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THE GREEK-CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ROMANIA  
FACING THE CHALLENGES OF THE POST-MODERN SOCIETY

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**Abstract:** Starting mostly with the second half of the 20th century, the churches and the religious communities are facing the challenges raised by the process of secularization, which is considered by some sociologists of religion as irreversible. The most affected ones were / are the traditional churches and the most obvious area where this phenomenon has become very visible is the Western Europe. This study aims to analyze the situation of the traditional churches in Romania, with a special focus on the Greek-Catholic Church, from the same perspective: the impact of post-modernity over a church which is very much orientated towards the West, which is becoming more and more urban and is still passing through a complicated process of structuring and transition. The study underlines the fact that one of the answers to the problems raised by the process of secularization is based on the way in which the ecclesiastical community is built and on how deep is the consciousness of the confessional identity rooted in the mind and the soul of the believers.

**Key Words:** secularization, post-modernity, sociology of religion, confessional identity, traditional church, minority church, autonomy, persecution, The Greek-Catholic Church

With this study<sup>1</sup>, we aim to analyze the current situation of one of the traditional churches in Romania, focusing on the particular case of the Greek-Catholic Church, in the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, facing the challenges raised by the contemporary, post-modern world, having as methodological basis, an inter-disciplinary perspective which combines historical research with a series of conclusions formulated by the sociology of religion. The sociology of religion studies religion in its social context, analyzing its effects on the society, but also the influence had by the society and its evolution over the religious life<sup>2</sup>. Applying this definition to a real social context, we will refer to the evolution of the Romanian Uniate Church in the last decades, to the effects of the changes in the present society over the spiritual life of its believers, to the modification of its profile of identity; and finally, we shall try to formulate some practical suggestions regarding the ways in which the church could better adapt to the current situation, starting from the ideas presented by some of the leading world researchers of the sociology of religion.

### **The Greek-Catholic Church in Romania after 1990**

We shall start our analysis with some observations referring to the current situation of the Greek-Catholic Church in Romania:

- The Greek-Catholic Church reorganized itself after the fall of communism, in the very last days of 1989, having nowadays an institutional structure with 5 dioceses, spread mostly in Transylvania, Banat, Maramureș, Crișana – very few centers can be found in the other regions of the country, except Bucharest. From the ecclesiological point of view, the Greek-Catholic Church is a local church, part of the Catholic Church, with a special rank – Major Archbishopric, thus having a special status and prestige. From this perspective, the Greek-Catholic Church benefits from an enlarged autonomy inside the Catholic Church. This could lead to a state of isolation inside the Catholic world as a whole, or inside the Eastern Catholic one in particular.
- The Greek-Catholic Church is facing a special situation: as a result of the Communist persecution, the number of its believers is very much reduced as compared to the decades before 1948; thus, its character as a minority church is more emphasized today, in a country with a very large Orthodox majority: in the 1930 census, 13.108.227 people were Orthodox, 1.427.391 were Greek-Catholic, and 1.234.151 were Roman-Catholic<sup>3</sup>; whereas in the 2002 census, 18.817.975 people were Orthodox, 191.556 were Greek-Catholics and 1.026.429 were Roman-Catholics<sup>4</sup>.
- The Greek-Catholic Church has to manage a very tense relationship with the Romanian Orthodox Church, and in some situations also with the Romanian state<sup>5</sup>, as issues related to the

properties and the churches held before 1948 has led to numerous conflicts especially in the 1990s. Local conflicts continue to emerge because of problems related to the building of churches, to the alternative celebrations of the liturgies, to the cemeteries, possible conversions, land etc.

A special situation has been constituted by the profile of identity of the Greek-Catholic believers after 1990. The phenomenon of people “returning” to the Uniate Church registered a more intense wave in the first years after 1989, but slowed down rapidly, reaching currently a state of stability, a stagnation in the process of “conversions”. According to the present situation, this phenomenon could be considered stopped for at least one decade and a half. From the point of view of age, the solid core of the Uniate community consisted for years of those people who survived the Communist persecution, who loved the Greek-Catholic spirituality without restrictions before 1948, those who knew or saw personally the martyr bishops of the church or the members of the clergy who suffered in prisons or acted in illegality. The solidarity around the phenomenon of persecution was an important and coagulant element of the Greek-Catholic community after 1990. In more recent years, more and more people matching this profile died because of natural causes. Therefore, the Greek-Catholic Church in Romania has at this moment, a new nucleus of believers, with a different set of characteristics:

- the “old” believers, with a very strong confessional identity determined by the experience of persecution, are fewer every year due to natural causes;
- the believers of mature age, born in the Communist period, but after the end of the years of severe and brutal persecution (around 1955-1960 and after the general decree of amnesty from 1964), have mostly a confessional identity based specially on the idea of family tradition;
- the young believers, with a confessional identity in formation, who did not know (or knew less about) the period of Communism.

One must mention also the fact that lately, the Greek-Catholic Church has been faced with the emigration of young people abroad, to European countries like Italy, Spain, Germany or Great Britain, which has seriously affected the population of the Uniate parishes, especially in the rural areas. Of course, this phenomenon is generally present within Romanian society, but it has a more visible effect in a Church with an already reduced number of believers. Thus, the Greek-Catholic community is confronted with a massive process of aging, mostly in the rural regions, becoming more active in the urban areas – and this tendency will continue in the following years.

A recent study based on the research methods of the oral history, covering most of the territory of the diocese of Lugoj and of the arch-dioceses of Cluj-Gherla and Alba Iulia – Făgăraș, showed that the

confessional identity of the Greek-Catholic believers had the following characteristics<sup>6</sup>:

