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***The Adventist Doctrinaire Syncretism – the Premise of Heretic Proselytism.
A Missionary Perspective***

Summary

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A Missionary Perspective

Summary

I. Introduction

The mission of the Church has become essential to its future; it is paramount that the attention of the members of the Church be redirected towards this goal, because it is on this realm that we state what we truly are, alive or numb. Whether we are alive or numb is a matter and a question on whose answer the Church's entire future missionary approach may depend, because it must overcome today's challenges in the Romanian society.

The rise of Adventist sects partially represents the framework in which the Church carries its mission, as their doctrine change the meaning of creation, the meaning of eschatology, of the universe, of mankind and the meaning of the Church. Proselytism turns man into a being without identity, into a mere consequence of the universe's irrational evolution, the Orthodox Church ceases to be "laos to teon", that is God's people, the postmodern man is urged to embrace other pseudo-religious forms that covet to identify themselves as God's people.

Given this context, we think it is necessary that such a study come in support of the Church by identifying the main missionary principles in the contemporary Romanian society. The Church ought to realize that its mission is carried in a hostile environment, where the product of globalization has taken shapes, generating a culture that is poisonous for a Christian's life, as this culture struggles to be acknowledged as an alternative. Thus, the preaching of the Bible must respect the people's freedom to express the truth in its own manner, but still remaining (the Bible) the sole source of the fundamental cultural outlook. The preaching of the Bible, beyond it being necessary in the current cultural and social context, must take into account certain patterns and display a certain insight, considering the current realities. Through the

preaching of the Bible, the Church can see that the integrity of the basic existentialist principles of Christ's Church is being preserved, while facing new forms and cultural expressions.

Pseudo-religious pluralism reinforces the idea that the pseudo-religious alternative to the real revealed religiousness has the same moral and doctrinal value, which is false and dangerous, because the alternative to the true religiousness is the false religiousness. Pseudo-religious pluralism must be analyzed within the degeneration process of Christianity and of the Church, which is starting to take the shape of a secular desacralized society. While in itself, cultural, economic, political diversity is one of its basic characteristics, the Church, wearing the mask of the secular society, must accept and promote diversity and pseudo-religious pluralism.

Secularization meant a dramatic depreciation of the religious feeling, a dechristianization, a secularization, a desecration, an emancipation from the guiding influence of the Church and its exclusion; it meant the denying of God and of His revelation to man, secularization being an antireligious phenomenon, which took the shape of militant atheism in totalitarian regions or which non-violently or non-conflictingly slowly infiltrates into democratic societies. Secularization isolates man within himself, denying him any contact with a loving transcendence, open for a relationship; after all, this means the bankruptcy of the human being, which brings along the loss of the meaning of existence, a spiritual void, an existential anxiety, modern day boredom and, eventually, existential failure.

One of the damaging outcomes of secularization is the **desecration** of the contemporary man. There are many causes for desecration, but some of them rise from within the Church. The behavior and inadequate attitude of clergymen has played an important role in the process of desecration, the most recent example being the sexual scandals in which priests and even a bishop in the Romanian Orthodox Church. Furthermore, the passions that a priest might have, such as pride, greed, selfishness, mediocre theological and secular competence have drifted churchgoers away from the Church, hence their reluctance to want to receive communion. While it is true that many representatives of the Church may be examples to be followed, unfortunately, the media does not promote this kind of people.

The dechristianization in post modernism reflects in a weakening of the religious life in an important number of churchgoers who used to be very enthusiastic not very long ago. This consists of participating less frequently in the Mass and not receiving the communion.

Another aspect of the process of secularization is **religious indifference**. During the last few years, we have been witnessing a social indifference, shown by the poor participation rate in the political voting process on different levels and the young generation's indifference to its own educational path and development.

