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**THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE
CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY**

-PhD Thesis Summary-

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Introduction

The systematic exposition of the relationship between the challenges of the contemporary world and the way in which missiology as a science seeks to solve them is the key of the work entitled: *The Mission of the Church and Young People in Contemporary Society*. The central objective of the thesis focuses on the desire to alert those who are involved in the life of the Church, but also the postmodern society, that the new generation of young people is an allegory of the best seed of the Sower Parable. This seed must not be stifled by the negative effects of postmodern society. In this context, the doctoral thesis may have as an equivalent title: *The effects of postmodernism on the spiritual and psychological health of young people*.

The founding of the Church in the unseen form by the sacrifice on the Cross of the Savior Jesus Christ (Acts 20:28) has embraced the salvation of the human race and the entire ecclesial community was actually enriched by new life (Romans 6: 4). In that mystery of the rising from the dead (1 Corinthians 15: 12-22), all the beings built by God were embedded in a synergy of divine works, fulfilling and being perfected through Jesus Christ all in all (Ephesians 1, 23).

The kingdom of God was prepared for man, but man had to discover the mystery of faith, love, and hope. In order to guarantee success, the man needed an affectionate support that would guide his steps towards the goal. Convinced of the limit of his existence and power, man sought to advance forever with powers similar to that of the technological elements he had discovered in the profane world, but he has found that this last leap does not provide the necessary opportunity for success. For this reason, the man admitted his guilt established by disobedience act, humbled himself to the union with the Son of God, to exalt, to regain *κυριότητα* - "prince of the universe". The fulfillment of the purpose proposed by man was fully realized through the Holy Eucharist, but also through the missionary work of the Church that guided its steps to success.

Through the Church's participation in the missionary work of Jesus Christ to preach the gospel of righteousness, man was guaranteed deification. The fact that the Church possesses a pragmatic character determined by the event of Pentecost, shows how it acts towards those who are sanctified members.

The penetration of the Church's mission into the profane framework of contemporary society defines the action of the Church's responsibility towards the whole building of God. The missionary work of the Church is practiced on the

basis of man's desires to experience all that are of the world, but to remain at the same time united with eternity. This has outlined in time a paradox to which Church had to find a solution. The exigency of the Church's responsibility towards its members determined its social extension, starting from the church at home, which is represented by the family environment in which the young person developing. But the triangle of the full formation of a young man is determined not only by the family, but also by the school and the Church, who through their work tries to fulfill the commandment of God, to raise the youth to the time when they become full of (John 15: 5), perfect in all things (Matthew 5:48).

The responsibility of the Church towards the new generation of young people is an actual concept determined by the challenges of the contemporary society in which they operate. Due to transition factors, the new generation of young people does not have enough experience to blur the negative effects stemming from the ideologies of postmodernism. For this reason, the Church tried through the religious education to offer, free of charges to its members, to provide real support to new generations of young people. Thus, the organic nature of the Church as a model of religious education expresses the connection between community life and the threefold service of the Savior Jesus Christ. In the lives of young people, faith is particularly important and can symbolize a common language with that of the Creator. The dialogue between the youth and God will reflect what is missing today's society, obedience. Based on this reason, the Church's desire, but also the aim of the present thesis is to realize a society that education is not directed only towards themselves, but also towards each other, which means that the completion of the new generation of young people may be the extent of religious education of their participation and identification with the life of the Church.

The teaching of the Holy Fathers has always been a necessary guide for Christians in order to know the God in Persons. Today, when there is the freedom to express the faith everyone can see a fierce departure from the religious element. The reasons that have led to this state of degradation or alteration of the image of God in man are multiple but best resonate with the challenges posed by postmodern society. The image of the surrounding reality becomes increasingly obscure by the negative effects that contemporaryism produces through its structures.

On new paradigms emerging in the space of society, the Church seeks to provide the most viable solutions to re-induce the state of normality. Mobility and dynamism of the Church have always shown that it can regenerate according to the needs of its

members, with the same rigor and value as hers Source. In this note, the efforts of the Church to keep spiritual health and psychological health of its members, according to St Paul: "maintain the unity of the Spirit" (Ephesians 4: 3), must be for youth a practical guide to living according to God's commandments. This advice becomes the reality of the relationship between the Church's mission and personal mission of each member who must remain in an unaltered state wisdom, patience, peace and kindness. Success occurs in the unity of faith, love and knowledge of God.

The mention of the Ephesians by Saint Apostle Paul in his epistle as some who are strangers to the word of God has a special role in the context of the youth mission. If the beauty of exposing the teaching of faith from the Apostle of the Gentiles has led the Ephesians to seek the source of the Truth, then the pastoral tact of the altar servants can guarantee the same success for the new generation of young men. These young people must reach "the unity of faith ... to the state of the perfect man, according to the age of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13). The new Areopagus in which the word builder of the soul can resonate must be synonymous with the place where the young man is active. Although the online environment does not seem appropriate for the development of spiritual life, there are however programmed and projects developed by the Church in this virtual environment that aim at developing the moral conscience of the new generation of young people.

