

**“BABEȘ-BOLYAI” UNIVERSITY CLUJ-NAPOCA
FACULTY OF ORTHODOX THEOLOGY**



MAN - DIGNITY – FREEDOM

**The Adopting for the first time on Romanian soil,
in the Principality of Transylvania,
of the Religious Freedom Principle and its evolution in a
relatively short time of 25 years
(1543-1568)**

EMPOWERMENT THESIS

DOMAIN: THEOLOGY

- SUMMARY -

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**Cluj-Napoca
2017**

SUMMARY

The thesis I have prepared for the certification of the quality of conducting doctoral theses in the field of Theology, I believe that it meets the requirements imposed by the legislation in the field (*National Education Law No. 1/2011* and especially the *Order of the Minister of Education and Scientific Research no. 3121 of 27.01.2015* approving the *Methodology regarding the organization and carrying out of the process of obtaining the empowerment certificate*). Thus, the thesis we present in order to obtain the empowerment certificate, presents the results of the scientific research and the professional achievements made public during the period from obtaining the title of Doctor in Philosophy (2002) and the title of Doctor in Theology (2009) until submitting the dossier for the granting of the empowerment certificate, although we consider that it would be suitable for drawing up a complete picture of the didactic and research activity, to also present the papers published in / up to the doctoral dissertations.

In the first part of the thesis I presented a summary of the motivation that led me to prepare this thesis to present in order to obtain the empowerment certificate. From the contents of my dissertation it follows that my main fields of interest in scientific research and academic activity were and still are subordinated to the theological field, concerning the *History and Philosophy of Religions, Church History, Church Law, the Right of Religious Freedom*.

Thus, in this first part, the concerns in my field of activity were concretized by the publication of several books as a single author (6), of a book as a co-author, of several edited / coordinated volumes, in Romanian and English, as well as editing (co-editor) of 2 multilingual volumes, as a result of some international or national scientific conferences, together with a large number of chapters in books, specialty studies and articles, as well as a significant number of scientific papers presented at various national and international scientific events (conferences, symposia, seminars), according to the *List of Publications* submitted to the file.

Due to the fact that in the course of history man's problems, considered to be a microcosm, concerned the minds of many wise men: philosophers, apologetics, polemicists, Church Fathers, theologians, etc., the man representing in existence a very special reality that goes beyond the condition of the other existential forms, I have approached this vast subject especially in the work *Anthropological Aspects in Patristic Thought and the First Christian Centuries*, doctoral thesis in philosophy, in which we decided by the use of some means specific to the History of Philosophy to highlight anthropological aspects in the conception of the Holy Fathers and the Church Writers,

as well as the influence of the anthropological conceptions of the Greek philosophy on the thinkers of the Patristic age and Early Christian centuries.¹ Thus, in the second part of this work, entitled *Cosmogony and Anthropology in Patristic thought*, I attempted to present the views of Church Fathers and Church Writers on cosmogony and anthropology, emphasizing that the significance of Patristic thought is found mainly in its thematic and its subject matter. Thus, the object of this thought is: God, the Logos, the world and the man, widely debated theme in the patristic world. The peak of patristic thinking is however the doctrine of *the Logos* and *the Divine Wisdom*. The *Logos* is considered to be the Divine Person around whom all Christian thinking and practice revolves. The Holy Fathers of the Church have taken from the Greek philosophy the name of *Logos*, but have given it a new, specific significance, understanding through it the generating and saving principle of the universe.²

As far as the world is concerned, it is considered in patristic thinking as the work of the divine *Logos*, a jewel world, a miraculous world. In the patristic conception, the world is not eternal, but has a beginning and is thought to have an end. Man as a miracle of the world, between the sensible world and the intelligible world, was a preoccupation of patristic thinkers and it should be noted that there was almost no Father or Church Writer who had not been concerned with the anthropological problems, the origin of man, its composition, the essence, purpose and value of the soul, and so almost all Fathers of the Church wrote a treaty about the soul. This shows the concern that man has enjoyed with everything he is to thinkers of the patristic age.³ Regarding this topic, I have written several studies, published in prestigious volumes or journals in the country or abroad, as well as several scientific papers presented at various international scientific conferences, published in their volumes (*Proceedings*) from abroad:

Together with the anthropological problems mentioned above, I was also concerned with human dignity, a quality that exclusively reveals the human condition, being par excellence a human value, researching alongside it the fundamental human rights and freedoms, and especially religious freedom. Thus, I analyzed man and human dignity, along with his behavioral coordinates towards other members of society, whether believers or unbelievers, in several studies and articles, according to the attached List of Publications.

¹ Ioan-Gheorghe ROTARU, *Aspecte antropologice în gândirea patristică și a primelor secole creștine*, Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2005, p. 9.

² *Ibidem*, pp. 9-10.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 10.