In our country, Adventist preaching has intensified after the 90s, gathering many followers among the Orthodox Christians who were not frequent churchgoers and who lacked an authentic, healthy religious background. Furthermore, the lower class was deeply affected by this type of proselytism due to the fact that the Adventist preaching was doubled by social aid, financial support of those who intended to be *baptized*.

All of the above have made Adventist heretical gospel to spread in a staggering speed and, worse, have made the contemporary man, who has a poor religious background and education, believe the heresies of this sect and drift away from the Church founded by Jesus Christ, while adhering to these Adventist sects which were founded by men.

II. Contemporary Advent Movements. Historical Facts and Gospel Idiosyncrasy

Adventism was born in a historical, ideological and religious background dominated by rationalism, deism and the principles of the French revolution. The origins of the Adventist movement are tied to the millerite movement which bloomed in the United States of America in 1830, during the revival of the apocalyptic expectations which characterize *The Second Great Awakening*.

Adventists do not seem to play an important part in Western society. They are devoted to proselytism and would rather avoid any conflicts with the secular authorities, thus they have never had any notoriety, nor have they enjoyed any popularity. On an academic level, Adventism has raised little interest. Sociologist Bryan Ronald Wilson first described the group as being a

revolutionary sect, but then he revised his discourse, with a look on to the process of denomination which the movement was going through. Thus, Adventism is a complex phenomenon which cannot easily fall within and be classified under a single notion. Within the Seventh Day Adventist movement there is a substantial local diversity in both, practice and doctrine, as well as an obvious tension between the avant-gardist reformist branch and the traditionalist fundamentalist branch, against dialogue.

The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints (Mormon) was initiated by Joseph Smith (1805-1844) in 1830 in Fayette, New York. Joseph Smith claimed to have been visited by God- our Father and by Jesus Christ and was given the assignment to restore the *true church* and the *true ministry* on Earth.

The vast majority of Mormon dogma is written in the book *Word of Wisdom*, which forbids premarital sexual relationships, smoking, drug consumption, alcohol, coffee and black tea consumption. On the other hand, they are urged to eat fruit, cereal and meat. Every Mormon should respect the 10 commandments of the Old Testament, to pray at least three times a day and to read each day for at least half an hour from *The Book of Mormon*.

Jehovah's Witnesses was founded in the United States of America, towards the end of the 19th century, as a branch of the Seventh-day Adventist cult. The founder of this sect is Charles Taze Russel (1852-1916), who was born to a Presbyterian family in Pennsylvania, but apparently connected to an old Jewish tribe, having German or Irish roots. He was brought up in a strict Presbyterian austerity, which he rejected because he was lured by the Adventist mirage, for which reason Russel initiated a research study of the Bible in order to discover the date of the beginning of the millennium.

From a doctrine perspective, Jehovah's Witnesses falls within one of the pseudo-Christian sect, having a heretic doctrine, distancing itself from the authentic Christian dogma. Therefore, Jehovah's Witnesses preach an undue worship of God, whom they call Jehovah. They wrongfully interpret several passages of the Bible in which God is truly worshipped only if he is called *Jehovah*.

III. Adventist Syncretistic Doctrinaire Reference Points of Jewish Origin

Adventism is a faction that was delineated by Jesus Christ's Second Coming, in which they hoped in such a manner that it speculated certain biblical texts, especially the Book of Daniel, in order to find a set date of Jesus Christ's coming on earth. This date was a real date, but it did not materialize in the Lord's coming. After this easily proven beguilement, one would expect that the faction would collapse, given its small number of followers. However, this kind of religious illiteracy doubled by people's naivety has made this sect increase its number of followers, counting today millions of followers.

