

PASTORAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY MODEL
IN ORTHODOX CONTEXT

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Argument of the thesis

The subject of my thesis is PASTORAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY MODEL IN ORTHODOX CONTEXT. I approached this theme from the consideration that the work of the Orthodox missionary constitutes one of the Christian ecclesial works that needs a permanent improvement.

In the Church, in general, the Orthodox missionary gravitates between the theological dimensions of the teaching of faith and their way of addressing the world, in such a way as not to degrade the truth which they profess by the act of preaching, but to increase it permanently. On the other hand, the challenges of the world in which he lives are to articulate the message of Christ to cultures and nations through which humanity understands to express its identity.

Inculturation, as an environment conducive to the development and universalization of the Church's teaching, is an extension of the contextualization process from which the Christian Church has conceived a missionary means of expression.

The relationship between the teaching methods specific to the Eastern Christian horizon and the Christian missionary model outlined by the biblical imaginary, materialized in the liturgical, philanthropic and theological work of the Holy Apostles, we believe that it represents the perfect model of the Christian missionary.

Motivated by these reflections, we have proposed ourselves as from the relationship between the pastoral foundations of the Church and the missionary models that her history proposes to us throughout the ages, let us paint a picture of the Orthodox missionary today in the context of the challenges that the secular world is addressing to the Church of Christ.

This research aims to highlight the process by which the Orthodox missionary today is called to go through in order to acquire the ability to address in a contemporary context the

intercultural environment that it generates contemporary, ultra-technologized man, religious reflections on how the world belongs to him or how much he finds himself in this relationship with the world. In the conclusion of each chapter, the study synthesizes the ideas and concepts presented to draw some obvious touches of how human space is defined by the way it contextualized the Christian message.

Christianity, by definition, is a religion that, *extra muros*, constantly adapts to human history and civilizations. As an integral part of the world, Christianity progresses, it develops, it is constantly renewing and reinventing itself from its own inner dimensions in order to provide adequate answers to the transcendental horizons that human culture constantly addresses to it.

On the threshold between millennia, the questions of the postmodern man changed the old paradigm of human society in which human knowledge had its origins in divine eternity and found another expression - the reason of matter by the research of which man, by himself, deciphers and resizes his relation to reality which is not regarded as the result of a creative act, but as a space of manifestation resulting from a paradigmatic relationship of the interior with the exterior of its being.

Through an analysis applied to his own existence, man changed his relationship with divinity and in this way the context of his entire existence.

These new approaches, however, show that human reality is contextual, which belongs to a context, which is why the Church considers that its approach must remain contextual in her missionary activity.

The concept of contextual theology has several meanings, which makes it appear to be elusive and fluid, but precisely by the meanings it acquires in this respect, it allows itself to articulate better to human nature.

Christian theology, which is always carried out in context, refers to the shaping of the human person according to the model of the Christian missionary who has Christ as the supreme model of preaching.

Therefore, we refer to the recognition of the missionary nature of contextual theology, with all its potentially controversial and problematic implications, as a specific and defining attribute. What is different from the statement that theology is itself contextual, because the contextualization process thus viewed is not just an epistemological method of encounter with Christ, but also a way of life that is required to be lived fully, with real bestowal.

Purpose of the work

Exploring this approach in this paper interacts with the reality of the world we live in today, which is why we set out to problematize on this topic. The theological and contextual approach, in the missionary horizon, is questioned, to the extent that it is really possible, to shed light on the role of the human experience of encountering Christ through the work of the Orthodox missionary, from the perspective of the challenges that contemporaneity addresses to the Christian believer, but also of man in general in his relationship with divinity, from the philanthropic perspective of family concepts, migration, technology, urbanization etc.

Research stage

In the Orthodox space, as in general in the Christian interfaith space, contextualization is a subject intensely debated for more than half a century. Over time, the debates have increased intensity and today occupy a special place in religious actuality.

The diversity of the Gentiles and cultures to which the Church addresses Christ, as early as was presented in the New Testament, has today become a more challenging one, especially if we consider how much the teaching of Christ has been enriched in the history and tradition of the Church.

For these reasons, contextual theology is today a theological undertaking through which the Church addresses the contemporary world. The relationship between the human, historical or cultural context, for example, and the theology of the Church of Christ, in this case, is the basis for prolific debates.

In this regard, we note that there are numerous bibliographic sources on this subject. By what distinguishes our approach, it is the angle of approach of this theme, because we intend to present it from the perspective of the teaching of the Orthodox faith in order to respond to current situations that challenge both the thinking of Orthodox theologians and the faithful of the Church. For these reasons, our theme is not necessarily a niche one, which it does not even propose, but, through the information and issues it proposes, we consider that by the final conclusion, it will build the presence of horizons that other Orthodox theologians will deepen in order to enrich the Orthodox missionary ethos.