- the mentioning, in a very large proportion, of the family tradition as an explanation given for the believers' appurtenance to the Greek-Catholic Church – this is though, a changing and insufficient element, especially if it is not doubled by a proper religious education.
- a good knowledge of the elements of faith which individualize the Catholic Church as compared to the Orthodoxy – this doesn't cover the relation with other confessions, the Protestant religions, for instance, thus creating a certain vulnerability in this direction.
- the usage of numerous elements of Latin rite (e.g. the Rosary, Passions of Christ, the cult of the Latin saints, especially St. Anthony of Padua, St. Therese of Avila or St. Rita, the usage of musical instruments for the liturgical services, the lack of the iconostas in some new churches); or, on the other hand, the opposite tendency to focus only on the Eastern elements of rite and tradition. In both situations, the identity of the believers can be diluted by a more intense rapprochement to the Orthodox – Eastern model, or to the Catholic – Western one. This selective perspective ignores the historical evolution of the Greek-Catholic identity of the Romanian Uniates which combined elements of Eastern rite and tradition with those of Latin origin. This phenomenon started in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was constant over the centuries and ensured a very specific identity to the Greek-Catholic Church in Romania in 1948.
- a good awareness of the example given by the martyr hierarchs from the years of the Communist persecution; this is though doubled by the fact that the current believers know very little things about the history of the Romanian Uniatism, even of its founding moments – the events from 1697 – 1700.
- a strong feeling of confessional otherness – especially in the relation with the Orthodox Church – the aggressive polemics leads in some cases to the dilution of the effects of this factor in its action of strengthening the confessional identity – the modern people, and especially the young ones, are, in many cases, less impressed with a very polemical and aggressive discourse on issues that seem sometimes not to be so close with their own spiritual needs.

Taking all these elements into consideration, we can state that the Greek-Catholic Church in Romania is facing currently a series of important challenges:

- the continuation of the process of institutional organization and development;

- the continuation of the process of reorganization and reformation of its system of theological education;
- the management of its difficult relations with the state – as a consequence of its status as a minority church – the churches receive state funding only according to their number of believers;
- the management of its even more difficult relations with the Romanian Orthodox Church, the majority church; the identification of an acceptable solution for the continuation of the inter-confessional dialogue; this solution will then influence the degree of involvement of the Uniate Church in the ecumenical dialogue at national level (one must notice that this dialogue does not imply only the bilateral relation with the Orthodox Church);
- the organization of the pastoral activity for a community of believers with an approximate confessional identity with rather a lot of “weak” elements; the overtaking of the state of identity confusion – as much as possible;
- the reformulation and promotion of a discourse of identity, coherent and with a strong impact on the believers;
- the way in which the Greek-Catholic Church in Romania will deal with the effects which are already visible (and which will obviously be more acute in the future) inside the community of believers of the so-called modernity, or as the sociologists used to assert, of the post-modernity.

We will focus from this point on, on three important problems: the challenges of “modernity”; the relation with the Romanian Orthodox Church; the issue of the confessional identity.

### **The impact of the secularization process on the traditional churches: a sociological approach**

But, which of those elements of a post-modern world that are already seen in the Romanian environment, defining and influencing the context in which the Greek-Catholic Church is also evolving?

First of all, we must mention the fact that in the modern age, as well as in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the external orientation of Romania was always towards Western Europe, which was seen as a model of development and as a source of modernity. This natural tendency for the Romanian state continues and is accelerated with the country's integration in the European Union. In these conditions, one can assert that Romania could pass (if it is not already passing) through processes similar to those registered in the West. Sociologists like Grace Davie maintain that the modernization of a society can follow other models as well and not only the West-European one, and that phenomenon like industrialization, the intense development of technologies, or massive urbanization do not necessarily have to lead to the same effects as in the European case<sup>7</sup>. But, in Romania's case, its model has always been Europe (meaning the West

and not Europe as a whole), and the tendencies that are present in the industrialized countries from the West will manifest sooner or later in the Romanian space as well. Needless to mention the huge cultural and social impact had in the Romanian society immediately after 1990 by the American and Western (West can mean in this situation a combination between USA and Western Europe all together) cultural models (music, art, films, food, fashion, sexual behavior, educational trends, every-day activities, every-day mentalities). All these elements are normally more present in the urban areas and amongst young people.

In this type of post-modern society, the churches are confronted with specific problems. As the sociologist Karel Dobbelaere mentions, referring mostly to the Roman-Catholic Church, the church has to face two major challenges: secularization and acculturation. He showed that the process of secularization is a consequence of a functional or structural differentiation of the society and of the process of societalization resulting from the first one<sup>8</sup>. Thus, religion becomes just one of the sub-systems among other social systems such as education, politics or economy<sup>9</sup>. Secularization is a phenomenon with multiple roots, synthesized by Steve Bruce as follows: the Judaic and Christian monotheism which led to a first rationalization of the West; the Protestant ethics; the structural differentiation; the social differentiation and specialization of the individuals according to the new requirements from the economy and society; individualism; societalization; the formation and development of the religious sects; the increased social and cultural diversity in the modern state offering a large scale of opportunities for the individuals; the privatization of life; the secular state and liberal democracy; the moderation of the discourses of the various traditional churches regarding their relations with the state and with one another; the economical development; the evolution of science and technology; relativism<sup>10</sup>. Needless to say that all these elements can be traced in the Romanian case as well<sup>11</sup>, with roots going back in time since the Modern Age in some cases. Steve Bruce concluded: secularization is generated by multiple and complex factors which are called, in short, “modernization”. The process is considered by him to be irreversible as long as the cultural autonomy of the individual continues to grow<sup>12</sup>.

As direct consequences of these elements in the spiritual area, one can mention: the social role of the church decreases severely, having a diminishing impact on people's lives; the dramatic reduction of the number of those who take active part in religious services on a regular basis, except in the ceremonies connected to the rites of passage<sup>13</sup>; the development of the private spirituality – as modernity does not necessarily have to lead to atheism; the spread of a religion which is critical towards the authority and the Tradition, is subjective, eclectic and focused on identity and self-accomplishment<sup>14</sup>. Grace Davie called this type of religion lived in the private space “believing without belonging”<sup>15</sup>.

It is what Thomas Luckmann called “invisible religion”, or “little transcendences”<sup>16</sup>.

As all these elements are present in current Western societies, and considering the direction of Romania’s social, economical and cultural evolution, one can conclude that these phenomenon that affect the religious life are / will be recorded in the Romanian space as well. The process is visible in the other ex-Communist states, too. Here, some sociologists noticed an increase of people’s participation in religious ceremonies immediately after 1989, but the tendencies are / will be towards a constant decrease, considering the fact that the young people declare themselves to be less religious than their parents<sup>17</sup>. On the other hand, we would agree with the observation that generalizations are difficult to be made and that the situation of the Eastern Europe has its obvious particularity<sup>18</sup>.