The success of Adventist proselytism would not have been as great, if the Adventist doctrine had not borrowed certain dogmatic principles, moral principles or food prescriptions from the Jewish tradition, which it absolutized and rendered them as some of the most important doctrines. Therefore, the Adventist movement took over and developed the Millerite doctrine, being in the center of its own doctrine. Secondly, the Sabbath was borrowed from the Jewish tradition as the true rest day (thus the term Seventh-day Adventists), to the detriment of the day we ought to honor due to the events that took place during this day for the redemption of man – Sunday. In order for the movement to become financially profitable, which is paramount for this sect, Adventism also borrowed from the Jewish tradition the tithe (10% of people's incomes to be given to the sect). In fact, this is the real reason why the sect was successful in the first place – the money that was raised was used for the Adventist proselytism. The Adventist doctrine absolutized certain principles that were considered to be unimportant at first sight, such as alimentation and the refusal to drink alcohol - the propaganda doubled by these principles had a greater success as people are very sensitive to these aspects of the material world.

All these doctrines embellished by Adventism will be approached in such a way so as to reveal the danger that lies beneath this movement through its teachings for both the religious life and the spirituality of the Orthodox Christianity.

Nowadays, the sects which are based on the heresy of Chiliasm and which have founded their entire doctrine on this heresy bare no excuse, because the Church has expressed its eschatological teachings as they were passed by Jesus Christ to His disciples. Obviously, the

sects, especially the Adventist sects, use this heresy for preaching purposes and exploit it to its fullest, while having extraordinary success among the so-called Christians who do not have a thorough religious education and who think that the idea of Jesus Christ's earthly kingdom that will last for a thousand years is very attractive and elitist.

IV. Adventist Syncretistic Doctrinaire Reference Points of Protestant Origin

Sola Scriptura is the Protestant doctrine according to which the Bible comprises all the knowledge needed for redemption and holiness. As a consequence, Protestantism claims that only those doctrines that are preached or that are directly found in the Bible or that are indirectly logically deduced or deduced through valid deductive reasoning can be admitted. *Sola Scriptura* does not deny the fact that there might be other aspects that can guide Christian life, but they are all subordinated and corrected through God's written word.

From a Protestant perspective, the doctrine of *sola fide* completes the picture of redemption achieved in parallel with the Holy Spirit, the Person of the Holy Trinity who actually gives faith (Ephesians 2, 8; 1 Corinthians 12, 3; Romans 8: 14-15). It completes the work of salvation planned and prepared by God –the Father in the eternal divine council (Isaiah 42, 1-7; Timothy 1, 9) and achieved by His Son through His work of redemption (John 19:30). This work of salvation is already accomplished because the Holy Spirit creates faith during the Holy Baptism and through conversion following the preaching and the teachings of the Word (Matthew 28, 19), both reinforcing faith through the preaching of the Word and the receiving of the communion (Romans 10, 13-17).

Sola gratia was the superior teaching of protestant reformers with respect to redemption. Only the divine grace is the foundation of redemption and Christians are redeemed through grace with the help of faith.

We are talking about the denial of this Holy Sacrament, as well as the negation of the importance of Baptism for redemption. Furthermore, they make an enormous confusion between the baptism founded by Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit and fire and the baptism which

forgives all sins, practiced by John the Baptist. Therefore, they believe that, by rejecting the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, they are doing it in the name of God.

The Adventist eschatology is based on the teaching about Jesus Christ's ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary. The doctrine about the Heavenly Sanctuary is based on the texts of Saint Paul's Epistles to the Hebrews, in which he talks about Christ's arch-hierarchy's calling, on Saint John's Book of Revelation (14, 17; 11, 19) where we find Christ accomplishing His work in two places, as well as on The Book of Daniel, which, from an Adventist perspective, places the beginnings of *The Day of Atonement* in a concrete moment in time, meaning at the end of the 2300 weeks, that is in 1844, as the Adventists calculated.

Protestants and Neo-Charismatics, in general, and Adventist sects in particular, acknowledge neither religious Priesthood as a Holy Sacrament, nor the holy nature of the three hierarchical levels: deacon, priest, bishop.

The Adventists do not acknowledge the Eucharist as being a Holy Sacrament, but a mere symbol or a reminder of the Last Supper, with Jesus and the 12 apostles, as it is also called the Lord's Supper or the Lord's Holy Communion.