Motivation and importance of the study

In my inner sensitivity to the new generation of young people and to the environment in which I have pursued my professional activities, the motivation to approach the theme: Church Mission and Youth in Contemporary Society has been the most appropriate step for me to signal the challenges of the contemporary world, but also the devastating effects that these challenges have on the spiritual health of young people. The space of the contemporary world is being invaded by new ideologies, which is why I have found a different niche of the exposure of the intrigues that take possession of both, the social framework and each individual. The new perspective of exposure to devastating phenomena has been formed on the basis of the cause-effect relationship, trying to point out that any deviation from the source of the Truth will bring suffering. This suffering must be understood to the extent of the spiritual, psychic and

physical imbalance which, once they take possession of the new generation of young people, conceals them into a void from which they will feel that they no longer escape.

Knowing the trials of this world, I have proposed that during religious lessons held in pedagogical practice and through subsequent professions of religion, I should address every challenge directly. Exposing the topics that directly govern the lives of young people has further motivated me for the effervescent spirit to identify pertinent answers. For this reason, in 2008, in the parish I had affiliated, I started a program with young people who, besides the philanthropic activities of aiding elderly people who were not transportable and those related to choral singing, included workshops on concise topics related to these challenges that lead young people to experience a different life.

Besides the didactic activities and the parish programs that have focused on the challenges of the contemporary world, I tried to briefly present these secular challenges also in my graduation and dissertation thesis. For this reason, I was urged to thoroughly investigate the phenomena resulting from such moral slip and to present them in a current note within the doctoral thesis. For this, I used my database, which I brought an update and integrating an inter-confessional perspective. To accomplish this, I have participated in many conferences, as a result of which I have acquired knowledge and views different from the original ones, which she has exposed in a systematic order, from the desire to find the shortest time possible a solution to the problems faced by young people.

The dynamic spirit has made me, in my PhD thesis, to use questionnaires and interviews personally made by myself to emphasize the desire to fade in the short term the negative effects of the challenges presented.

Based on this desire, I have named the thesis: *The Mission of the Church and Young People in contemporary society*, in the desire to express the importance of such a subject that must be investigated by all those who wish to make a good start in their lives. Of course, choosing such a title would not have been sufficient if it was not supported by the importance of the subject presented. In this sense, I relied on the accounts of a friend who has experienced a great deal of these secular phenomena. The effects produced were devastating and this led to the construction of such a thesis. The importance of the study is not only supported by the quality of the observer, but by the reality and the severity of the effects that the postmodernism challenges pose on the spiritual, mental and physical health of young people.

The course of my theological work is about priestly ministry, which is why I wish for a thorough understanding of the reasons that lead to the removal of the youth from religion and faith. Looking at things from this perspective, I have imposed a thorough understanding of the current social framework. Young people must be raised in the spirit of ancestral faith, education must be implemented with much tact, that is why I have published a volume: *Triumph - a Journal to Adolescents*, which is meant to provide young people with a chart of the spiritual-moral imperial path in a desecralized society.

Looking at things from the perspective of theological and pedagogical activity, the work could be a useful tool for presenting secular challenges. This thesis must be made available to the teachers and religious lecturers who address this so-called subject, but especially to the young people who are burdened with new perspectives on society and who want to return to the authenticity of the faith, to the purity of the moral norms.

The state of research

In the Church, young people present a privileged sector because they have a responsibility to continue the mission of preaching the gospel of the Savior Jesus Christ. That is why the problems they face and which could remove them from their apostolate have become the main subject of the Church mission that seeks to find a viable and permanent solution to their problems. Although many of the challenges of young people are subjected to come from the boundless universe of their thinking, contemporary society is the main culprit for encouraging and developing these problems. This has led to a whole range of researchers from different fields of expertise focusing on *young people - society*. In all these areas, missiology represents the most reliable approach because it used the positive results achieved throughout history, to which were added all the component structures: religious education, pastoral infallibility of the Church, etc.

