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**SUMMARY**

**COMMUNICATION AND MISSION. THE LANGUAGE OF THE CHURCH IN THE  
POST-MODERN ERA**

**COORDONATOR ȘTIINȚIFIC:**

**Pr. prof. univ. dr. habil. Mihai HIMCINSCHI**

**DOCTORAND:**

**Pr. Cătălin Marius RESCEANU**

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### **SUMMARY**

**Keywords:** communication, postmodernism, mission, confession, apostolate, language, globalization, secularization, digitalization, media, diaspora, communion.

Communication and mission, church language in the post-modern era is not a subject that has been researched enough in our country. In the Romanian language we do not have a rich bibliography on this subject. Studying a topic such as religious communication in the context of the media dominated society and the rapid evolution of new communication technologies can be considered risky, inappropriate or even meaningless, given the constitutive and functional differences of the two domains: religion and mass -media (modern means of communication). It is a great challenge to come up with such a theme in an age when new technologies have taken over all public spaces of wide interest, an age in which young people and not only get information with amazing speed, an age when information has changed. the size of time and space. The Church has her holy mission to confess and transmit the word of God, the giver of light, to guide all her children: The Church is not alienated from the world because it has the mission of God to serve and inspire, even when the world is hostile to it. For its part, the world cannot ignore the Church, because in its dramatic pursuits it inevitably hears the voice of the Creator and feels the power of the crucified love of Christ.

It is clear that the person, the creation of God, plays an important role in a world that is not united, where people are divided, led to individualism. The lack of real communication has no purpose of communication. The epicenter of world division is in the heart of man, in the inward man; and the division that is created in it goes beyond any external division.

Communication is an expression of God's love for / for people, a unique message-giving tool that brings man to communion. Communication is a *conditio sine qua non* for human life, a gift from God, which helps man in a social context to accumulate, through a complex process, rules of communication, exchange of information, ideas, opinions, knowledge. Christianity gave a spiritual, eucharistic meaning to the word communication, bringing it closer to the

participation of believers in communion with the Body and Blood of Christ the Savior. Both communication and communion are a sharing, a together-going, sharing and uniting. So we are not just talking about a simple exchange of information, but about a unity, a communion, as the ultimate goal of being together - of being one, according to the exhortation of our Savior Jesus Christ. Communication has become ubiquitous, we live in an era of communication and the communicative understanding has become even more present, due to the fact that people are increasingly involved in the production and exchange of information, in symbolic content of any kind.

Social life is embedded in communication, all the central aspects of social life revolve around communication. The digital society we live in - a society of diversity and minorities - is in a continuous and alert transformation, the dimensions of space and time are strongly affected and we are in a present that lives its future now. We are in a full and fast multimedia revolution, a process with many tools: internet, personal computer, cyberspace, all characterized by a common denominator, a video-view. The post-modern man is attracted to unknown places, which offer well-being, a better life, but with new rules, different from those known.

In this postmodern era, some essential references of human, cultural, religious and ethnic being are lost. The competitive spirit causes the modern man to give up values such as family, school, church and to enter into a well-developed system that manages to absorb it, imposing a precise pace of work. It is very difficult for the post-modern man, who belongs to a traditional religion, to embrace new moral / religious precepts, alien to his religious values. Man must always be at the center of society, he is the one that unites through communion and communication. Both communication and communion are strongly exposed to major transformations due to globalization. Globalization removes particularities and changes individuals and societies into an amorphous mass.

The man, being endowed with the gift of communication, is subject to new rules proposed by technology, rules that isolate, individualize, alienate him. The concern that the mass media must manifest today concerns precisely this aspect mentioned above, thus they are guilty of degrading the person and of human life, by promoting passions full of violence and individualism. God created man with the ability to converse with Him and with others. Any need to talk to one another and to wait for an answer is a divine commandment placed in

us. The Word, the Divine Logos, the Father's Named Son is defining in this loving interpersonal dialogue. The word of God is different from the words of men. The Holy Scripture teaches us about the properties of the divine word, which is: true (Psalm 33: 4), living and hardworking (Hebrews 4:12), nurturing (Amos 8, 11 and Matthew 4: 4), full of power (Luke 1: 37), healer (Matthew 8, 8), eternal (Matthew 24, 35) etc.