They claim that it was demanded by Christ, according to the texts of the Scripture in Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-34. Furthermore, it is argued the fact that the Eucharist was kept in local churches (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:20, 33, 34). Nowadays, Adventists learn that both, believers who were reborn and baptized and other believers should be allowed to take part in the Lord's Supper, while those who lead a sinful life should not participate until they repent (1 Corinthians 5:9-12; 11:27-32).

Sabbath School is a replica of Sunday school, existent in other sects, with the distinction that it is held for all age groups, as a worship program as well as a studying program on Saturday morning.

Jehovah's Witnesses, as they define marriage, do not even regard it as a symbol: the union between man and woman sealed in order for them to live together as husband and wife according to the guidelines found in the Scripture. Marriage allows husband and wife to establish an intimate relationship, doubled by the safety given by the loving climate and the devotion to

each other of the two spouses. When marriage was founded, the purpose that God had in mind was not only to ensure that man had a close companion who would complete him and make possible the multiplication of human beings within a family.

Adventism, like most sects, does not acknowledge the necessity of the Holy Unction in order for man to gain physical and spiritual health, by claiming that it does not have any basis in the Holy Scripture. In text they do not understand the fact that it was a common practice in the Church during the first centuries, but focus on the role of the prayer in the process of healing. This Holy Sacrament is not an innovation, but it was practiced by the Apostles themselves, who cannot be called innovators, but are the true keepers of God's Holy Sacraments.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that the dead "know nothing" (Ecclesiastes 9, 5-6) and that when a person dies "his thoughts perish" (Psalms 146, 4). In other words, as Adventists say, the Bible teaches us that death is an unconscious sleep and that the dead will not wake up until resurrected by God (John 5, 28, 1 Corinthians 15, 51-55, 1 Thessalonians 4, 16-17). Because the dead know nothing, the funeral service, although honoring the dead, is held for the comfort and relief of the living. Anointing this service within the Church would not provide any benefits to the spiritual state of the deceased.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has four constituent levels that lead believers all over the world:

1. The local Church, made of all the believers on an individual level;
2. The local conference or mission, an unitary authority of all the churches in a state, province or territory;
3. The Union Conference, made of several conferences on a wider territory;
4. The General Conference, the largest organizational unit, which comprises all unions all over the world. The divisions are departments within the General Conference which have administrative liability in various geographical areas.

Each member of the church has a say in the election of the church representatives. The Church elects the officers of the state conferences. The representatives chosen by the state conference chose the officers of the union conferences and those chosen representatives chose the officers of the General Conference. Via this hierarchy, each conference, each institution, each

church and each individual, directly or through its representatives, have a say in the election of those who bare the main responsibilities within the General Conference.

The Adventists have inherited ecclesiastical practices from the cults and sect which they broke away. Among these practices, there is the way in which the clergymen assigned with the organization of the cult are divided: the pastor (Adventists use the term *minister*) or the priest, the patriarch and the deacon, common terms in most Christian churches, even if among protestants the term *pastor* is more frequently used than the term *priest*. Some North-American protestant denominations, including those from which they broke away most frequently, had two types of pastors or ministers: the licensed and the ordained. Among the protestant denominations the meaning of the *elder* or *patriarch* and *deacon* has sometimes substantially varied.

Adventists have always preferred to use the term minister instead of pastor, term used by Anabaptists and Baptists. At first, only the pastors/preachers (ministers) served, then they adopted three levels: pastors, patriarchs, deacons. Furthermore, they also adopted the Christian traditionalist practice of publicly acknowledging their assignment to one of these levels by putting their hand on the person being assigned. In the beginning, this was called ordaining and took the shape of a ceremony which evolved into a ritual meant to symbolize the deeply sacred nature of the office held by those who were ordained.