Young people's development and progress have become a subject of real interest to society that has sought to shape future contributors to its own interests, and this has begun a sort of competition between the Church and society. Based on this, sociologists, theologians, psychologists and theorists have begun a dispute in trying to attribute their supremacy to the subject presented. Starting with the earliest researches, such as Vasile ISPIR, *Îndrumarea misionară a Bisericii Ortodoxe, 1922*, până la cea a autorului Danny

FRANKS, *People Are the Mission - How Churches Can Welcome Guests Without Compromising the Gospel Paperback*, 2018, missionologists have shown that their scientific segment is best suited to a general theme such as the *Church-Youth-Society*, because it is based on real situations arising from permanent dialogue with young people but also with a part of religious communities or those who wish to know the source of truth. The most representative works in this regard belong to foreign missionaries, such as Stephen BAYNE, *Mission is Response*, 1966; James STAMOOLIS, *Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology Today*, 1986; David BOSCH, *Transforming Mission - Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, 1991; Harvie CONN, *Eternal word and changing worlds - Theology, Anthropology and Mission in dialogue*, 1992; Donald MESSER, *A Conspiracy of Goodness-Contemporary Images of Christian Mission*, 1992; John PIPER, *Let the nations be glad! The supremacy of God in Missions*, 1993; Vinay SAMUEL/Chris SUGDEN, *Mission as Transformation - A theology of the whole gospel*, 1999; Eckhard SCHNABEL, *Early Christian Mission*, 2004; Paul HIEBERT, *The Gospel in Human Contexts-Antropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions*, 2009; Eric WRIGHT, *A Practical Theology of Missions-Dispelling the Mystery, Recovering the Passion*, 2010, and romanian missiology teachers as Gheorghe PETRARU, *Misiologie Ortodoxă*, 2002; Mihai HIMCINSCHI, *Biserica în societate - Aspecte misionare ale Bisericii în societatea actuală*, 2006; Valer BEL, *Misiune, Parohie, Pastorație - Coordonate pentru o strategie misionară*, 2006.

Based on this research, I have formed an overview and a niche that I have to pursue in order to discover unspoken spaces that could produce clear answers to the proposed theme. For this reason, in the first chapter of the thesis, Social Responsibility of the Church to the New Generation, I have proposed to highlight the supreme role of the Church, which is to bear the responsibility of its members, understanding in this context that the Church offers to young people all the means necessary for them to enter the field of God's kingdom. Studies by Paul BENWERE, *The Social Responsibility of the Church*, 1971; Peter van INWAGEN, *Moral Responsibility and Ontology* 2000; Anne CONZEMIUS/Jan O'Neill, *Building Shared Responsibility for Student Learning*, 2001; Osagie OBASOGIE, *Social Responsibility as a professional virtue*, 2004; Nafsika ATHANASSOULIS, *Morality, Moral Luck and Responsibility*, 2005; Martin FISCHER, John, *My Way - Essays on Moral Responsibility*, 2006; Karen EVANS, *Learning, Work and Social Responsibility*, 2009; Gareth EVANS, *The Responsibility to Protect - From an Idea to an International Norm*, 2009; Larry CHURCHILL, *The Languages of Fate and Moral*

Responsibility, 2012; Neil LEVY, *Cousciousness – Moral Responsibility, 2014*, was a milestone for me to really understand the meaning of responsibility. Starting from the image I have formed on the basis of biblical sources, I wanted to present the concept of Church responsibility in another form that is more accessible to understanding. For this reason, the first chapter of the thesis is the corner stone, the contents of this chapter containing data on the extensive character of the mission of the Church, which seeks to make the contemporary youngster aware of the beauty, the stability and the fullness of the divine grace salvation shares fully. The novelty of this first chapter is based on the elements that show the Church's ability to remain in a state of wakefulness over their members , especially young people, to whom it is possible to develop to the extent of perfection . This does not indicate a simple assimilation process, but an incentive for young people to develop internal missionary work. In other words, the Church reveals to youngsters the ability to divide the world's mysteries, but also to sponsor them in the same time as the purpose of permanently enlivening the spiritual experiences that came with the discoveries. By discovering himself, the young man will succeed in developing that internal missionary mission from which will spring the desire to reform the way of collective government. In this sense, the young man will no longer lose himself in the whirlpool of the contemporary society, but will become a symbol of his own collective responsibility. For this reason I have proposed the theme: *The social responsibility of the Church toward the new generation*, comprising three key issues: The general concept of responsibility, whose source of information we hold as a result of bibliographic research; Mission of the Church seen through her ability to care for new generations of young people - something that is includes the essence of the proposed theme which, although researched by other authors, did not encompass the elements of religious education, and Internal missionaryism - which includes the newest perspectives on how young people can cope with the challenges of contemporary society that have negative effects on their spiritual and mental health. My wish is that the current state of research on the proposed theme should be developed to such an extent that the title of the first chapter of the doctoral thesis be a project that needs to be developed by the Orthodox Church at national level. Within this project, I would like young people to be made aware that they have the duty to create an internal missionary profile, that religious education is the first stage in its realization, that a joint work together with the mission of the Church will guarantee a healthy, normal and prosperous society.