Studies whose content maps the geographic forms specific to the missionary work of the Orthodox Church, such as the work of Professor Ion Bria, *Credința pe care o mărturisim*, Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest, 1987; Idem, *Destinul Ortodoxiei*, Publishing House of the Biblical and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest, 1989; Idem, *Liturghia după Liturghie. O tipologie a misiunii apostolice și a mărturiei creștine azi*, Athena Publishing House, Bucharest, 1996; Idem, *Go Forth in Peace. Orthodox Perspectives on Mission*, World Council of Churches, 1986; Valer Bel, *Misiunea Bisericii în lumea contemporană*, 2 vol., Cluj University Press Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2002, P. F. Patriarch Daniel appeared in English under the title *Confessing the Truth in Love. Orthodox Perceptions of Life. Mission and Unity*, Basilica Publishing House, Bucharest; Pr. Prof. univ. Valer Bel, *Misiunea Bisericii în lumea contemporană*, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2004, as well as Anastasios, Yannoulatos, *Ortodoxia și problemele lumii contemporane*, Byzantine Publishing House, Bucharest, 2003, Man G. Dorel, *Church and multiculturalism in the end of the millennium Europe*, Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Cluj University Press, 2001. But also Pr. Prof dr. Adrian Gabor and Asist. Radu Petre Muresan, (Coord.), *Biserica Ortodoxă în Uniunea Europeană*, Bucharest University Publishing House, 2006; Rudolf Poledna, Francois Ruegg, Calin Rus, (Coord.), *Interculturalitate. Cercetări și perspective românești*, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2002 and *The models of contextual theology* by Stephan Bevans, published in 1992, it is the landmarks that gave us the understanding of contextual theology from the perspective of which we will relate to the Orthodox Christian contextual spiritual space in this study.

Documentary basis

In this study we propose an interdisciplinary approach through which we intend to offer the work a missionary character, specific to the field of theological research of the Orthodox approach that, in the ecclesiological space, it is used by patristic sources and sources, official documents, dictionaries and encyclopedias, etc. The theme, throughout its development, is based on the following aspects:

- systematic theology elements, which have missionary applicability, because they are born from an activist reading of the documentation related to the concept of contextualization in the Orthodox missionary space, in which way we refreshed, we believe, representative opinions in the field, but

also those in which, according to the teaching of Orthodox faith, are fundamental to the act of preaching

- the elements of comparative Orthodox theology, to which we have articulated the message and the teaching of the theology of the Orthodox Church, yes we have also specified what we have added in order to relate the Christian believer to the secular space;
- the elements of history and culture, the exposure of which sought to shed light on data and events relating to how it came about in the current missionary context;
- the elements of contemporary Orthodox theology through which we have updated and thus, we consider, we have sedimented in context the Orthodox missionary message, the role that the concept of missionary contextualization and its limits have.
- most of the information we used in this study is recent. However, it was also necessary to access older sources, which, however, did not in any way distort the present research, but, in our opinion, to, it has increased its scientific meaning and value.

Method of work

The method of work that we used in this work is made up of several dimensions. Thus, in addition to taking most of our information from the vast Christian theological horizon, especially the East, we will also use historical means, descriptive and comparative to highlight how the basic teachings of faith of Eastern Christianity express their missionary work in the contemporary context.

Contextualization generally involves expressions and formulations as accurate as they are vast, which is why the horizons of this work will expand and will contract according to the boundaries, boundaries, differences, diversity, plurality, uniqueness, complexity, by which the space of manifestation of the human being will articulate it to the saving act of the Incarnation of Christ.

As quantity, the information presented we consider to be rich. They express the need for discernment that we have appealed to carry out this research, because not all the sources and texts we encountered during the epistemological act constituted objective or academic information.

Here are the methods we used in our thesis:

- analytical method, through which we aimed to highlight the position and thinking of certain theologians, historians, sociologists, representative philosophers from specific fields related to our theme. That method is, in our opinion, the expression of the spaces of dialectics and philosophy, from which it borrows and uses descriptive and analytical means to develop and preserve the self-critical sense;
- theological method, which points out and highlights the diversity of contemporary faith confessions and theological teachings, as well as of historical paradigms, social and cultural work in which modern ecclesial work is carried out, which concerns itself with issues contained in the concept of contextualization and, above all, within the Orthodox teaching of faith
- the historical method, the research of which reveals the sustained effort to understand the meanings of concepts, notions and terms to be capitalized on, in order to bypass the erroneous information encountered throughout the references and texts;
- the comparative method, by which I am clear, specifies the differences that generate controversies specific to missionary contextualization, as well as the similarities that arise from this due to the related approaches of sociological, historical, cultural, political, political type, philosophical etc.;
- the spiritual method by which the power of Orthodoxy is emphasized, revealed by the religious experiences and experiences of the Christian liturgical space and, in particular, of the vast Orthodox spiritual field, so that, and through this work, let the truth of Christ and His Church be confessed as love, humility and dialogue.