V. The Impact of Syncretic Adventism on Modern Society. Adventist Proselytism

The research on the psychological and social profile of those who are recruited or of those who are targeted by the sects' proselytism in general, and by the Adventist movement in particular, has been a major concern for sociologists, psychologists, psychoanalysts or psychiatrists. Sociology identified two main templates of conversion to a sect. The first template is based on the active role of the new recruit, who consciously and in a responsible manner converts to the new faith, but the final decision is influenced to a great extent by psychological or social factors. The second template sees the recruit as a victim of recruitment techniques that are well known to the representatives of the new faith, thus being subjected to psychological

pressure. Seven decision factors have been identified, each having a major contribution to the individual's own decision to abandon the old faith and to embrace a new one: the overwhelming stress in one's everyday life, the tendency to address certain issues in a religious setting, the conscious religious quest, a conflict with a fellow member of a cult, establishing or reinforcing a bond with one or several members of the cult, denying any kind of relationship with non-members of the cult, repeated interactions with the members of a cult which eventually drives the potential recruit to a religious life.

The process of recruiting has three successive stages, which progressively determine someone to convert to a sect, while some sort of intellectual and emotional dependence emerges. Gradually, the recruit will be seduced, persuaded and, eventually, fascinated. The act of recruiting has three important stages: seduction, persuasion and fascination, the crushing of one's personality through indoctrination. All these combined make the process of recruiting very easy to put into practice, having good results, hence the proliferation of neo-charismatic sects and of those of oriental origin in our country, especially after 1990, when Romanians were literally under assault, invaded by different groups, wreaking havoc on the Orthodox Christians who lacked a proper religious education because of the atheist communist regime.

The world Adventist mission was clearly defined in 1966 when the *Department of World Mission* along with the *Seventh-day Adventist Institute of World Mission*, were both founded with the support of Andrews University. World mission initiatives were also launched in 1980 through the so-called Global Strategy. The concepts of Louis R. Conradi (1856-1939) represented a template for the field work: a new vision on the endorsement of evangelism and on the initiation of missionaries, successful methods for the growth of the church, peddling or missionary campaigns, increasing concern about the understanding of the Western template. Erich W. Baumgarten shows that Louis R. Conradi's and other Adventist pioneers' efforts have focused on the *adjustment to the local culture* and this has been extremely important for the survival and the growth of Adventism. On the other hand, German leaders have made everything they could in order to keep the Seventh-day Adventist Church from being perceived as an American sect and have fought not to upset the Traditionalist Churches.

The world Adventist proselytism is based on the so-called field work. The missionary activity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is carried on by full-time missionaries called *non-*

residential missionaries. They target groups of people in areas that have not been reached by Adventists yet, as they are very well instructed.

There is another program which works through *Tentmakers*, that is missionaries who blend in a certain social framework with the purpose of preaching from the inside. We are talking about teachers, IT experts, doctors, engineers, nurses, etc.

The main Adventist organization is the **Adventist Development and Relief Agency** (ADRA). This is an agency which provides financial support regardless of age, ethnicity, religious or political affiliation. Through this agency, thousands of people all over the world are assisted, numerous agricultural and cultural projects in various poor regions of the world are organized, several clinics and hospitals are established.

Adventist Review is the Seventh-day Adventist Church's official weekly publication. In 1849, James White started to publish **The Present Truth**, a periodical which expanded the doctrine of Sabbath as the day of rest and started publishing the **Advent Review** the following year, where he tried, among other things, to prove that the followers of the Sabbatarian Adventism were the true descendants of William Miller. In November 1850, White merged the two papers into *Second Accent Review and Sabbath Herald*, while in 1961 its name was trimmed to *Review and Herald*. From 1978 to the present day, it has been bearing the title **Adventist Review**. Nowadays, the magazine is published in other languages too, other than English.