The objections of some specialists regarding the irreversibility of this phenomenon, respectively the tendencies for resacralization registered lately in some areas, refer to other regions than Europe itself (South-America, Africa, South Korea, even China), or to religions different than the traditional Christianity (e.g. the extraordinary evolution of the Pentecostal religious movements – see also below), or to non-Christian religions (Islam, Buddhism, Orthodox Judaism)<sup>19</sup>. Therefore, we do not think that these conclusions apply (or will apply) to the Romanian case.

### **Visible effects of secularization in the Romanian religious context**

Regarding some of these effects that can be visible in Romania currently, we can make a few observations:

- Romania is in the process of integration in the European Union, applying economic, social, cultural, educational reforms that will transform the country according to the European model; the transition is long, difficult and will take time – the process of industrialization is facing huge difficulties as is the one of urbanization: according to the 2011 census, only 51,8% of men and 53,7% of women live in the urban areas<sup>20</sup> - this situation will slow the process of secularization for the churches more present in the rural areas, such as the Orthodox Church, but it does not influence so much the churches focused on the urban areas – as we mentioned above, this is the situation of the Greek-Catholic Church as well; on the other hand, the rural population is aging, and the migration of young people towards urban areas is an uncontestable reality.
- Solid and coherent studies referring to the ways in which the spirituality of Romanians is manifested have not been concluded yet, but there are other relevant data that can be taken into consideration. The first remark is related to the fact that all the traditional churches in Romania have lost a large number of

believers in the last ten years. And the numbers are relevant: there were 18.817.975 Orthodox people in 2002 and only 16.367.267 in 2011 (although the percentage remained almost the same – 85,9 – 86% of the total population) – the Romanian Orthodox Church lost 13% of its believers as compared to the situation in 2002; there were 191.556 Greek-Catholics in 2002, 0,8% of the population, but only 160.275 in 2011 – also 0,8% of population – the Greek-Catholic Church lost 16,4% of its believers as compared to the situation in 2002; there were 1.026.429 Roman-Catholics in 2002, but only 869.246 in 2011, 4,6% of the population – the Roman-Catholic Church lost 16,5% of its believers as compared to the situation in 2002. But, there were 324.462 Pentecostals in 2002 and 367.938 in 2011, which means a 12% increase; 126.639 Baptists in 2002 and 118.003 in 2011, which means a decrease of only 6,8%; there were 93.670 Adventists in 2002 and 85.902 in 2011, which means a decrease of only 8,3%<sup>21</sup>. Which means that the „new-Protestant” cults grew in number – the case of the Pentecostals is absolutely extraordinary – or had a smaller percentual decrease as compared to the traditional churches.

- The number of the persons who declared themselves to be atheist almost tripled in the last 10 years – from 8.524 in 2002, to 23.900 in 2011 – most of them living in Bucharest, and in Cluj and Timis counties, meaning, in the most developed and urbanized regions of Romania. We can also add the fact that if, in 2002, 12.825 persons declared not to belong to a certain religion, their number doubled in 2011, when 23.918 persons were registered “without religion”.<sup>22</sup>
- One can note the fact that declaration of appurtenance to a certain religion during an official census speaks little about the real confessional identity of those individuals; these data do not show the degree in which these individuals attend the religious services, how well they respect the traditions and rites; many of these declarations are made “automatically”, following a family tradition – this is a phenomenon more present in the traditional churches and less in the new-Protestant ones.
- On the other hand, the diversity of the new Protestant cults in Romania grew constantly after 1990, which is considered to be another effect of globalization, as they are more adaptable to the way in which the contemporary world is organized; they are excellent users of modern technologies, are part of large international networks, have strict regulations regarding their doctrine and behavior of the individual believers, practice an offensive missionarism and benefit from external funding<sup>23</sup>.
- Recent data published by the World Health Organization show that Romania has the biggest ratio of abortions in Europe – 480



abortions for every 1000 new-born children, which represents an average twice higher than the one registered in the European Union<sup>24</sup>.

At the end of these remarks, we must underline the fact that the important decrease of the number of Greek-Catholic believers in the last decade has had a deeper impact on the church than the same phenomenon registered in the case of the Romanian Orthodox Church. All the churches lost believers, which is partially understandable if we consider the fact that the total population decreased from 21.680.974 inhabitants in 2002 to 19.042.936 inhabitants in 2011. The loss of 2,5 million people in ten years is very significant from the demographic point of view. The causes consist in the decrease of the birth rate, phenomenon common in many European countries, but also in the departure of many persons to work abroad in other countries of the European Union – Italy, Spain, United Kingdom, Germany, The Netherlands etc. – the census in 2011 registered 910.264 persons who left the country for a longer period of time.

### **The Orthodox and the Greek-Catholic Churches in Romania facing secularization**

Let's notice that these challenges are similar to all Churches in Romania, but mostly to the traditional ones. Therefore, the Greek-Catholic Church, or the Orthodox Church, will have to find answers to these problems under the condition to become aware of these processes in time, to analyze them carefully, to build a series of strategies which could diminish their immediate or long-term effects. It is easy to notice that, facing a "common enemy", the traditional churches could adopt common or similar strategies, could find a way of communication that could bring them closer and make their efforts more efficient.

In the last decades, the inter-confessional relations have been difficult, as both churches believe fundamentally that it represents the unique source of redemptory truth. As a natural consequence, the traditional churches have the tendency to strengthen the borders between them, to promote an intensive discourse meant to warn their believers about the dangers comprised by the rapprochement of "the other", in a time when the ecumenism (the institutional framework inside which this rapprochement could be put into practice) is sometimes seen as a dangerous element which can lead to "syncretism" and to the dilution of the traditional values which are considered to be always true.

On the other hand, in the last years, facing these challenges, the churches in Romania were forced more and more often to accept the dialogue and the ecumenical approach. It is a long and complicated process, in which they have to emphasize the elements of inter-connectivity, of overcoming the classical boundaries and the historical alterities, of creation of areas of closeness. The process has a transitory

character, as a reflection of the symbolism of the two faces of Janus: the passage from the past towards a future which remains uncertain and still unknown.

Applying this metaphor to the inter-confessional relation between Orthodoxy and Greek-Catholicism, it becomes even more relevant as the two faces look traditionally to the West and to the East, in a symbolic dialogue that influenced along the centuries a great part of the European history. It receives new meanings with the current acceleration of the process of extension of the European Union towards the East, which brought inside the borders of the Union countries with an Orthodox majority, an inevitable evolution that was supported by the hierarchies of all churches.

