneficial is to design the schedules, where possible, on the liturgical calendar, achieving consistency between subjects, on the content of education: it is inadmissible, not pedagogical (totally unscientific!) that while religion teacher teaches creationism, according to Saint Scripture, some teachers of biology, physics, philosophy, history etc. speak, after 11 years after the fall of communism, about "man coming from monkey" and other similar, when great non-theologian scientists categorically deny the Darwinism theses. The duplicity of concepts, which unfortunately still persists in some schools, leads disastrous teaching results: the child's mind, so fragile and vulnerable, becomes confused, derailed, and unable to shape a healthy judgment.

The harmonization of relations between the school management, non-theologian teachers and the religion teacher, in all respects, including the educational content, based on a curriculum in line with scientific truth will undeniably lead to the best results. It would be also important to ensure a minimum material base, as well is the case of other disciplines (biology, physics, foreign languages, etc.) Ideally, in schools there should be a specialized religion class, with a small theological library, icons, Bible maps, TV set and a video recorder for watching tapes in the fields, a radio cassette recorder etc. In larger schools even a chapel could be arranged, where students can enter free for prayer and meditation. Periodically, the priest could be invited here from the nearest church for certain offices, religious meditations, etc. Also in the chapter "material base", we deem necessary for schools to support student trips and pilgrimages to monasteries and other places of religious interest.

In Chapter VI, I also showed the current and future importance of involving the church, the parish in partnerships with the school and the family. We believe that every parish should involve a priest in these partnerships. The Church is called here to respond responsibly in this direction, preparing these priests through various seminars, workshops, in order to improve their missionary work, he may then enter into contact with other stakeholders involved in child's education and personality training. This is because the priest, through his work as a parish representative and of Christ on earth, should integrate the other institutions and societies in the parish community.

I pointed out that the Church's missionary approach must include the notion that the Church is not, in fact, only community with a high or very high number of members, but also with the lowest number,



where dwells the spiritual testimony about living the life of Christ in our lives, which is the authentic life.

The Community spiritual area where the community-communion in Christ and Christ-centre interpersonal relationships form is the Church religious congregation, having the Divine Liturgy at its centre and climax. From here, from the Mass, young people need to understand that life is and must be an Eucharistic and doxological sacrifice of daily facts, brought to God. Without this vision, believers cannot receive divine grace sanctification and their "spiritual life will be a simple external convention, a formal religiosity that has nothing holy and ends in judgment and condemnation rather than salvation."<sup>4</sup>

In sub-chapter VI.1, I presented concrete ways of involving children and young people in church life. I highlighted that young people cannot be separated from the life of the church, but it must cross the daily life of everyone. It is not very easy because everyday life is full of problems, concerns, questions and needs. Therefore, the ministers of the Church are asked to answer concretely to daily lives through sincere and strengthening dialogue. Church worldwide means community dynamism, communion of life in one Spirit with God and communication/communion between people. I highlighted here the idea that the priest has a duty to address all social categories, but his message must aim primarily the young because the moral future of society depends on how they are educated. How the priest will patiently align the energy and exuberance of youth depends on the freshness of parish life and keeping alive the religious life. The call of Christ addressed to the world is not a universal invitation to an idea, but a call to existence, to live reality. This is why it is expressed in the known evangelical words: "Come and see" (John 1,46). This means a call to a life different from the life of the world and in this different life, young people must be convinced to enter for its peace and eternal happiness, and the mission of the Church is paramount.

---

<sup>4</sup> Gheorghe D. Metallinos, *quoted*, p.48

**KEY WORDS:** education, child, Old Testament, New Testament, temptations, theology, secularization, the Decalogue, parents, old tradition.

## **SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **EDITIONS OF THE HOLY BIBLE**

1. *The Bible or the Saint Scripture*, Publishing House of the Biblical Institute and Orthodox Mission, Bucharest, 2008.
2. *The Bible or the Saint Scripture*, jubilee edition, written and annotated by IPS Bartolomeu Valeriu Anania, Publishing House of the Biblical Institute and Mission of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest, 2001
3. *The New Testament*, printed under the guidance and care of His Beatitude Teoctist, the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, revised version, prepared and commented by Bartolomeu Valeriu Anania, Publishing House of the Biblical Institute and Mission of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest, 1993.
4. *The Noul Testament with Psalms*, printed under the guidance and care of His Beatitude Daniel, The Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Publishing House I.B.M.B.O.R., Bucharest, 2008.