In the first chapter, THE MISSION OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD, we exposed the foundations of pastoral work within the dogmatic terms and ecclesiastical canons, because I felt that in order to be able to compile useful answers to the Orthodox missionary, he must understand, whenever necessary, the reasons of faith for which he preaches Christ.

I have thus presented the teaching of faith on the characteristics of the Church as the basis of the Orthodox mission, starting from the attributes of the Church: one, holy, catholic and apostolic, as well as Christ as the supreme model of preaching and as the profile of the Orthodox priest and missionary in the first subchapter, and in the second sub-chapter I made an excursion of the missionary structure of the Church, as an indispensable source of salvation, which springs from her sacramental works: Baptism Chrismation, Communion, Repentance, Repentance, The Mass, the Wedding and the Ordination. In the last sub-chapter, we have highlighted the importance and

role of the relationship between the work that Christ carries out and the work done by the Holy Spirit in fulfilling the missionary process as an integral part of the nature of the Church.

In the second chapter, *THE BUILDING OF THE CHURCH THROUGH MISSION*, in order to highlight the model that the Church makes available to every believer and even more so to the Orthodox missionary, that is, to the priest of liturgies, we have developed in four broad subchapters examples of preaching about the missionary character of the Divine Liturgy, about how the Liturgy is a permanent work of Christ, which extends its liturgical expressions, through believers and church servants permanently in the world beyond the walls of places of worship, but especially how important it is that the faithful Christian understands that the liturgical work of the missionary priest must continue in the family, in the church at home.

In the final chapter, *THE ORTHODOX CONTEXT OF THE MISSION – CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES*, we have mirrored the teaching of faith in the Church with the context of the Christian world in the area of Orthodox faith with Romanian specificity. To this painting I added the adjacent images that complement the reality of the Romanian Church in the diaspora.

In order to achieve this approach, we called on the concept of contextualization whose missionary models, in the first part of this last chapter, we listed and presented them. Then, using this framework, we presented the communitarian, ecclesial and ecclesial aspects of the missionary and philanthropic activities that the Church carries out in the Romanian context, because we understood it best.

Following these definitions, we have analyzed the relationship of the Church with postmodernity, the way in which culture dilutes spirituality, inculturation and the way in which Romanian Orthodoxy found solutions to these challenges.

Here we have presented the main directions that make up the relationship between the Church and the hyper-technologized man of postmodernity from the perspectives of the human person, he said, a dialogue between the secular space and the church universe and the tendencies of relationship and exclusion that the Church of Christ meets in the challenges of today's world.

In this context, I considered it necessary to problematize with reference to the religiosity of the postmodern man who balances between the idea of the superhuman that technology proposes to him and the concrete problems of life, which rises on him caused by globalization, as well as

migration and diaspora. Addressed in a missionary context, these subjects have highlighted the works, in our opinion, which the Church carries out in the postmodern horizons.

Each *sub-chapter* is the continuation of the precedent, and the chapters themselves, composed to make up a whole and sustain the same message originally expressed in the title, they are summarized in distinct conclusions that contribute to the edification of our research.

Conclusions are an opportunity for meditation, but also a mean by which the present work is constituted, we believe, in an effective search and contribution to enriching the missionary work of the Church of Christ. On the other hand, it shows that the nature of contextual theology should be explored in relation to specific theologians rather than abstract, because a missionary theology, such as contextual theology, requires any study to take a distinct approach.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The priest has a mission greater than a layman, because he must serve those present, but he must also pray for those who are not present. The participants in the liturgical ministry thus benefit from a direct presence of the priest and his prayer.

For this reason, the liturgical ritual has become a tradition for them, a natural habit of their daily life, their piety is expressed by the gestures and mimic of the priest. For them the Eucharistic service has no secrets. It's live, direct, dynamic, powerful transformer, a real metanoia. This situation often leads to formalism, because familiarity with religious service generates a Eucharistic sacredness that makes the emergence of a static pietism possible.

That is why the number of believers who attend the liturgical service in the place of worship expresses the work of the priest in the parish.

The liturgical space must be extended through its pastoral activities, through visits to the homes of the faithful with the help of which he builds bridges between them and Christ. The man to whom he announces Christ is waiting for Christ to knock on his door. The priest who rebukes him for indifference does nothing but draw him away from Christ. Building direct relationships between priest and believer generates more liturgical space in the place of worship and makes Christ present in the life of believers.