The traditional churches will have to cooperate exactly because they are facing common “dangers” which include, besides the ones mentioned above, the degradation of the moral values, especially of family ones, atheism, or the proliferation of the religious sects. Therefore, the most important traditional churches, the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, are confronted with an essential paradox:

- On one hand, they have to protect their own dogmatic, ritual, Sacramental and moral values, deepening the tendency for self-orientation and for the intensive promotion of their own discourse of identity.
- On the other hand, they are looking for “allies”, because they feel the extraordinary pressure made by the challenges of the modern world, for which they are more or less prepared. This is why the patriarch Daniel upheld in an interview from 2007, immediately after his election as the leader of the Romanian Orthodox Church, the possibility of an alliance with other churches with the aim to combat these dangers<sup>25</sup>.

Obviously, this type of cooperation will be difficult to be put in practice in Romania, in the context of an old and profound otherness between Catholics / Greek-Catholics and Orthodox, but the message deserves to be taken into consideration.

### **The Greek-Catholic Church in Romania and the possible answers to secularization**

Currently, in order to be able to seriously confute these challenges, the Greek-Catholic Church in Romania has to overcome some internal vulnerabilities, thus delimiting certain main direction for future action:

- The development of the intellectual elite of the church – the improvement in the level of the theological instruction; the

promotion inside the church of studies regarding sociology, history, anthropology, philosophy, political sciences, psychology.

- The reformulation of the discourse of identity and identification in the ways to strengthen the confessional identity of the faithful.
- The reformulation of pastoral strategies, mainly focusing on young people.
- The growing involvement of lay men in the life of the church.

We will refer to some of these aspects, trying to identify several solutions that the church might take into consideration.

For the strengthening of the confessional identity and for the reconsideration of its fundamental elements, the church institution has to pass through a process of reflection, of self-analysis, in order to better understand the processes and the phenomenon which influenced the evolution of the Greek-Catholic community in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the impact of the communist period on the believers, respectively the way in which the church functioned after 1990 and reacted in the face of some very new challenges. Paul Ricoeur showed that for the construction of a strong and clear identity, “the inner self” has to be “reflexively understood”, which represents evidence of the capacity of self-analysis, a process which is necessary and could be compared to “an analysis in mirror”<sup>26</sup>. In order to do that, one needs a reference point, which can be found in its own past, its own history and continuity in time, as M. Jensen suggested<sup>27</sup>. Therefore, in order to better understand the contemporary situation from the perspective of confessional identity, the church needs a period of self-analysis, of (re-) reading the lessons of the past carefully, with its moments of continuity and discontinuity.

The years after 1990 were influenced by the intensification of the otherness towards the Orthodox Church. The causes are multiple and can be found at the level of the hierarchs, of the high-rank dialogue, but also at the local one, where often the tensions even led to violence. This otherness led / or can lead to the strengthening of the confessional identity. Because of the “struggle” from the 1990s with state institutions and the Orthodox Church, The Romanian Uniate Church passed through another moment of “adversity”, during which it played usually the role of the victim. Being a minority, the Greek-Catholic Church sustained its point of view with difficulty, especially in the first years after the anti-communist revolution. This allowed it to assert that it had the moral superiority against those who held power politically or religiously<sup>28</sup>. Such a discourse led to the “creation” of a specific identity, which has at its fundament the idea that the persecution continued also after the fall of the Communist block. This idea is a constant element in the Greek-Catholic discourse in the last decades, being present also in the Christmas pastoral letter from 2009 of Virgil Bercea, bishop of Oradea<sup>29</sup>.

In this context, another observation of Steve Bruce becomes relevant as he pointed out the fact that a minority community has the advantage of

preserving its identity better through the promotion and propagation of its own traditions<sup>30</sup>. His conclusion referred to the ethnic minority communities from the United States, but it is equally valid in the case of the Greek-Catholic Church in Romania. It is just the case of another type of community: ecclesiastic and not ethnic. One problem still rises though: that a particular community has to be aware of the existence of a specific set of traditions, different from those of the majority religious group, even if they belong to the same national background. For the Greek-Catholic Church, these elements could consist of: the aspects of rite of Latin origin, in practice, some of them, since the 18<sup>th</sup> century – the Rosary, the Passions of Christ, the cult of the Western saints, mostly of St. Anthony of Padua and St. Rita, the Eucharistic Adoration and so on – blended with specific festivals or places of pilgrimage, and the cult of the martyr bishops.

An important element for the strengthening of the confessional identity is represented by the cult of those saints originated in the church's own tradition and history. For the Greek-Catholic Church in Romania, the development of the cult dedicated to the martyr bishops from the communist time will bring a fundamental element for the consolidation of the confessional identity. The premises are favorable as the believers are well informed about the years of the persecution and the heroes of this resistance – as it was obvious from the above mentioned questionnaires. The cardinal Alexandru Todea is known by 43,85% of believers, and in a hierarchy of the most famous personalities of the Greek-Catholic Church in Romania, cardinal Todea, cardinal Iuliu Hossu and bishop Ioan Suciș are amongst the first 5 key-figures, alongside bishops Inochentie Micu Klein and Petru Pavel Aron, the most important hierarchs of the 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>31</sup>. A too extended prolongation of the process of canonization of these bishops could lead though to the clergy's and believers' frustration.

Referring to the two famous bishops of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, one must bring into attention the issue of history as an essential source for a strong confessional identity, especially in Europe. In spite of all the effects of secularization, in the Western Europe, there is still present a strong consciousness of the essential role played by the historical churches in the formation of European culture, and the testimonies of this past are visible in the "physical and cultural environment of Europe", as Grace Davie wrote<sup>32</sup>. The link with the past ensures the idea of continuity, of a self tradition, which is important for any kind of community, and, moreover, it can be a very deep source of symbols, images, heroic moments, and characters which can be remembered in the discourse of identity as landmarks, as spiritual or cultural brands. Thinking to the history of the Greek-Catholic Church in Romania, it is easy to mention: personalities like Inochentie Micu Klein, Iuliu Hossu, Ioan Suciș or Alexandru Todea; places like Blaj; or cultural brands like the Transylvanian School. The confessional identity becomes stronger through the usage of old or recent

symbols. The sociologist Yves Lambert noticed that the process of secularization led in many cases to an independence of the individuals towards the religious authority, but it did not lead to the dissolution of the power of the religious symbols<sup>33</sup>.

