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**DYNAMICS OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND  
OFFERINGS IN THE HISTORY OF SEVENTH-  
DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN ROMANIA**  
**(PhD Thesis Summary)**

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# **DYNAMICS OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND OFFERINGS IN THE HISTORY OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN ROMANIA**

## **(Summary)**

This research paper is part of the general area of church history and its object of study was the tithing and offerings system of the Adventist Church. The subject of the thesis was to trace the evolution of the financial resources of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Romania from its emergence to the present. The main goal was to compile a history of the financial system, which would be the basis for a history of Romanian Adventism.

The problem investigated was formulated as follows: the financial system available to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Romania was one of the factors that favored its development. By church development will be understood the number of members and churches, as well as church institutions (schools, publishing houses, media centers or medical institutions). Considering the problem

under investigation, I started from the hypothesis that the development of the Romanian Seventh-day Adventist Church was due, among other things, to its financial system. Because I studied the financial system through the prism of three aspects (origin of funds, how they are used and their transparency), I formulated three working hypotheses. The first sub-hypothesis I started from was that the source of funds was the basis for the development of the church. The second sub-hypothesis states that the way in which the funds were used led to the development of the church. The last working sub-hypothesis argues that the church's transparency about the use of funds has ensured its development.

In order for the work to reach its true goal, I pursued the fulfillment of several objectives. The first considered the correct and clear formulation of the topic to be researched starting from the current stage of the research. The second objective consisted in achieving a deep documentation of the proposed research field by exploring the specialized literature, the archives of the Adventist Church both nationally and worldwide, the state archives, such as those of the former Security or

Cults. I have not encountered any obstacles in this regard, having access to this entire database. The only limitation was imposed by the Adventist Church that I would not divulge information regarding salaries, but it was not a major factor preventing the understanding of the researched subject. The third objective pursued was to synthesize the information gathered from the documentation, using both a diachronic and a synthetic approach. The last objective had in mind the testing of the stated working hypotheses.

In order to carry out the research work, I consulted both the specialized literature (secondary literature) as well as the primary written sources, in this case the available documents and archives regarding the financial resources throughout the history of Adventism in Romania.

The work methodology used was descriptive and synthetic. The descriptive method captured the current state of knowledge in the fields of the history of Adventism in Romania and the theology of financial resources. The synthetic method, specific to the theology of history, synthesized the information that emerged from

the documents discovered during the research. It should also be stated that I used both a diachronic approach (the evolution over time of the system of tithes and offerings in the Adventist Church) and a synchronic one (the presentation of the structure of the system of tithes and offerings at a given time).

In order to achieve my objectives and the purpose of the research, I have systematized the work in several chapters, each of them with its own subdivisions. The first chapter is an introductory one and captured the arguments for choosing the research theme, the current state of knowledge, the working methodology and the structure of the paper.

The second chapter, *Financial Resources in the Adventist View*, captured the history of the tithe and offerings system, the theology of financial resources, and the position of other denominations regarding the tithe and offerings system. The history of the advent movement shows that it was against any form of organization, considering it Babylon. In the period 1844-1858 there was no plan of endowment by which the work could be supported, everything depending on the goodwill of

believers or listeners. In 1859, following a study of the New Testament, the plan of systematic benevolence was adopted. Another Bible study, that of 1878, noted the universal nature of the tithe. The Adventist Church believes that the tithe is holy, belongs to God and must be used to support the preachers and the advancement of the work. God is the Owner of all things, while men are called their stewards. The adoption of the system of tithes and offerings led to the development of the church through the establishment of churches, the support of pastors, the fulfillment of the needs of the poor or those who have gone through difficulties and, finally, the support of God's work.