### **PATRISTIC AND POSTPATRISTIC AUTHORS**

1. **Saint John of Damascus**, *Dogmatica*, translated by the priest Dumitru Fecioru, Publishing House Scripta, Bucharest, 1993
2. **Saint John Chrysostom**, *Comentariu la Epistola catre romani (Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans)*, Homily 24, P.G., tome 60
3. **Idem**, *Tratatul despre preoție și omilia rostită când a fost hirotonit preot (Treaty on priesthood and homily uttered when he was ordained a priest)* in "Despre Preoție" (*About priesthood*), Ed.I.B.M.B.O.R., Bucharest, 1998.
4. **Idem**, *Omilii la Facere (Homilies to Genesis)*, in the collection PSB, volumes 21,22 translated by the priest Prof. Dumitru Fecioru, Publishing House, IBMBOR, Bucharest, 1987.
5. **Idem**, *Omilii la Matei (Homilies to Mathias)*, in the collection PSB volume 23, translated by the priest Prof. Dumitru Fecioru, Publishing House IBMBOR, Bucharest, 1994.
6. **Idem**, *Omilii și cuvântări despre educația copiilor (Homilies and allocutions on children education)*, translated by the priest Marcel Hancheș, Publishing House Marineasa, Timișoara, 2005.
7. **Idem**, *Despre Feciorie și despre creșterea copiilor (On virginity and children education)*, translated from Greek and annotated by the priest Prof. Dumitru FECIORU, Publishing House IBMBOR, Bucharest, 2001.
8. **Idem**, *Părinți, Copii și creșterea lor (Parents, children and their education)*, translated by Ierom Benedict Aghioritul, Publishing House Panaghia, Suceava 2004.

### **SPECIALTY BOOKS**

1. **Aleksandrovici, Avdeev, dr.Dimitri**, *Când sufletul este bolnav (When the soul is ill)*, translated by Adrian and Xenia Tănăsescu-Vlas, Publishing House the Orthodox Book, Bucharest, 2005.
2. **Idem**, *De vorbă cu un psihiatru ortodox, (Talking to the orthodox psychiatrist)* translated by Adrian and Xenia Tănăsescu-Vlas, Publishing House Sophia, Bucharest, 2006.
3. **Andreicuț, Î.P.S., Andrei**, *Dragoste libertate și sex responsabil, (Love, liberty and responsible sex)*, Publishing House Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, 2001.
4. **Breck, John**, *Darul sacru al vieții, (Life sacred gift)*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, translated by P.S., Dr.Irineu Pop, Bistrițeanu, Publishing House Patmos, Cluj Napoca, 2003.
5. **Istodor, Pr.Dr.Gheorghe**, *Aspecte psihosociale ale fenomenului sectar, (Psycho-social aspects of the sectar phenomenon)*, Publishing House Garuda-Art, Vasiliana -98, Chișinău –Iași, 2006.
6. **Idem**, *Misiunea creștină ca activitate permanentă și practică a Bisericii (The Christian mission as permanent and practical activity of the Church)*, Publishing House Sigma, Bucharest, 2006.

7. **Idem**, *Iubirea creștină și provocările contemporane-perspective misionare*, (Christian love and contemporary challenges – missionary perspectives) Publishing House Sigma, Bucharest, 2006.
8. **Pantelimon, Golu, Zlate, Mielu, Verza Emil**, *Psihologia copilului*, (Child psychology) E.D.P., Bucharest, 1997.
9. **Pestov, N.E.**, *Cum să ne creștem copiii, Calea spre desăvârșita bucurie*, (*How to raise our children, the way to perfect bliss*), translated by Lucia Ciornea, Publishing House Sophia, Bucharest, 2005.
10. **Todea, Alexandru**, *Cascada tinereții*, (*Youth cascade*), Blaj, 1943.
11. **Tomșa, Gheorghe**, *Consilierea și orientarea în școală*, (*School council and guidance*), Publishing House Credis, University of Bucharest, 2005.