A strong confessional identity would prevent the “defections”, maintaining the integrity of the community. This is a first and compulsory condition for the possible attraction of new adherents, considering the fact that, currently, conversions represent a process which is increasingly rare and difficult.

One can not forget that we live in a very pluralist society from a religious point of view. As mentioned above, most sociologists consider that pluralism has influenced secularization, but there are other specialists who argue that diversity can lead to the growth of the religious feeling, and of the awareness of one's belonging to a certain community, inside which the members can be easier mobilize to support the “common cause”<sup>34</sup>. The plurality of the Christian denominations in Romania contributes to the existence of a large religious market, in which the “offer” is very diverse, and the number of the “undecided” or of those in search for answers to their spiritual problems is very large as well.

Starting from these simple conclusions, sociologists as Rodney Stark and Roger Finke drew up the theory meant to explain the modality through which an individual could choose his religion. This is the theory of the “rational choice”<sup>35</sup>. It starts from the idea that a person could choose his religion rationally, considering the benefits and the rewards granted by it<sup>36</sup>. The theory led to strong reactions among sociologists, who contested the idea that a person would follow only his/her own interest, being cut off from his/her social and cultural context, choosing the religion as a result of a rational calculation<sup>37</sup>. Steve Bruce argued that the choice of a religion could not be compared with the selection of a car, for which action one would always think of all necessary precautions in a very rational way<sup>38</sup>. Applied as designed by its authors, this theory suits better the intellectual and spiritual profile of men and less of women, being more common with the urban mentality, in the societies with a stronger emphasis on individualism, liberalism and spirit of competition.

Applying this economic language to religious and spiritual issues could lead to disapprovals and dissatisfaction inside the ecclesiastical environment, but there are a few elements of this theory that deserve attention and could become part of the internal debates of the traditional churches, as solutions or approaches that could lead to the reduction or procrastination in the effects of secularization. According to this type of vocabulary, the churches promote a “spiritual product”, which is rather complex, often complicated, with a large amount of subjectivism, confronting strong competition from secularization and atheist theories more and more popular in the last decades. That is why every community

has to find the best methods to promote its own product, taking into consideration the laws of pure marketing:

- the institutional churches must build or strengthen a specific profile, that can make them easily identifiable to anyone – the process of conversion (using this term, I refer to the classical sense of the word, to someone's adherence to a certain religion coming from outside; respectively, to those that were part of a religious community in a passive way, through inertia, being “entered” in that particular religious group through birth / baptism, or through marriage, and who “convert” over time, becoming active as a result of a reflexive process, of a spiritual “awakening”) includes a series of internal changes which affected the identity of the individual and his system of understanding the world. “A conversion is often accompanied by a new lifestyle and a new social context. The typical convert will let behind the old way of living and the old friends and will look for a new community”<sup>39</sup>. Therefore, it is important that the profile of the religious community is well delimited, thus offering an easier answer to the searches of the individuals. We underline the fact that the consolidation of this profile means, in fact, the strengthening of the specific identity of that community.
- The promoted message must be easily understandable, clear and logical, with a well-defined accent on the possible “rewards” (e.g. – the access to deliverance and to eternal life; offering of an explanation, of a plausible meaning for our existence, in the context of the every-day confusions, stress and pressure; a quiet and peaceful environment, and a psychological and social comfort; an environment where the individuals can feel that they “are somebody”, thus fulfilling their need for personal accomplishment<sup>40</sup>; an environment in which the individuals can feel that they truly belong); alongside with these more spiritual elements, certain sociologist like L. Iannacone also refer to some more practical aspects such as: the offer of a variety of religious services, of religious instruction, social activities, entertainment, like the so called “club type activities”<sup>41</sup>.
- The usage of as many as possible ways of promotion of the discourse of identity, of the symbols, of specific images, of all individualizing elements. Thus, it is pointless to emphasize again the value and the extraordinary usefulness of media: radio, TV, press, internet. Two concepts are brought into discussion: “religion online”, referring to all the information about a certain religion that can be found on the internet, thus putting in value the informative character of the virtual world web, which is even more valuable considering the very low necessary costs; respectively, the one of “online religion”, referring to the forms of

practice of the faith used by the individuals through the means of the same communication networks. The concept of “online religion” was formulated in 2000 by the sociologist Christopher Helland<sup>42</sup>. Although we don’t personally agree with the conclusions drawn by another sociologist, Brenda Brasher, who argued that the “online religion” is the form in which the religion will manifest itself in the future<sup>43</sup> (the internet can not take over also the personal and the corporal character of religion), one must take into consideration the possible religious practices that could be available to certain believers via internet – the case of the persons with a physical handicap, unable to assist in the religious services, or those forced to be involved in other activities during the religious services. Here, the possibilities are numerous.

- The churches must take into consideration the various profile of the believers – “the consumers”, having different intellectual, social, economical, ethnical backgrounds. There are huge differences amongst the faithful according to their age, sex, origin. Therefore, the churches must offer a series of very diverse “services”, trying to address to all these typologies. Like this, the young and the old, women<sup>44</sup> or men, traditionalists or liberals and modernists, or those with different ethnical origins (e.g. – an important challenge for the pastoral activity of all religions in Romania is constituted by the Roma community) could find at least one type of spiritual activity suitable for their needs. One of the great errors that can be made by an ecclesiastical institution is to transmit the message in a unique and uniform formulation. This proves a lack of understanding of the social and intellectual environment, immobility, and lack of adaptability and dynamism.
- The fact that the individualism can threaten the old tradition / rites must be understood correctly. Therefore, the formulation and construction of new traditions could be considered a valid option. An open mind is needed in this respect, and the power and will to adapt to the needs and tendencies of the differing groups of believers facing their own social, economic and cultural contexts.
- The Churches must instruct their staff in order to be able to face all these challenges. The clergy must be aware that it forms a group of professionals benefiting from an instruction that allows them to understand the society and the individuals – in the same way in which any company that wants to promote a certain product, must understand the profile of its potential clients. For this, the clergy must have good knowledge of psychology, sociology, anthropology, marketing and philosophy. The danger of a rupture between the individuals and the clergy can be avoided. The ministers must reconsider their discourse which is often too

theoretical and with a diminishing practical and personal relevance<sup>45</sup>.