Today, Adventist proselytism in Romania is particularly vivacious due to the various means of communication and to the financial and human resources the sect enjoys. The members of the sect have infiltrated in all the institutions of our country, having an unparalleled missionary activity. Proselytism is also facilitated by the broadcasting of doctrines and information regarding the church's activity through the TV channel and radio channel called "Speranța" (Hope). While it is true that the pace in which the followers of the Adventist Church proliferate is not as fast-moving as it was in the 90s, still, Adventist proselytism in our country is a real challenge for the Romanian Orthodox Church's mission because it is extremely harsh and critical to our clergymen.

Other than the organizations and the Adventist publishing, Adventist proselytism has been supported by establishment of several radio and TV channels which helped spread the Adventist message to the masses.

The Adventist Media Center (AMC) is a Seventh-day Adventist organization which coordinates the media programs for North America. It was established in 1972 by the General Conference from Thousand Oaks, California. **The Adventist Media Center** eased the production and the broadcasting of the Voice of Prophecy, It is Written and Faith for Today. Furthermore, it has produced audio-video materials for proselytism and, later on, added Breath of Life, La Voz de la Esperanza (a Hispanic version of the Voice of Prophecy), Jesus 101, the Biblical Institute and Radio Life Talk. In 1996, the property right on the Media Center was transferred from the General Conference to the North-American Division. Since 2014 it has updated and improved its technology in order to allow their programs to move to different locations.

The Adventist World Radio (AWR) is a Seventh-day Adventist radio project on short term. Starting with placing the programs on Radio-Trans-Europe in 1971, the sect used four transmitters up until 1980 in order to broadcast 80 hours on air each week, in 18 different languages. In 1985, the General Conference voted for establishing its own radio station in Guam, which would broadcast in Asia. By the end of the 90s, the **Adventist World Radio** had built additional transmission sites in South America and Italy and has aired on other European radio channels. Nowadays, it is broadcasting around 1000 hours a week in 46 languages.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a very well organized internal structure, which helps it administer itself, manage itself and perform in Romania. It is part of the structure of the world Church and in our country it is viewed as a Union of Conferences, as it comprises six Conferences. Each conference is made up of several local communities which are spread all over the country.

Generally, it can be claimed that the sects represent a real danger to our society by mentally destabilizing, financial requirements, a break with the environment, the achievement of physical integrity, enrolling the children, anti-social discourse, public disorder, embezzling, and infiltration in public offices.

VI. The Contemporary Orthodox Mission before the Adventist Doctrines and Proselytism

As it can be concluded from the missiology manuals and from specialty books, we, the Orthodox Church, stand on defensive grounds regarding the mission and missiology, and we learn to defend ourselves and we are less inclined to confess that we are more oriented towards the past, instead of focusing on the challenges of the present day and future perspectives. Unfortunately, within many subjects that are being taught at the Theological Faculty, both discourse and research are oriented towards the past, without having a creative and constructive perspective on the present, much less about the future. For this reason, Missiology is the first to foresee the growth and development of the Church, to intensively lead man towards the state of accomplishment, found in Paul's theology and to extensively preach the Bible to everyone, as our Savior commanded. In this particular context, certain principles which generally guide theological education should be revised in order to find a mission with roots in the contemporary reality which deals, among other things, with the Adventist proselytism, not detached from it.

The Adventist proselyte movement regards Orthodox areas as adequate territories for their mission because former communist countries are viewed as areas where people have lost their faith in God because the atheist-materialist ideology promoted by these regimes. By performing these actions, which usually take place in the street or around the corner, some sects, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, think that they are fulfilling their duty to Jesus, because, in their view, the majority of the members of the traditionalist Church have yet to receive Jesus' Bible. That is the reason why the Adventist mission targets both non-Christians and Christians who need a re-evangelization.

