

Resume

The present work aims to contribute to a better understanding of the role of evangelical churches in the construction and reconstruction of post-communist Romanian society, by exploring the intersection between faith and social action. The first chapter establishes the biblical and historical foundations of Christian social action, showing that social involvement is not a secondary option, but an essential dimension of authentic faith. Based on the analysis of fundamental biblical texts and historical examples, from the Early Church to Max Weber, the chapter highlights how Christian faith has always shaped social structures. Of particular relevance in this context is the analysis of Weber's thesis on the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, which demonstrates the profound influence of religious convictions on Western economic and social development.

The second chapter provides a comprehensive literature review distinguishing between three main approaches: social theology (specific to Eastern Orthodoxy), political theology (from Wulfstan to Carl Schmitt), and modern public theology. The resurgence of religion in the post-secular public sphere challenges the classical predictions of secularization theory and brings the need for an interdisciplinary approach, integrating perspectives from sociology, anthropology, philosophy, and political science that are essential for understanding the complexity of the contemporary religious phenomenon.

The third chapter examines the presence of evangelicals in the Romanian public sphere, contextualised within the global phenomenon of religious resurgence. It focuses particularly on the spectacular growth of the Pentecostal movement, from approximately one million members at the beginning of the 20th century to over 640 millions today. In Romania, the Pentecostal Church is the fourth largest denomination, with over 360,000 official members and more than 3,000 places of worship, most of them built after 1989. The chapter critically analyses the tension between the community's numerical potential and its limited public visibility.

The educational dimension of the evangelical presence in the public sphere is presented in the forth chapter, which outlines the impressive development of evangelical confessional education, from university-level theological institutes

(Bucharest, Oradea, Arad) to an extensive network of confessional high schools and primary/secondary schools. This educational infrastructure, which serves more than 5,000 students and includes hundreds of teaching staff, represents a substantial contribution to the Romanian educational landscape, offering a viable alternative to the dominant secular model.

Chapter 5 constitutes the most innovative part of the work, presenting concrete case studies of evangelical social engagement. Major projects such as Căminul Felix, Teen Challenge, the Dumbrava phenomenon, and the Bodnariu case are analysed, showing how evangelical communities have actively contributed to developing effective solutions for acute social problems such as child abandonment, addictions, the marginalisation of Roma communities, and the protection of family rights. These initiatives illustrate the capacity of churches to function as an active civil society, providing social services that complement or even surpass those offered by the state.

This thesis makes significant contributions in several directions. First, it represents a systematic and up-to-date analysis of Pentecostal public theology in Romania, filling an existing gap in the domestic theological literature. Second, it empirically demonstrates the positive social impact of evangelical communities, challenging negative stereotypes and their marginalisation in public discourse. Third, it proposes a model of public theology that transcends the dichotomy between sectarian withdrawal and secular accommodation, advocating for a distinctive and transformative public presence.

The work identifies the main challenges affecting the evangelical community, including the lack of a coherent theological vision regarding social involvement, the fragmentation of social actions, the absence of a unified public voice, and the tendency towards counterproductive political compromises. The 2018 Family Referendum serves as a case study for these dysfunctions, illustrating how the absence of a mature public theology can lead to major strategic failures. In this context, the present work seeks to be a compelling plea for the development of a robust evangelical public theology, capable of articulating a coherent vision of the common good and of mobilizing the spiritual and human resources of communities for social transformation. Against the backdrop of the multiple crises of contemporary Romanian society, the thesis demonstrates that evangelical churches possess both the

biblical mandate and the practical capacity to contribute significantly to the building of a more just and more humane society.