- An adaptation of the content of the theological message transmitted to the believers is also probably needed, calling to a set of concepts and images that are closer to the mentality of the individuals in the contemporary society. The suggestions made by the Swedish researchers Inger Furseth and Pal Repstad are very interesting from this perspective, as they emphasize the following aspects: the necessity to focus less on the concept of the power of God, but on His love and presence; the usage of more impersonal images of God, with an accent on the divine energy; the usage of certain anthropological and functional arguments for the consolidation of the individual religious feelings – it is a discourse that would promote the mental well being of the individual, making a turnover from the traditional discourse of pure dogmatic origin of salvation and damnation; a more optimistic vision of the human person, with an accent on the idea of self accomplishment, of a possible success in the spiritual fight; a more optimistic perspective over the world, seen less as a place of sin, and more as a gift of God for mankind; a revitalization of the narrative – it is the need for new narrations – of the symbolic actions, of the metaphors and a smaller usage of the cognitive and dogmatic formulations (mostly because the believers know or understand just a little of the dogmatic profoundness of the faith; the understanding of the theological language is accessible only to a small number of initiated people, while the believers express their faith in the formulations given by the church through the clergy – this is another argument for the necessity of a strong relation of trust between the clergy and the faithful); a more important accent on the personal spiritual expressions and experiences<sup>46</sup>.

In connection to the methods that could be used by the traditional churches in order to have a bigger impact on the communities, one must also bring into the discussion the model offered for quite a long time already by the Pentecostal or Charismatic movements. In 2002, they counted 523 million adherents worldwide (out of a total of over 2 billion Christians), among which two thirds were spread outside the United States and Western Europe, meaning in areas that are considered more traditional and where the traditional churches or religions had hitherto played the main role – no matter if we refer to Christianity, Islam or Buddhism. The Charismatic movements had an impressive annual raise: 9 million new adherents per year. These data place the Pentecostals in second position in the Christian world as defined by number of believers, after the Roman-Catholic Church. These movements are very vivid, dynamic, with an accent on the personal faith, on the individual, with a clear, simple and easily understandable message, and with numerous



elements of specific practices of exuberant adoration, emphasizing the healing power of God and His presence in the world, and with a very intense media activity. They are trends that adapted very well and took advantage of the opportunities offered by the process of globalization<sup>47</sup>. Their success is not by chance and offers a lesson that can be useful to all churches, including the traditional ones<sup>48</sup>.

The consolidation of the confessional identity and the strengthening of modern, dynamic, flexible pastoral strategies centered on the believer / individual aim to design the specific profile of the community as well as of the institution. The confessional identity of an individual is very much connected to his own identity as a human being. In the present, post-modern world, any person builds a set of multiple identities, according to the different roles that he plays in the society and to the various influences that he faces. That is why people are “constantly reconfiguring their identities”, as argued by sociologists Arthur Greil and Lynn Davidmann<sup>49</sup>. But these identities are tied together by the values accepted and assumed personally by the individual. The community of the believers is formed out of a group of people with a series of common values. They ensure the inter-dependency between the personal identities, respectively “the organic solidarity” of a community in which the individuals have clear roles chosen freely and consciously, as suggested by Emile Durkheim in the 1960s<sup>50</sup>. This is the type of religious community that could have success in the fight against secularization: a community with a clear identity, with well defined values, accepted by all its members, with individuals who have clear roles and responsibilities which allow them to manifest actively as part of a personal choice, coordinated by “specialists” with an instruction that allows them to get closer to society, with a set of symbols and images with impact on the people. Steve Bruce’s words are relevant in this perspective: “the survival of religion requires that individuals be subordinated to the community”<sup>51</sup>; but to a very specific type of community.

This community needs also something extra, though connected with all the elements mentioned above: the defining of an *ethos* is essential – meaning the way in which “we” do certain things. This is an extension of the values and the forms of living and thinking promoted by a certain church, into forms that are recognizable in the everyday behavior of the individuals. The churches can offer a so called *habitus*<sup>52</sup>, a framework in which the individuals conceive their participation in all sort of subcultures or fields of activity – including the religious one. Catholicism in general, or the Greek-Catholicism in the particular case of the Romanian church discussed in this paper, can offer this *habitus*, that could lead even to a development of the forms of Catholic form of living, inclusively in open societies where various spiritual offers function<sup>53</sup>.

I will end this essay on the challenges facing the traditional churches in the post-modernity, with the conclusion drawn by Peter van der Veer

regarding the conversions to the various forms of Christianity in the modern time. He argued that these were not just conversions to a modern form of a religion, but, at the same time, to religious forms of modernity itself<sup>54</sup>. His words bring into attention exactly the need for the traditional churches (and not only) to try to adapt to the modern world, to find a common language and to be able to fulfill the needs of the individuals with a modern religious formula, applied to the individual and not to the mass of believers, attracting him inside a community conscious about its identity, where he could find the existential answers that he was looking for, but also the possibility to manifest in the self conscious of his own “ego”, and following a set of common values accepted and promoted by all the members.

Post-modernity does not necessarily have to lead to disbelief, nor to the disappearance of the religious life manifested inside an institutional framework. The United States is proof in this regard, as the most “modern” of all the developed states registering the highest degree of involvement of the individuals in forms of institutional religion<sup>55</sup>. But this was possible only because of a set of modern, actual values, adapted to the needs of the individuals. Otherwise, the traditional churches especially will have a more and more diminishing role, becoming marginal in the spiritual, cultural and social life of the individuals.

## Conclusion

In a country like Romania, a new member of the European Union, following an evolutionary trend that finds its roots and fundamentals in the Western world, trying to develop its process of industrialization, urbanism and modernization, with a population that is more and more focused on a way of life and on a mentality that is closer and closer to their Western models, the Greek-Catholic Church can be very much affected (or it is already) by the spiritually specific evolutions of the post-modern world for the following reasons:

- the church is becoming more and more urban;
- the church is still in the process of institutional transition;
- the confessional identity of the believers has a lot of “soft” elements;
- a large part of the members of the community belong to a new typology: younger, more and more urban, less linked to the past and to the history of the persecution, more dynamic and adapted to the “modern” world;
- the church is influenced by many Latin origin elements;
- the church is very much focused on its links with the West;
- the permanent comparison, competition and adversity with the Romanian Orthodox Church often become catalysts for the Greek-Catholics to get closer and closer to the Western models.