This type of attitude is regarded by the Orthodox Church as being offensive towards the profession which the Orthodox Churches have made during two millennia, while neo-Charismatics regard it as a duty and as something natural. Moreover, the Adventist neo-charismatic proselytism uses recruitment techniques which are always improving, along with material or financial incentives. During recruitment, on the street, those who are being recruited

are induced with the false sense that everything occurs under the guidance of free will, which encourages a necessary future brainwash. This type of brainwashing is necessary because, otherwise, certain ideas would be instantly rejected. One example would be that of Jehovah's Witnesses who, after unsuccessfully calculating the end of the world several times, have come to admit the fact that no human being actually knows this date. However, they claim that God can still give some information regarding that. This type of attitude, as father Istodor observes, contributes to maintaining the proselyte motivation.

This attitude betrays the apostolic spirit of following Jesus and preaching the word of His Gospel. This educational activity of the Church aims at a religious preaching and at a training of the believer, in close connection to the cult promoted by the Holy Church.

VII. Conclusion

The mission is the essential activity of the multi-millennial Orthodox Church, divided in two stages: the first, to lead people towards Jesus, the second, to accompany them in their Christian journey until they are united with Jesus Christ. From a technical point of view, the above phrasing expresses the Church's objective, which can be reached through the Orthodox-Christian missionary's efforts.

Man is in a permanent development and progress from a doctrinaire, social and political perspective, thus changing the context in which the mission unfolds. The changing of the missionary context brings along the embrace of adequate answers and of more effective methods and means, still loyal to the substance and the basis of the Holy Tradition, which, in fact, expresses the Church's identity.

In this regard, today's missionary starts from the acknowledgement that there are certain essential traits and reference points of the Christian-Orthodox mission, restricted to the reason and purpose of Creation: the love and eternal life alongside God, a God within the Holy Trinity, who is never absent and never indifferent to the course of humanity, as world history and the books of the Holy Bible prove.

The missionary must own a language in order to make himself understood, accepted and followed, a language that, although foreign to many, can be easily understood by all. The knows the vocabulary of his own calling, its basis and manifestations from Him who, by interposing Himself between Heaven and earth through His sacrifice, managed to reconcile man and God, as a spiritual being, not as a mere individual or as an animal with reason. By eliminating Jesus Christ from this equation, mankind can no longer reach its result.

The biblical and dogmatic basis of the mission reveals God's yearning to be with people, through the Church, the dynamic Church which is not stiff in shape and ritual, as an unaware outsider may think. Christ, the ultimate missionary, paragon and advisor, is the author of missiology's terminology and basis, which are the instruments of nowadays' missionary. These baselines do not exist within the Adventist proselytism.

The Christian-Orthodox missionary retrieves from and through Jesus Christ the necessary characteristics, whether clergyman or layman, shaping them to his mission. This is a *sine qua non* requirement of the formation of a religious people, who would adore and serve God, to the extent of their calling, training and means, united under the same goal, that is the metamorphosis of the world in the Church, battler on Earth and triumphant in Heaven.

He is summoned and sent to be a model for those in the Church in order to be part of the life-giving sacrifice, Christ's flesh and blood, in order to fulfill the goal of being a liturgical community and to turn monotheists, Jew and Muslims to God, and, at the same time, to spread the Gospel to people who have not discovered Him. In this regard, the hesitant missionary efforts in Africa and Asia could represent a calling for young priests and, why not, accompanied by layman educators, doctors. Both within and outside the Church, the missionary has to highlight methods and means offered by modernity and post-modernity. The mission has to target people who have already left the Orthodox Church, embracing other cults, mainly Adventist.

Knowing and understanding the missionary context prepares the missionary for an optimal approach of the work ahead. As compared to the missionary of the past centuries, the modern-day missionary has to face the massive migration that mankind experiences in general, and Romanian migration in particular, caused by economic and political reasons. Today's emigrants, challenged by the issue of diversity, will be the believer who will embellish the

Church in tomorrow's Romania. He will come back with the temptation to compare those seen and heard abroad, thus the missionary work in diaspora keeps the same coordinates of Romanian Orthodoxy. Famous missionaries in diaspora may arouse in today's missionaries the yearning to follow in their footsteps.

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