With regard to the second chapter, my research led me to the conclusion that the proposed subject : *The Attitude of Young People Towards Postmodernism and Its Consequences*, was a real concern to many sociologists, theologians and academics. Based on the studies of Laurence CAHOONE, *From Modernism to Postmodernism - An Anthology*, 1996; Savatie BAȘTOVOI/Nicolae BALOTĂ/Andrei KURAEV/Dumitru CRUDU, *Ortodoxia pentru postmoderniști*, 2001; Chistopher BUTLER, *Postmodernism*, 2002; Daniel CORBU, *Postmodernismul pe înțelesul tuturor*, 2004; David HARVEY, *Condiția postmodernității*, 2002; Richard APPIGNANESI/Chris GARRATT, *Câte ceva despre Postmodernism*, 2003; Gheorghe ISTODOR, *Postmodernismul - provocarea majoră pentru misiunea Bisericii creștine*, 2005; Vasile NECHITA, *Postmodernitatea - ieșire din creștinism*, 2005; Ion POPESCU, *Ortodoxie și Postmodernism*, 2005; Gheorghe PETRARU, *Paradigme conceptuale moderniste și postmoderniste și impactul lor asupra teologiei și misiunii Bisericii*, 2005; Daniel CORBU, *Postmodernism și Postmodernitate în România de azi*, 2008; Niall LUCY, *A Dictionary of Postmodernism*, 2016, I have begun a true research of the elements that make up the postmodernist stream trying to find the weakest link that could break this chain of corruption.

If the latest research has stopped emphasizing the concept of secularized or indifferent religious, I have discovered that postmodernism also used other means to broaden its doctrinal horizon. *Mass media* and *oriental religious dynamism* have become two vast structures that serve postmodernism with a special vocation, constantly feeding its profane spirit. Starting from Debra SPITULNIK, *Anthropology and Mass-media*, 1993; Sara STOVE, *Religion and the Mass-media - Audiences and Adaptations*, 1997; Kenneth THOMPSON/Anita SHARMA, *Secularization, Moral Regulation and the Mass-media*, 1998; Ion ALBULESCU, *Educația și Mass-media*, 2003, concerning the influence of television or the perishable manipulation of the Internet, until Shiva SAMHITA, *Cartea Secretelor din Hatha și Tantra-Yoga*, 1993; Vilma LAVANI, *Yoga pentru sex*, 2004; Bija BENNET, *Yoga emoțională - Cum poate trupul să vindece mintea*, 2004; Ioan FILARET, *Creștinism și yoga*, 2011; Satynanda PARAMAHAMSA, *Yoga-Sutra*, 2012, which talks about the sinking of Christianity through Oriental practices, postmodernism has shown itself to be a true supporter of these mass globalization methods.

Based on the spirit of observation, I have found that the liberal manifestation of postmodernism can be diminished to the extent that it is subject to criticism. Permanent evaluation of the key points to which it is directed, regularly highlighting the negative effects it produces on the mental, spiritual health of young people, fighting through

Christian doctrines, etc. will guarantee success in this perspective. My wish is that these stages of research on the effects of postmodernism should remain anchored in the past without any possibility of evolution. As far as the flattening of evolution is concerned, society will return again to Christian values and young people will have adequate spiritual and social progress.

Driven by the desire to explore a wider area of the challenges contemporary society brings to the life of young people I have proposed for the third chapter : *The Christian family under the challenges of contemporary society*, a clear analysis of the effects of postmodernism that influenced the basic cell of society as well. In order to show the gravity of the consequences, I have chosen to present a study on the issue of divorce. Such research was not presented in a Romanian Orthodox theological note, which is why the subchapter titled : *Divorce* , is a contribution to this. Starting from autorilor Craig EVERETT/Sandra Volgy EVERETT, *Divorțul sănătos – 14 etape ale divorțului și recăsătoririi*, 2008; Beniamin FĂRĂGĂU, *Divorțul și Recăsătoria – Deși Dumnezeu urăște despărțirea în căsătorie, El nu întoarce spatele problemei*, 2009; Vasilios PAPADAKIS, *Teologia Ortodoxă despre divorț*, 2011, I have shaded the line that defines the exaggerated overcrowding of husbands for love received through the blessing of the Mystery of Marriage. The presence of divorce in the bosom of modernity seems to be a normality and this fact proves the state of health of society. Of course, this last critical threshold of the relationship between the two spouses can add to it other challenges that postmodernism has brought with its evolution. New types of family are a paradox of traditional society, the basis of discrepancy being reversed by the antithesis of terms that define new concepts. If the term family defines a union between two people, then the single parent family variable is not basis because it is a contradiction in terms as the family with same sex partners.