On the other hand, the church can act in various directions, in order to delay as much as possible the effects of the process of modernization, and secularization which affect the Romanian society as well:

- the process of strengthening the confessional identity must be accelerated and the discourse of identity must be updated and promoted focusing on the construction of the “hard” elements – the doctrine, the history, and the link with the past, the practice of a specific and individualized set of ritual practices;
- the construction of a new narrative; the promotion of new symbols and a new set of images;
- the promotion of a specific *ethos*;
- the promotion and consolidation of a specific type of piety, supporting the above mentioned elements; the lesson offered by the Charismatic movement is very valuable in this respect;
- the adaptation of the discourse for each type of believer, respecting the laws and principles of the abovementioned theory of “the rational choice” – the spiritual marketing; the intense usage of all types of media, especially the internet;
- the creation of a specific *habitus*, which will become the framework for the development of the church;
- the promotion of a permanent and intensive professional development of the clergy;
- the construction of that system of a network of institutional pillars: schools, kindergartens, medical foundations, hospitals, agencies for religious tourism, insurance agencies etc. (of course, some things have already been done in this direction, but the Greek-Catholic Church is at the beginning of this process; one must also take into consideration the fact that the Romanian Orthodox Church has already started to build and develop a similar system).

Thus, is the process of secularization going to affect the Greek-Catholic Church in Romania irreversibly? The answers to this question can be various, and personally, I don't think that the pessimistic perspective is the only valid one. The church can find enough elements to delay these negative effects, or to reduce them to a minimum, but its efforts must be directed for the construction of a very dynamic community, very much aware of its identity, with a strong *ethos*, and based on a solid institutional structure.

### Notes:

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“Programe postdoctorale pentru dezvoltare durabila intr-o societate bazata pe cunoastere”.

<sup>2</sup> Inger Furseth and Pal Repstad, *An Introduction to the Sociology of Religion* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 5. See also Nicu Gavriluță, *Sociologia religiilor. Credințe, ritualuri, ideologii*, (Iași: Polirom, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> I. Scurtu (ed.), *Istoria Românilor*, vol. VIII. *România întregită (1918-1940)*, (București: Ed. Enciclopedică, 2003), 32-34.

<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/RPL2002INS/vol4/tabele/t5.pdf> (accessed June 15, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> For elements relating to the relation between the state and the Greek-Catholic in Romania after 1990 see Gabriel Andreescu, „The Romanian Church United with Rome (Greek-Catholic) Under Pressure: the ROC’s Bad Behaviour as Good Politics”, *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol. 11 issue 32 (2012): 227-255.

<sup>6</sup> Ciprian Ghișa, „Aspecte ale identității confesionale la începutul mileniului III. Studiu de caz: Biserica Greco-Catolică din România”, in *Identitate și Alteritate. Studii de istorie politică și culturală*, vol. 5, ed. C. Bărbulescu, I. Bonda, C. Cârja, I. Cârja, A. V. Sima (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2011), 156-172.

<sup>7</sup> Grace Davie, „Resacralization”, in *The Sociology of Religion*, ed. B. S. Turner (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell Publications, 2010), 160-177. The author mentions the case of South Korea, which passed through a similar process of industrialization and modernization as many European countries without knowing the same spiritual effects.

<sup>8</sup> Sociologists Thomas Luckmann and Peter Berger argued in the 1960s already that the differentiation of society was one of the main causes of secularization. They pointed out the fact that different areas of society were getting out of religious control, receiving their own laws and strategies of government. The issue of societalization was rediscussed by Bryan Wilson in 1982. Furseth, Repstad, 85-86.

<sup>9</sup> Karel Dobbelaere, “Roman Catholicism. Function versus Performance, Universalism versus Particularism”, in *The Sociology of Religion. Critical Concepts in Sociology*, vol. III. *Christianity*, ed. M. Hamilton (London & New York: Routledge, 2007), 275.

<sup>10</sup> Steve Bruce, “Secularization”, in *The Sociology of Religion*, ed. B. S. Turner (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell Publications, 2010), 126-137.

<sup>11</sup> Ioan Hosu, Sandu Frunză, „Religious Affiliation and Social Action in the Public Space”, *Revista de cercetare și intervenție socială*, vol. 43 (2013): 240-254.

<sup>12</sup> Bruce, 138.

<sup>13</sup> See Dobbelaere, 275.

<sup>14</sup> Furseth, Repstad, 124-125.

<sup>15</sup> Davie, 174.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Luckmann, *The Invisible Religion. The Problem of Religion in Modern Society* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), 15.

<sup>17</sup> Bruce, 125.

<sup>18</sup> Ionuț Apahideanu, „East Meets West Once Again: A Quantitative Comparative Approach of Religiosity in Europe over the Last Two Decades”, *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol. 12 issue 36 (2013): 100-128.

<sup>19</sup> Grace Davie discusses the well-known case of sociologist Peter Berger, a great advocate of secularization in the 1960s, but changing his position after analyzing the abovementioned examples in his book from 1999. Berger argued: “Although

the term 'secularization theory' refers to works from the 1950s and 1960s, the key idea of the theory can indeed be traced to the Enlightenment. The idea is simple: Modernization necessarily leads to a decline of religion, both in society and in the minds of individuals. And it is precisely this key idea that turned out to be wrong". Berger apud Davie, 168-169.

Grace Davie also refers to the conclusions drawn by a global study, called *World Values Study*. One of the main authors of the study, Ronald Inglehart, showed that in the last 50 years, in the industrialized societies, the tendency had been towards secularization, whereas, in the other parts of the world, the number of persons with traditional religious beliefs increased significantly. Davie, 169.

<sup>20</sup> See the data referring to the 2011 census

<http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/RPL2002INS/vol1/tabele/t01.pdf>;

<http://www.insse.ro/cms/files%5Cstatistici%5Ccomunicate%5Calte%5C2012%5CComunicat%20DATE%20PROVIZORII%20RPL%202011.pdf> (accessed June 14, 2012);

[http://www.insse.ro/cms/files%5Cstatistici%5Ccomunicate%5Calte%5C2012%5CRPL\\_rezultate%20preliminare.pdf](http://www.insse.ro/cms/files%5Cstatistici%5Ccomunicate%5Calte%5C2012%5CRPL_rezultate%20preliminare.pdf), 2-12 (accessed June 14, 2012).

<sup>21</sup> See <http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/RPL2002INS/vol4/tabele/t5.pdf>, 12 (accessed June 15, 2012).