The logos is nothing but the name of Christ the One who became incarnate when the time appointed by God-Father was fulfilled. Communication is strongly linked to the word, it can exist without that distinct, fixed lexical unit - communication, because any communication process has a sacred foundation, which expresses an intention. The technological challenges propose a new approach regarding the reception of the word by people. It is obvious that today we are living a true paradox of communication without communion, a paradox that the virtual environment encourages. The Holy Apostle Paul teaches us that the Logos is the One who breathes, Who gives life, Who makes present and worker in the word of God throughout His creation (Hebrews 1: 1-2). The clear difference between the word or words of man and those of God is that the former are extinguished and disappear, but those of God are eternal and omnipotent: My words are spirit and life is (John 6,63) ... heaven and earth will pass, but My words will not pass away, says the Lord (Mt. 24:35). Man expresses, by word, his thoughts, desires, expectations, he is driven by personal desire, limited by knowledge, time and space; therefore his word is not as full as the Lord's.

The logos is a word, but at the same time it is also a reason. The given word must be believed. If God gave His Word, we believe Him. But the world we live in often proves the opposite, because people no longer trust the word given. It is no longer accompanied by fact and truth, becoming untrustworthy. The word changes everything in man, teaches him to love, to create, to have hope and trust, because "if anyone loves Me, says the Lord, He will keep My word" (John 14:23).

The system that gathers, places and arranges all these communicative signs - the words - is called language. We believe that there is a complete harmony between communication and language, because we communicate not only through words, but also through gestures, images or sounds.

Church language can only use the word of the Holy Scripture, which not only reduces itself to being a means of transmitting information, but represents that creative energy of the Logos.

Confession of God through words is one of the components of the Church's ministry and mission. The church language becomes that instrument that balances tradition with modernity, sacredness with accessibility. Even if lexicologists confirm the existence of a so-called conflict of primacy due to the relationship between Slavonisms, Greeks and Romanic neologisms, we cannot ignore the monumentality of the church language. Beyond its archaic character, the church language is constantly subject to dynamics of assimilation and incorporation of many new elements, many of them being, due to their provenance, incompatible with the religious style.

The present work is structured on five chapters, preceded by the content of the research and introduction; they are followed by the final conclusions and the bibliographic list. In the introduction are mentioned five distinct components, namely: argumentation of the theme, purpose of the paper, stage of the research, documentary basis and method of work. The introductory notions were used to familiarize us with the specificities of the communication sciences.

The first chapter, called Introductory notions about communication and language, includes some aspects related to the fundamental communication models, here being surprised the six communicative dimensions: message, communicator, listeners-public, transmitter, receiver, transmission channel. Special attention was given to the responsibility of the Church, school, family and the media in relation to the communication or transmission of information.

The second chapter, called Communication and mission in the context of the postmodern world; communication technology and its cultural, social and religious impact, highlight the current challenges of technology and their impact from a cultural, social and religious point of view. In a globalized, desacralized, secularized era, new technologies and communicative training processes have largely changed the way communication of all typologies is carried out. Also, this chapter presents what are the main effects that globalization has produced on the culture, identity, traditions, values and

principles of the Christian life and what is the mission of the Church in this dynamic of postmodern changes.

The third chapter, entitled Mission and dialogue. The church in the postmodern era, is a presentation of the current context of the postmodern society in which the Church fulfills its mission. Also, the missionary challenges, instruments and language used by the Church in this age of technological transformations, a world marked by hyperdigitalization, are analyzed. The apostolate and the confession of faith are two of the arguments that support the Church's mission by modern means of communication.

The fourth chapter, Communication and mission in the diaspora: challenges and limitations of the pastoral-missionary nature, presents us the role that the church language plays in preserving the national and religious identity of the Orthodox Christians in the diaspora.

Chapter Five, Language and Communication. The actuality of the message of the Church in the public space, makes a review of all the communicative instruments, which the Church has at hand to convey its message in this postmodern context. Church media, religious television and all other mass media are just some of the means of communication that contribute to the missionary activity of the Church.

The paper concludes with the final conclusions, intending to summarize, in a few points, clear and well systematized, the opinions presented during it. At the same time, from these conclusions one can be surprised the strong connection that exists between communication and the mission of the Church. It is noteworthy that the postmodern era brought with it new technologies, which are undergoing permanent change, these representing a real and complex missionary challenge, to which the Romanian Orthodox Church must respond pertinently and with much pastoral and missionary tact. The final conclusions also outline the novelty of the research, the relationship with the existing literature, the limits of the study, but also the logical ideas that remain open and can form a basis for future research on this topic.

The postmodern world, in a permanent movement, where new technologies are present in our daily lives, proposes us a continuous transformation of the human person, a technological man who is forced to learn and read through these communication tools.



The media, today, is the main tool that models and relaunches the patterns and lifestyles of modern human thinking. We can consider them a "guiding tool", it offers solutions and answers for the needs of all types of technological man today.