Studies show that the postmodern society in which the young man lives today has different principles and landmarks than traditional society. Due to the unpleasant effects of science and technology, the young man has changed his attitude towards the world by trying out new means and techniques to find solutions to his problems. The world of the contemporary young man is the world of possession, of material slavery, everything is reduced to profitability. The young man knows the richness of the world, submits it, but forgets God, who created him. This phenomenon of the transition from theocentricism to anthropocentrism now bears the name of secularization. Society no longer preserves its values, young people have no examples,

indifference appears. Certainly rejecting the truth of spiritual life, refusing to communicate with God, egocentrism, drugs, oriental religions, religious relativism seem to be the most common challenges that lead to the dissolution of heavenly harmony, producing a different identity in the young man's being.

For this reason, through a social and missionary action, the Church wishes to offer the future generation of Christians all that is necessary for salvation. When the church is caring, the young man must reach the religious feeling that is the depth of life and the act through which the light of Christ can be seen. In this sense, missiology must always respond to the nature of the age, to take account of the circumstances in which those to whom it is addressed. The purpose of missionology and mission is a permanent struggle with the world, time, temptation. The mission of the Church in today's society is nothing but the revival of the moral state that the world needs.

Structure of the thesis

In an attempt to elaborate a doctoral thesis in an academic note with a solid structure of information, I have approached the latest bibliographic sources, and this has made it possible to systemize the work in a fair and concise way. The paper received a classic formula, based on chapters and subchapters, to which I added appendices. Not really neglected was how the title of the thesis had to correspond to its structure. Moreover, in the thesis, I attempted to see the main idea on every page written precisely from the desire to draw a warning signal to the reader on the disasters that the new ideologies produce for the mental, spiritual and physical health of young people. This aspect was built on the basis of the subject's elasticity, which may have different views or prompt solutions to which the reader will follow.

Although an academic structure follows, the PhD thesis: The mission of the Church and the young people in contemporary society, presents the subject in a reverse timeline. In this sense, in the first part of the thesis, I presented what was to be, in fact, its last part, namely the answer that the Church offers to the secularized and deacralized society. The inversion of the chapters was based on my desire to show that the first reality of life is Truth. So, thesis begins with the teaching that the Church addressed to the world forever preaching the word of God incessantly. Moreover, first part the paper presents the best answer to the challenges that the new generation of young people face. The subtlety of this particularity clearly seeks to point out that young men are

obliged to preserve their identity of "image and likeness". Although subjected to criticism, such an approach must be understood in the spirit of Truth. Young people must start on the road of life with full awareness that Jesus Christ cares for them, and the Church, seen as an extension of His Body, which can guarantee their salvation. The attributes that the Church possesses represent the key to success in the struggle with the challenges of this world, therefore they're highlighting was the first step that I wanted to achieve in the elaboration of the thesis.

Considering the multitude of aspects presented, the thesis asks the reader for maximum attention because its content is dressed in a dogmatic note with philosophical nuances. In this sense, the first chapter of the thesis, *The Social Responsibility of the Church Towards the New Generation*, was elaborated on the basis of a fair relationship between the six subchapters and the six attributes that the Church possesses: mission, evangelism, testimony, ministry, pastoral service. or this reason, in the first subchapter, *Current Missionary Considerations*, I have highlighted a chart of the contemporary missionary context, starting from the moment when the Apostles call the witnesses of the Truth, to the universality of this act. It must be noted that in the contemporary missionary context, the Church is struck by the wall of nihilist ideologies that add weight to the intended purpose - the preaching of the Kingdom of Heaven. However, the first subchapter does not want to be a negative reflection of the space in which the Church must exercise its mission, but a warning signal directed at the society that should maximize the interest in religion, not ignore it as is happening today.

In the second subchapter, I have presented in a clear form : *The missionary profile of the Church* , highlighting its specific features as well as the fundamental constitutions of the Church - the Eucharist and eschatology. Shaping an image of the Church's mission was not a great effort to me because the However, the first subchapter does not want to be a negative reflection of the space in which the Church must exercise its mission, but a warning signal directed at the society that should maximize the interest in religion, not ignore it as is happening today. reality of the subject was visible from the beginning: love, dialogue, ministry.

Starting from the premise that the mission of the Church is its effort to act against all the vicissitudes of society and to bear the responsibility of its members, I have called the third subchapter : *Interconfessional missionary features* , not the desire to emphasize the missionary completeness of the Orthodox Church through its multitude of programs, but to show that mission is a universal reality that must fully present Jesus Christ as the

Savior of the world. The idea of the missionary responsibility of the Church has been extensively exposed in subchapter four, *The Concept of Social Responsibility Through the Mission*, my motivation being to emphasize the capacity of the Church to capture the entire communion of believers in the censorship of its love. The responsibility of the Church is not an ideological work, but a real one, and this is accomplished by the benefits that it pours over its members. Moreover, the fifth chapter, *Moral Responsibility as ecclesiastical anthropology*, presents the progress of the missionary work through the filter of responsibility, showing that young people can grow harmoniously because of their coexistence in the plan of God. Thus, the responsibility of the Church becomes a form of spiritual incorporation where the new generation of young people will maximize their quality of sons of God.