The pastoral visit is the path that Christ joins with those who walk in this life. That is why the priest, beyond liturgical service, must be with the sick, the suffering of passions, those who have lost their orientation, the pope said, by those who seek meaning to give them the light of Christ, the teaching of the Church.

The concrete relationship between the priest and the faithful is the missionary foundation of the beginning of the ministry. Beyond the moral dimension and its essential Christian character, the work of the priest in the parish is established by maintaining and strengthening these types of ties, essential as pastoral activity and missionary expression of the Church.

By its very nature, the Church of Christ has a missionary character. It is, if it may be so said, its fifth attribute besides unity, catholicity, holiness and apostolicity. Institutionally founded at Pentecost, the first community of believers was born with the missionary work of preaching the Holy Apostles through the descent of the Holy Spirit.

The Ascension of the Lord definitively highlights the fulfillment of the mission of Christ, and the sending of the Holy Spirit is the beginning of the salvation of the human race. In the Church of Christ, through the Holy Spirit, the commandment to spread the Good News to the ends of the world has become a perpetual spiritual work carried out by the Church. Framed in the members of the Church, it contextualizes the personal human contribution in the missionary activity of the ecclesial liturgical space. In this way the work of preaching, as the mission of the Church, becomes the nature of the Church.

The Divine Liturgy, which is the center of church worship. It is the ontological source that updates the work of salvation done by the Holy Spirit in the Holy Mysteries. Through the Divine Liturgy the communion of those who believe in Jesus Christ is enriched, this is why the Divine Liturgy is the first missionary means of the Church which reveals to the world the missionary character of the Incarnation of the Son of God and the preaching dimension of the Holy Eucharist through the work of the Holy Spirit.

The missionary concept of the Liturgy after the Liturgy reveals how the Holy Eucharist, through thanksgiving, manifests in the world the work of the Spirit as an expression of the personal works of the faithful. The fulfillment of the Christed commandments is the re-experience of the Savior's life, which is why their mission is similar to that of church ministers. As members of the Church, incorporated into the Lord Jesus Christ, they participate fully in the threefold ministry of Jesus Christ the Savior by performing the missionary work of the Church beyond the walls of the

place of worship after attending the Divine Liturgy. The laity are apostles of Christ through the life they lead after participating in the Eucharistic moment, becoming examples of authentic and eloquent Christian living in society.

Through them the Church continues her missionary work outside the liturgical service. All liturgical services are fundamentally missionary, but through the lives of the faithful the Church extends its liturgical dimensions to all horizons of the world. Believers who participate in the Liturgy are missionaries with rights, but especially with full duties.

The Divine Liturgy reiterates the moments in the life of the Savior, and in this way the faithful, as participants in this event saturated with deification, become an integral part of the missionary work of the Church. It is a missionary reality that has begun since the formation of the Church and will be perfected with all creation in the Church, when there will be no time, no space, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ the Savior.

In conclusion, the philanthropic experience is the expression of the liturgical experience. The help of the poor and those at bodily and spiritual risk is part of the work of the Church and of the Orthodox missionary whose role is to watch over and make heard the wishes, the problems and social needs of the flock given to her for herding, by promoting initiatives that develop social policies and mobilize communities in carrying out the Eucharistic work of Christ in the world.

Therefore, the role of communion with Christ in the liturgical space must be fruitful. The missionary theologian, the Holy Eucharist, must shed more light on the practical dimension, in this sense, the Orthodox priest, in his capacity as missionary, it must be part of religious associations and foundations that operate under the Church's direction.

Through their missionary and philanthropic activity, the Church constitutes projects that respond to the problems of a religious community that can be extended, as a contextual missionary model, beyond its borders.

Finally, following the missionary discourse we have made through this research, we conclude that the Church has solutions for the challenges of the contemporary world. The secularization, globalization and consumerism that characterize the times in which Christian believers live, causing diversity devoid of authenticity and beneficial competition to the articulation of the human being to the divine universals of existence, he finds his answer in the work of contextualization that the Orthodox missionary has to learn.

In today's world, this spiritual process begins at the parochial level in the Orthodox context, by articulating the themes related to migration and diaspora that challenge the ecclesial nature of the contemporary Eastern Christian liturgical space. The cultivation and maintenance of an Orthodox conscience, through the pastoral work of the Church towards her children and the activation of the catholicity of the Church, represent ways of reviving the spirit of Holy Tradition. The disordered postmodern climate, lacking historical landmarks and presented as a fascinating intergalactic future, includes Christ as a God of all gods, and in this way, he manages to generate in the mind of today the hedonistic alternative to religious relativism.