The third chapter, *Dynamics of Financial Resources in the Period 1870-1946*, focused on four aspects: the emergence of Adventism in Romania, the system of tithes and gifts, statistical and financial reports, and Adventist institutions during this period. From a historical point of view, the Sabbatarian movement in Transylvania can be seen as a forerunner of Adventism, through the observance of the seventh-day biblical Sabbath. The first missionaries who arrived on Romanian

territory came via the American route, most of them being of German origin. The expulsion by the authorities of the pastor of German origin, Hinter, who worked in Bucharest, made the church train Romanian pastors. This was the moment from which Adventism exploded in Romania. The increase in the number of believers led to the organization of the church in different forms, such as the Romanian Conference, and after the Great Union of 1918, the Romanian Union. The development of the church required the establishment of a publishing house and printing house for the production and distribution of religious literature, the establishment of a missionary school to train future pastors, and the establishment of a medical center. The information presented in this chapter confirmed my first two working sub-hypotheses, namely that the source of the funds was the basis of the development of the church (theology) and that the way the funds were used led to the development of the church (statistical and financial reports).

Chapter Four, *Dynamics of Financial Resources under Communism (1947-1989)*, emphasizes aspects such as the system of tithes and offerings, statistical and

financial reports, and Adventist institutions during the communist period. This was one of the darkest periods in Romania's history. Although state control manifested itself through involvement in the elective elections of the church, as well as in the functioning of the church, through the control of the financial resources available to the church, nevertheless it resisted and developed slowly, despite the prohibitions of the state. To counter this state control, church leaders decided to have double-entry bookkeeping, through which salaries were supplemented, various aids were given to pastors, and certain needs of local churches were covered. Following the discovery of the secret account, security gathered evidence with the aim of disbanding the church and fueling members' mistrust of the church. Even though some mistrust in the handling of the funds has perpetuated to this day, the security has failed to either abolish the church or produce total mistrust in church leaders. State control did not allow the church to fully follow the financial regulation of the world church, nor to report the evolution of Romanian Adventism. Therefore, financial data are gaps or estimates. Despite these shortcomings, the system of



tithes and offerings worked during the communist period, proving the first sub-hypothesis of the research, which states that the origin of the funds was the basis of the development of the church. The reports and statistics presented, even if they are flawed, prove the second sub-hypothesis, which states that the way the funds were used led to the growth of the church. Due to state control, the church was not fully transparent, leading to a tarnished image among the faithful, especially due to the secret account. However, Adventist believers continued to support the system of tithes and offerings. Therefore, the church's transparency regarding the use of funds did not guarantee its development, the church developing despite some transparency issues. Therefore, the last sub-hypothesis could not be demonstrated.

The fifth chapter, *Dynamics of Financial Resources After 1989*, focuses on such aspects as the system of tithes and offerings, statistical and financial reports, Adventist institutions in the post-communist period. The change of the communist regime was auspicious for the development of the church. The state no longer interferes in the internal affairs of the church,

and its functions according to its statute. As such, the financial regulation of the world church worked without a hitch, so that the church was able to apply the system of tithes and offerings as it is applied worldwide. Over time, the church developed several new educational, medical or media institutions. The Theological Institute continued to develop, becoming Adventus University. The publishing house was re-established and became one of the first profile institutions, at the level of the world church. The data presented in this chapter demonstrate all three working sub-hypotheses. The theology of the system of tithes and offerings developed by the Adventist Church worldwide, including the Adventist Church in Romania, demonstrates that the source of the funds was the basis of the church's development. Financial reports from the post-communist period show that the church has a financial system based on the allocation of percentages of tithes to various categories of expenses or institutions and respecting the destination of offerings. This fact demonstrates the second working sub-hypothesis, which states that the way financial resources were used led to the growth of the church. The adoption of total transparency,

including the financial one, led to the opening of the church not only to its members, but also to the whole world. The financial reports of the Adventist Church in Romania can be found on the online platform of the world church. Also, every Adventist institution in Romania presents periodic financial reports and are audited by specialized bodies. These facts demonstrate the last working sub-hypothesis, which claims that the church's transparency regarding the use of funds guaranteed its development.

The last chapter presents some practical aspects related to the operation of the system of tithes and offerings. The purpose of this chapter is that it can be used as a practical guide to adopt the biblical system of tithes and offerings.

Therefore, the research paper retained the working hypothesis, which stated that the basis of the development of the Adventist Church in Romania was, among other things, the adopted system of tithes and offerings. The three working sub-hypotheses were also retained: the source of the funds was the basis of the church's development, the way in which the financial resources

were used led to the church's development and the church's transparency regarding the use of the funds guaranteed its development.

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