In the last subchapter: *The Premises of Responsibility Through Religious Education*, I have sought to impress on the minds of young people that their development is reflected in the efforts they are making toward themselves and towards others. The synergy between family and church education is the key to any response the young man has to offer when he is struck by the challenges of life.

In the second chapter of the thesis, *The Attitude of Young People Towards Postmodernism and its Consequences*, I have directed my attention to the space in which the Church exercises her gospel preaching mission. Unfortunately, it is defined by a crisis of contemporaneity, inappropriate phenomena and mentalities, facts that put into difficulty the programs of the Church. In the first subchapter, *The Postmodern Society*, I highlighted the historical progress of society that it should have reflected an image of spiritual, moral, economic, and political perfection, but it appeared to be full of disgrace, immorality, incapable of governing the beauties of this world. Due to these malfunctions, that cause-effect relationship appeared. The multitude of inconsistencies in social systems has overwhelmed man's spiritual capacity, for which he began to become interested in new types of ideologies. *The secularized man*, the second subchapter, clearly illustrates the title that the contemporary man has come to wear. Although strange as a language, this title fully reflects the rationale of a society that focuses on productivity rather than on moral valences. The main feature of the secularized man is: *Religious Indifference*, title I gave the third subchapter of the second chapter. This indifference does not refer to a state of indifference, but in an attempt to destroy the truth, value and Christian spirit. The effects of rational indifference are aimed at both the individual and the environment in which it operates.

Driven by the desire to present the consequences that postmodernism and secular society have on the spiritual and psychological health of young people, I turned my attention to the adjuvants of these phenomena – the mass-media illusions. In this sense, the subchapter: *Utopic aflux of mass-media* presents many negative elements arising from the use by young TV and the Internet. The aim of the technology was to provide information in the shortest possible time, but with the passage of time technology became a tool of political interests and this is proved in the presented thesis. Starting from the influence of television, passing through the manipulation and perfidious action of the internet and ending with the devastating effects of social networks, I have reported the media abuse of mental and spiritual health of young people, asking them a lot of discernment when using virtual platforms.

The progressive effects of *media* have determined a sort of absurd curiosity, which is why many of these platforms have begun to seek information about the spiritual elements of non-Christian religions. Delighted by ritual practice, color and play, many young people have started practicing *yoga*. Fifth Subchapter: *Oriental religious dynamism*, represents devastating effects that yoga does for the soul and body. For this reason, I have presented, under the aegis of a practical-effect report, the doctrine of the greatest religions of the Oriental world, urging young people to regard these practices only as cultural manifestations, not as some to be experienced.

The third chapter of the thesis, *The Christian Family under the Challenges of Contemporary Society*, is for me the key to the whole thesis. Although only a part of the chapter's title corresponds to the general theme of the thesis, choosing a subject like the family is based on a personal desire to demonstrate that any deviation from this plenary structure contributes to spiritual, psychological or physical disasters. For this reason, I started a broad research on how the family should be seen in the space of contemporary society. This research was materialized in the first subchapter titled *Marriage Theology and Postmodern Ethics*, in which I compared the traditional family model that includes the connection of the love of the spouses to which is added the blessing of God and the contemporary family model seen as a closed system which includes tasks and obligations that spouses have to fulfill in order to secure a special social status.

The elements that come out of the modern family structure have been condensed into a new subchapter, *New Family Types*, in which I have criticized the new terminology given to an incorruptible structure. Single-parent family, concubinage, or same-sex family

have become viable terms used by contemporary society to define a structure close to the traditional one, but in reality these terms define, in fact, incapacity, irresponsibility and lack the courage of partners to listen to the voice and the teaching of Holy Scripture, which is a true guide to the founding of an authentic family. Marked by the desire to govern all that is around him, the young man abdicates in the face of reality, he becomes a partisan of disobedience, and this brings with it the soul's death, thereby understanding the spouse's inability to respond to the demands of the couple. Based on this dysfunction, I called the penultimate chapter *Divorce*, wanting to express strongly that this practice does not correspond to any religion or any ideology freely expressing in terms concise that there is no real reason why a husband and wife to divorce. Research on the act of separation the couple included a detailed exegesis of the pages of Holy Scripture and the final conclusion of the research corresponds to the text of Mark 10, 9 - *what God has joined together, let man not separate*. Last chapter, *Young people and spiritual life within the family* and represents a strong response given the challenges it addresses family postmodern society. In the immeasurability of the negative effects produced by this society, however, there is the possibility of spiritual progress visible within the family, but it is based on the key elements of Christian life: prayer, fasting, patristic reading, and the Eucharist.