<sup>22</sup> See also Cornel Lazăr, Mirela Lazăr, "Particularities and Changes in the Confessional Structure of the Population of Romania after 1990", *Revista de cercetare și intervenție socială*, vol. 35 (2011): 46-60.

<sup>23</sup> Manuela Gheorghe, „Noile mișcări religioase – agenți ai globalizării religioase în România”, *Revista Română de Sociologie*, new series, year XIX, no. 1-2 (2008): 147-151.

<sup>24</sup> Aurel I. Rogojan, "Recensământul din 2011 arată că populația României se află la nivelul anului 1965", *Cotidianul.ro*, 20 iunie 2012, <http://www.cotidianul.ro/recensamantul-din-2011-arata-ca-populatia-romaniei-se-afla-la-nivelul-anului-1965-186534/>

<sup>25</sup> Jürgen Henkel, "În dialog cu Patriarh ales al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, Daniel Ciobotea", [http://patriarhia.deveu.com/patriarhul/interviuri\\_3.html](http://patriarhia.deveu.com/patriarhul/interviuri_3.html).

<sup>26</sup> Paul Ricoeur apud Michael Jensen, *Martyrdom and Identity. The Self on Trial* (London: T&T Clark International, 2010), 7.

<sup>27</sup> Jensen, 8.

<sup>28</sup> Jensen, 30-31.

<sup>29</sup> Virgil Bercea, "Christmas pastoral letter", *Vestitorul*. Oradea, series I, year XVII, no. 10 (190) (2009): 2.

<sup>30</sup> See Furseth, Repstad, 88.

<sup>31</sup> Ghișa, 167.

<sup>32</sup> Davie, 171.

<sup>33</sup> Furseth, Repstad, 88.

<sup>34</sup> Furseth, Repstad, 90-91.

<sup>35</sup> David Lehmann, "Rational Choice and the Sociology of Religion", in *The Sociology of Religion*, ed. B. S. Turner (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell Publications, 2010), 181-200.

<sup>36</sup> Furseth, Repstad, 117.

<sup>37</sup> Furseth, Repstad, 118.

<sup>38</sup> Bruce, 137-138.

<sup>39</sup> Furseth, Repstad, 129-130.

<sup>40</sup> The research conducted by the anthropologist Marianne Gullestad in the mid 1990s, on the autobiographies and journals written by ordinary people, proved

that the current generations passed from the ideal of „being useful” to „being oneself” – a person aware of his/her own capacities, rights and living a life which has a meaning and a finality. See Furseth, Repstad, 122.

<sup>41</sup> See Lehmann, 190.

In order to sustain such a programme, it is necessary that specific institutions to be created and put under the control of the church. One must mention that the Roman-Catholic Church in the Western Europe, for instance, attempted to build an institutional system, as an alternative to the state, in order to face the challenges of the modern world. Catholic schools, universities, insurer companies, trade unions, travel agencies, hospitals, recreational associations. The process is known as “pillarization” – the church is supported by these pillars. In long duration, these efforts did not have a long lasting effect. See Bryan Wilson, „Secularization: Religion in the Modern World”, in *The World's Religions. The Study of Religion, Traditional and New Religions*, ed. P. Clarke and S. Sutherland (London: Routledge, 2001), 200.

<sup>42</sup> Douglas E. Cowan, “Religion on the Internet”, in *The SAGE Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, ed. J. A. Beckford, N. J. Demerath III (Los Angeles, London: SAGE Publications, 2007), 361. See also Ștefan Bratosin, Mihaela Alexandra Tudor, Iacob Coman, “La pratique du sacre dans le world wide web: une experience innovante de la norme”, *Science de la Societe*, no. 81 (2010): 121-134.

<sup>43</sup> Cowan, 369.

<sup>44</sup> Women respond differently from men to these changes that appear in the contemporary spiritual universe. The sociological studies showed that women had a more intense involvement in the movements of piety, which are considered by them to be a form of modernity. Their involvement in these trends gives them a greater responsibility, and a more important role inside the religious community and helps them to build their own networks of social relations. See: Rachel Rinaldo, “Women and Piety Movements”, in *The Sociology of Religion*, ed. B. S. Turner (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell Publications, 2010), 584-605. See also Mihai Lucaci, “Argument. Why Should We Study Everyday Lives of Catholic Women”, *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol. 2 issue 6 (2003): 108-116.

<sup>45</sup> Thomas Luckmann argued that one of the consequences of the organizational system of the churches was that the official, traditional religions is transmitted by a corpus of full-time specialists, who were more or less cut from the every-day life realities faced by the individuals. In order to create a real link between this official and uniform message and the individuals, there must be a correlation between the discourse of the church which is usually uniforming and the subjective system of the „last significance” of the individuals. And this is very difficult to accomplish. Luckmann, 76.

<sup>46</sup> Furseth, Repstad, 123.

<sup>47</sup> Afe Adogame, “Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements in a Global Perspective”, in *The Sociology of Religion*, ed. B. S. Turner (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell Publications, 2010), 498-518.

<sup>48</sup> There are Roman-Catholic hierarchs who introduced in their dioceses, certain charismatic practices, even if their usage is not yet officially approved by the church. See Wilson, 203.

<sup>49</sup> Arthur L. Greil and Lynn Davidman, „Religion and Identity”, in *The SAGE Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, ed. J. A. Beckford, N. J. Demerath III (Los Angeles, London: SAGE Publications, 2007), 556.

<sup>50</sup> Emile Durkheim apud Greil, Davidman, 555-556. See also Emile Durkheim, *Formele elementare ale vieții religioase*, (Iași: Polirom, 1995).

<sup>51</sup> Bruce, 138.

<sup>52</sup> For the concept of *habitus*, see Philip Mellor and Chris Shilling, “The Religious Habitus. Embodiment, Religion and Sociological Theory”, in *The Sociology of Religion*, ed. B. S. Turner (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell Publications, 2010), 201-220. See also Pierre Bourdieu, *Simțul practic*, (Iași: Institutul European, 2000).

<sup>53</sup> Sociologist Alejandro Frigerio analyzed the case of Argentina, noticing a development of the forms of Catholic piety, although several other forms of Christian cults are active in the region – such as the Penticostals. See Lehmann, 194.

<sup>54</sup> Peter van der Veer apud Adogame, 503.

<sup>55</sup> Luckmann, 35-36.

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