Thus, in the work *Sabbatarians in the context of Transylvanian life (16th-19th centuries)*, the doctoral thesis in theology, we dealt with a plethora of historical aspects, along with the description of some groups of believers persecuted for their faith, the Hussites, the Anabaptists, the Jews, who found shelter and religious freedom in the Romanian territories, but also with the ideas of the Protestant Reform that entered Transylvania in the 16th century. So we studied the social-political and religious situation of Transylvania, the environment in which the ideas of the Protestant Reform entered along with their consequences and the legal framework regarding the religious freedom of the respective period, with the emphasis that the adoption of the principle of religious freedom by *the Diets* (the legislative body) of Transylvania, created a proper framework to formalize (receive) the religions of the Principality, with the express mention that the legal provisions related specifically to the religions received and not to all religions or religious groups in the Principality.

In this framework, I studied the appearance of the Sabbatarians in Transylvania, researched and presented different aspects of their history, from the appearance and until their disappearance in history, and the result of the research can be found in three papers. In spite of the various waves of persecutions that came upon Sabbatarianism, it survives for 400 years (1580-1980) in the mountainous regions of Transylvania, among the Szeklers. Due to the political events of the summer of 1944, many Sabbatarians were taken by the Nazis to the concentration and extermination camps where they found their end, and their last representatives, who escaped from the camp, lived until 1980 - 1990, after which they disappeared altogether as a religious group while some of them who escaped either emigrated to other countries or integrated into the legally recognized churches in Transylvania.

All these aspects related to the topics presented above have been published in several books, studies, articles and scientific communications, according to the attached *List of publications*. The results of my research, published in books, studies and articles, scientific communications, have been remarked and quoted in the works of scholars and theologians. I believe that the fields studied either in the doctoral studies found in doctoral dissertations or in all published studies leave open the door to future research in the field of man and human dignity, fundamental rights and freedoms, and especially religious freedom, studying and researching the history of minority religious groups, notably the emergence and development of neo-Protestant churches.

In the second part of the thesis I presented some principles, directions, perspectives and objectives in the process of the development of my academic career and future research, emphasizing that, in principle, I also propose, after obtaining the title of doctoral supervisor, improving the teaching and academic activity by developing the teaching techniques and necessary skills for the teaching-didactic process within my current competencies (*History and Philosophy of Religions, Church History, Church Law, the Right to Religious Freedom*), developing and expanding of the specialized knowledge and especially deepening the scientific research in the field.

As far as the *directions of development of my future academic career and scientific research* are concerned, I will seek to work first in the same field of man, human dignity, fundamental rights and freedoms, and especially religious freedom, researching and studying the history of minority religious groups, especially the appearance and development of neo-Protestant churches, in the history and philosophy of religions. If I get the right to lead doctoral studies, both my studies and the PhD students I will coordinate, I will seek to focus their attention specifically on the history of the neo-Protestant cults, histories related to the socio-political context of the time, but especially of the conditions regarding religious and conscience freedom as they were at the time. Thus I will remain involved in the activities so far, but I intend to develop and expand these activities. The development of my academic career and future research is to be done in two main directions: didactic activity (educational) and research activity. In order to benefit from the benefits of both directions of development and to improve them continuously, these directions will not be considered as independent but will be correlated.

The development of the research activity will focus, as before, on participation in national and international specialized events (conferences, symposia, seminars, workshops), participation in national and international research networks and the publication and dissemination of research results and collaborating and developing new methods and results in the field in research projects. The results of future research will be found in the books and articles I will publish as well as in the research projects I will coordinate. In future projects I will encourage students, master students and PhD students to participate in research activities and disseminate the results through their participation in various conferences and symposiums as well as publishing the results in prestigious books and magazines from the country or abroad. In the research activity, I will make it

a priority to encourage PhD students to help them acquire the skills needed for future independent research.

In the field of university management, as a member of the CEAC Commission, within the academic institution where I am a titular teacher, I want to contribute through the evaluation, analysis and action activities to the development of a culture of the quality of the educational act, as well as to the improvement of didactic plans and of the curriculum.

The framework by which I propose to build my university career is based on a set of values: Thus, as a theologian, first of all, I believe that in my academic and research career, both present and future, *spiritual values* have and will have priority, developed through a special relationship (prayer, study, meditation) with God. Then follows the *values needed for a fruitful academic activity*: feedback, transparency, openness to new, communication, teamwork. I wish to build an excellent academic career and reputation to contribute to the success and heightened visibility of the university institution where I am a titular teacher, but also of any other academic institutions I will collaborate with, especially in the theological academic spectrum.

I believe that through my contribution in the field of historical Theology, I contributed to a certain extent to the development of this discipline, that the results of my researches were positively received by the national and international scientific community, that my activity as a member, scientific referent - scientific committees, of journals or scientific conferences, national or international, contribute to good scientific visibility and can contribute to the training of specialists in this research field in the future.