The structure of the doctoral thesis ends with an annex that takes the form of an interview that I have done by a young man whose effects of postmodernism have produced serious imbalances at the spiritual, mental and physical levels.

Based on extensive research which are added the case study, I presented a series of conclusions designed to awaken the conscience new generation of young people. The latter has the duty to preserve unaltered the grace received by the Sacrament of the Holy Baptism, to progress spiritually by serving together the Church of Jesus Christ, to vigorously oppose the challenges that arise during their lives, and to find all means to blur the negative effects of postmodern society on spiritual and mental health.

Methods of research

To illustrate the most coherent and concise topic that I am chosen, I wanted to use as many research methods as possible. The goals that I set them requested knowledge to develop the proposed theme. By applying them, I have been seeking to find immediate solutions to the proposed subject. Based on exploratory research, I focused my attention on descriptive and explanatory research as well as an impact or predictive research in an

attempt to find the fastest formula as the theme proposed to be considered a novelty in the field of the theological research. The application of the research methods was done in several stages.

The first stage is based on the theoretical research on the field of chosen case, in order to form a general idea. From this stage, I started researching the reference works, and then I analyze them by integrating into a database. The second stage included the formulation of some indicators that would lead me to the central point of the problem. I selected the information and comparing it, seeking to present impact content within the thesis, which would become interesting even for the unnoticed. In the last phase of the work, based on data interpretation and based on quantitative methods, I presented a case study related to the proposed theme and I set the general conclusions on the theme chosen.

Through the scientific approach presented, I have proposed to find a prompt response to the problems that young people face, so I relied on a specific research methodology. In order to guarantee my success, I briefly described the chosen topic, announcing the general research area: *Church, Youth, Challenges of the Contemporary World, Spiritual and Mental Health, The Effects of Postmodernism*. On the basis of the general theme, I approached the thesis in a pertinent note, relying on dense information sources and firm conclusions. Prepared mainly in the field of Christian pastoral ministry, the work dealt with a series of aspects of the sphere of missiology – *The Social Responsibility of the Church Toward the New Generation*, in the field of sociology – *The Attitude of Young People Towards Postmodernism and its Consequences* and that of psychology - *The Christian family under the challenges of contemporary society*. Regarding the predominant research flow, the present thesis was part of a scientific approach that wanted to be positive, but it was not lacking in critical approaches that aimed to explain the different concepts of how young people shape their future under the influence of postmodernism.

To obtain the data and then to analyze it, I have inserted both qualitative and quantitative methods. In collecting data, they were analyzed continuously and checked. Data analysis was carried out even at the time of their collection, which is why I used their qualitative research. For this, the data have been simplified, conceptualized, transformed, and the final information assembled in more accessible forms, which allowed me to formulate the conclusions that were validated by comparison.

Qualitative research has the role of generating consistent information needed for a thorough and general understanding of the overall context, allowing the main aspects of the research topic to be outlined, as well as diagnosing the situation, identifying hypotheses for future descriptive or causal research. The quantitative method sought to analyze the data to determine the aspects that describe the variables, the central trend and the dissemination of information.

At the level of the first chapter, the research was a theoretical one, based on the analysis of different concepts, notions and theories on the chosen subject. The transversal and the longitudinal method determined the presentation of the theoretical and empirical level of the subject. The result was a positive one, supported by the reality of the subject, the way the Church relates to its members, the responsibility of the new generations of young people, its saving work.

In the following chapters, I have used content analysis, qualitative / theoretical and quantitative / empirical research as research methods. In this case, the information analyzed was obtained by the non-partisan observation and document analysis method. At the same time, I used content analysis that took place in three stages: processing, exploiting the material, processing and interpreting the results. The purpose of using these methods was to present the new ideologies of postmodern society as real dangers to the spiritual health of young people.

Validation of the data analyzed was done through internal procedure, by reference to facts, but also by the external procedure, by confronting the results of other specialists who carried out similar research on the same subject. The external validation, although it seems to be limited to a certain social category, the *young people*, is in fact directed towards each generation of individuals. The particularity of validation is imposed by the specific aspects of each approach, the qualities and competences of the researcher, the nature of the theory and science to which research relates.

The feasibility of research has enabled data to be available for further research. The conclusion of the research has led to the same result throughout the work: the secular structure of postmodernism produces negative effects on the spiritual and psychological health of young people. The challenges that young people face is always current. For this reason, I have tried to expose the new ideologies of postmodern society through the bibliographic notes used. Their presentation in detail has shown that they can be criticized if viewed from a healthy, moral, religious point of view. Although more and more explored, this contemporary space offers new meanings to the structures that define it. The

attempt of researchers to discover the methods they govern is sometimes shattered by the ability of this contemporary system to continually update itself to new challenges that the Church has to face.