The Church's concern in this regard is to provide the opportunity to know the truth through the Word of God who is wise toward salvation.

Rapid changes, to which modern society is subject, push the Church towards a natural approach in terms of communication. The way the Church uses the means of communication and the facilities of the digital media to make religious education and catechetical and pastoral activities, better communication of the mother Church with the communities of the diaspora, is a great challenge today.

The church is aware that the means of social communication are important for the fulfillment of its mission, in the context of post-modernity, while maintaining a critical attitude about the way these means are used. It is very important that these mass social phenomena and the impact that they have on the development of humanity, do not leave the evangelical framework, the Christian Christian message.

The church has faced many situations caused by cultural changes and transformations. It took a lot of new energy, inspiration and imagination to proclaim the one Gospel of Jesus Christ. Today, if we think about the impact of the Internet and the new cultural context that technologies determine in terms of communication, surely we are talking about another decisive threshold. Also, cyber space is considered as a new frontier that opens at the beginning of this millennium, improving the culture of the Internet is another challenge that the Church faces.

Due to the influence of the media, the Church paid special attention to the reality of the parish, the missionary-pastoral image of the priest, who uses all the communicative tools.

We can also highlight some elements necessary for the mission of the Church in the postmodern era: a greater awareness of the believers that the Church exists for communication, communion and communion; communication and culture drive towards a renewed educational commitment, which allow us to achieve a concrete and enlightened discernment on the complex reality of today; we need to be more and more critical and attentive to everything that is offered to us through these communicative tools; to have a prophetic voice in all public debates, in order to defend Christian values and principles. At the

same time, there is an urgent need to undertake a broad educational activity of which the media are an integral part. The church must be in the service of the Word, thus fulfilling an effective missionary work, all the constituent elements of the communication are used by it in order to convey its message. Also, language is closely linked to communication, without knowing the codes of religious language we cannot talk about clear, correct and efficient communication. The basic institutions of a society, the family, the school, the Church and even the media, have a great responsibility in relation to the communication. Sending correct, true, objective information is beneficial for the whole society, if they are not true, they are not clear and they mask personal or group interests, then we are talking about wrong communication that produces evil.

The mission of the Church is God's action to call people to perfection through the Savior Jesus Christ. The natural motive of the mission of the Church can only be the love of God, which represents the absolute criterion of all missionary activities.

The role of religious language in preserving the identity and faith of the Orthodox Romanians in the diaspora is very great. The churches of the Orthodox parishes in the diaspora have become, on Romanian soil, something from home, the Romanian family, the place that brings us together, the joy of meeting. The missionary activity carried out by these parishes is a special one, here they take care of the ancestral faith, the national language, the traditions and customs, the Romanian port, those who are in difficulty, those who need help. The language of the country of adoption substitutes in a natural, natural way, the mother tongue. The greatest danger is the fact that all children born in these countries of adoption, mostly do not know the language of their parents, here the Church intervenes through its programs of learning and cultivating the national language. The school naturally fits into the ecclesial space, it cannot stay away from the Church, its teaching, its language.

The mission of the Church never changes, it works all over the place and in time, using all the tools to transmit its message. The main role of the missionary activity is to serve and to give life through the Word of its world, it does not depart from this world which is constantly subject to change.

The church uses all the means of mass communication, is present in the public space, looks for a language appropriate to the postmodern world, in order to become understood.

One of the topics brought to the attention of the National Church Assembly on February 10, 2020, was related to the mission carried out by the BOR through the Press Center of the Romanian Patriarchate, as stated in the report of the Social and Media Communications Commission. There is a clear concern about how the message of the Church is adapted to the present times. The temptation of secularized language is a clear danger that we observe very easily in communication, but much care and caution is needed in adapting the language of the Church.

Saint Vincentiu de Lerin, said that, you must be careful when learning something in a new form not to learn new content in the faith.

It is a very large missionary work of the Church, which is expanding and producing more intense communication (see Twitter and Instagram). The presence of the Church on social networks through the Basilica News Agency is highly appreciated, and the effects it produces from a communicative point of view are manifold. The orthodox message must be clean and elegantly formulated and take into account the evolutions in the Romanian society and in the world. The church must constantly adapt its communication strategies to the mental and cultural relief of the Christian today connected to the increasingly technologized and influenced world by its challenges. (from the word of Patriarch Daniel on the occasion of presenting the report of the Social Commission and media communications in the plenary session of the ANB).

We also mention the Online Church project, started in September 2019, which has set out to offer some recommendations on the behavior of a parish on Facebook, and from November on Instagram, the following material proposed by the Basilica, will include more recommendations on Instastory and IGTV.