General conclusions, limits and perspectives of research

The tendency of contemporary society to privatize moral and canonical norms, as well as attitude appreciates of it in view of the spiritual progress of the youth, were the determinants for which I have the present scientific propelled present. Driven by the desire to find a practical formula to blur the negative effects of postmodernism on the spiritual and mental health of young people, I have found in missiology the answer that I am looking for. Missiology is the dialogue that the Church carries with the science, culture and ideologies of the time, but at the same time it is a bicomponent structure because it includes The teaching and the practice of the truths of faith. Concerned about the descriptive and the normative element of faith, the Church tries, through its missionary work, to send a warning signal to society, urging it to discern.

For a general theme like a *Church-Youth-Society*, I wanted to prove that behind technological, cultural, scientific progress there is a subliminal message that addresses young generations of young people. The information provided by him aims to change the structure of the traditional society based on morality and value. For this reason, I have tried, as through the novelty elements, it has brought me, to induce in the social consciousness e contemporary features that the true beauty of life is the spiritual health, mental and physical growth of its members, not fashion of the time.

Defined by a systematic structure, the thesis on which I proposed it presents in the form of a report the effect of the experiences of young people who choose to live in accordance with God's commandments or those proposed by *The New Age*. The discrepancy between the two structures is evident from the beginning. The title of the effects produced by society is synonymous with that of the challenges, which denotes that they have negative elements in their composition. Instead, young people who choose to live their lives to the teaching of faith are promised a Kingdom of Heaven, a place of eternity and joy. To elucidate this statement, I proposed in each chapter of the thesis to elaborate content in form cause effect. The novelty, which am identified as a result of the research, has materialized in the three subchapters of the whole work: *The premises of responsibility through religious education, Oriental religious dynamism and Divorce*.

The importance of exposing a concept like missionary responsibility through religious education can be counted as a first step towards a project that the Romanian Orthodox Church can develop at the national level. This project is based on the elements of Christian education and aims at developing a system by which the Church can uncover

the ability of young people to meet the challenges of contemporary society, but at the same time, to develop an internal missionary profile, so as to convey to the others the teachings received.

Of equal importance is also the subject of Oriental religious dynamism, which he represented for me a great effort to keep personal beliefs in balance with the teachings of these Oriental mystics. Dressed in attractive shapes, oriental techniques attract a large number of followers. Unfortunately, some of them come from the great Orthodox Christian mass, and this leads to a process of epistemization of traditional values or in other words, authentic spirituality becomes just an adjective of the last times. Focusing on this challenge not yet explored in the literature, I managed to get in in the substrate goes oriental orientations and to pull out to the surface the devastating elements that these practices produce in the way of thinking and relationships of young people.

Another novelty that I brought it to my research It is based on a clear analysis of the influence of postmodernism on the traditional family. The importance of this study has brought to light a pioneering subject of Orthodox theology Romanian - divorce. The lack of spouses' responsibility doubled by their inability to respond to the needs of the couple has caused a crack in the structure of the core cell of society. Unfortunately, this spiritual and physical break-up between the two partners has become a normality today, therefore, the study presented it rises like a variety of criticism against those who give credit to an ace Thereby consent. Relying on a thorough analysis of the Bible, I decided to formulate a firm answer against this act, answer synonym with that in the text of March 10, 9: "what God has joined together, let not man separate."

In an attempt to bring a novelty to research, I hit by certain barriers or limits. Depleting excess elements such as type challenges mass -media or those related to the ideologies of Oriental religions, would have led the subject to another area of interest, I expressed interest in these subjects in a collateral way. However, I tried to highlight in general, the negative effects they produce on the spiritual and mental health of young people, without referring to the positive aspects that they may mass -media produces them as a means of mass information. Another limit with which I confronted with the area of research. In the last chapter, *The Christian family under the challenges of contemporary society*, I would have liked to expose myself effects negative attitude derives from permissive society in an analysis note medical, to highlight the slippages that occur in the psyche and the physical.

In relation to the stage of other authors' research on the proposed topic, the work is intended to be considered as a topical or a new perspective on the challenges contemporary society faces towards younger generations. Of course, this research area offers a vast space of perception, but I focused on the key elements of young people's life: education, mass -media, Oriental mirage and family. For this reason, I expressed myself the desire for the rest of the elements such as drugs, vanity, alcohol, etc. to be studied in collaboration with other researchers, and the results to be recorded in a paper representative of the topic *The church - Youth - Society*.

The final result of my research is mirrored in the words of St. Paul: "Do not steal yourselves from the foreign teachings of many kinds" (Hebrews 13: 9), but "Rejoice forever." Pray continually, "Give thanks for all, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." Do not quench the Spirit, Do not despise prophecies, beware of all the appearance of evil "(1 Thessalonians 5: 16-22).

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