

# Methods and Means Used for the Religious Education of Neo-Protestant Children and Youngsters in Communist Romania

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**ABSTRACT:** Through the laicisation of education in communist Romania, the education and training of the young generation has become the exclusive competence of the socialist state. Through school, the communists had, as their main objective, the education of children and young people in the spirit of material-scientific conception of the world and life. The monopolization of the media, the introduction of materials that favor atheism in the analytical curriculum, and the carrying out of performances in which the main Christian celebrations were caricatured, were just some of the methods of actively implementing the creation of the “new man”.

**KEYWORDS:** church, neo-Protestants, religious education, communism, Sabbath/Sunday school, catechization class, musical/youngsters’ programs

## Introduction

This article represents a revised and added subchapter from the Graduate Thesis titled *The Religious Education of Children and Youngsters in the Communist Period*, unpublished, presented in front of the Evaluation Committee at the University of Bucharest, Baptist Theology Faculty, in June 2007, in Bucharest.

In this Article we want to offer a perspective on the paradigm changes that have taken place in Romania, with the Communist Party being in power, as well as to bring to the attention of the reader the various methods and means used by the neo-Protestant churches for the religious education of their children and young people. Research is an unprecedented one in that the information provided derives, in particular, from the unpublished documents in the Archives of the State Secretariat for Cults (A. S. S. C.), as well as from the Archives of the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives (A. C. N. S. A. S.).

## 1. Paradigm shift

Once the communists took over power, the Romanian state started to undergo transformations with direct and major implications on all areas of life. Because at the religious level the atheism of the nation was meant, the whole attention of the Communist regime focused on the removal of “mythical-religious” ideas from the weak minds of young people, the education and training of the young generation become the exclusive competence of the socialist state (*Scântea tineretului*, no. 1068/1952). Everything was concerted to evade children and young people from religious influence (Modoran 2013, 176). In school, the role of the natural sciences was no longer to show the children that God created the world and man, but the reverse. Religion has started to be considered “opium for the people”, and Marxist-Leninism has become a compulsory subject of study in all schools, teaching religion in schools being prohibited (Deletant 2001, 76) and students were obliged to read anti-religious texts. There were theater performances that were meant to caricature Christmas and other holydays. And even more so, in order to annihilate the idea of a day

of celebration, Christmas day was proclaimed as an industrialization day (Manman 2005, 153). The “Christmas holiday”, as it was known, has changed its name to “Winter Vacation” (*Scântea tineretului*, No 1134/1952; Bucur 2002, 107. 153) and it was to last from the evening of 30<sup>th</sup> December until the evening of 11<sup>th</sup> January of the following year. Christmas was virtually officially suppressed as a holiday for children, and “Santa Claus” was replaced by “Moș Gerila” (Old Frosty) (Bucur 2002, 153).

The most outrageous was probably the fact that the pupils began to be used as propagandists among others and, in particular, in their own families, imposing the idea of the militant child, who was to be actively involved in the re-education of his parents. Children who had the courage to denounce their “retrograde” parents were considered heroes (Manman 2005, 154). In an interview with “Revista 22” in 2013 on the post-1965 communist repression, the Director of investigation of the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives said that “in the 1980s minors were recruited in schools and high schools” (Nagat 2013), tricked into signing a commitment to snitch their families, friends and spy on their closest friends and assume they would never talk about it. Also, one of the aims of the Department of Cults was to recruit students from different institutes of religious training, so that later, when they were to be pastors and possibly to advance in the hierarchy of their cult, to become instruments of political propaganda inside those cults (Petcu 2005, 372 – 373). To illustrate this, we remind that in the plan of measures on the Adventist cult, dated February 11<sup>th</sup> 1983, it was specified that special attention was to be paid to attracting the students at the Adventist Theological Seminar in Bucharest (A.C.N.S.A.S., no. 141, volume 1, 167).

Against this background, keeping children and young people in the religious sphere was more than a necessity, a move that the neo-Protestant cults in Romania fully assumed.

## **2. The most efficient catechization methods**

The Securitate authorities found that among the most varied and intense forms of catechism among the younger generations was practiced in the neo-Protestant churches. All neo-Protestant churches organized special religious services for children and young people, training them in various church activities (Modoran 2013, 177).

### **2.1. Sabbath and Sunday School**

This “school” system was seen by the Communist authorities as a very effective means of strengthening and developing neo-Protestant cults. The data revealed that, at least in the Adventist cult, this system of education and training was compulsory. In the first part of the communist regime, parents were guided by pastors not to send their children to school on Saturday, when the Sabbath school and the divine service were held in church (A.S.S.C., no. 3413/21 February 1961, 1).

Both Sabbath and Sunday schools included three degrees of education: Pre-school, elementary and medium (A.S.S.C., no. 103/1960, 1). This ensured that the religious education was differentiated according to the understanding and knowledge of each child. The Catechetical activities within the Sabbath and Sunday schools took place both in churches and in unauthorized private houses (Popescu 1986, 19), on Saturdays or Sundays, but also in other days of the week (Baptist Church no. 2 Oradea – Monday and Pentecostal Church no. 1 – Tuesday) (A.S.S.C., no. - /1989, 2). In general, religious themes, specific to each cult, were taught, biblical texts to be memorized were distributed (those from the daily wall calendar of religious cults), which were then presented by the children either within the Sabbath or Sunday schools or in musical and youth hours in churches (A.S.S.C., no. 1/1974, 2). In the Adventist cult they also studied the comments drawn by the cults Union of Conferences on biblical texts, in the form of the biblical Lessons, which were, in fact, the textbooks for this

school. Some questions were also used in the cult's magazine, the "Curierul Adventist" (Adventist Review) (A.S.S.C., no. 12/6/1975, volume 1, Inv. 3, 1). The Pentecostal cult used instead the "Panorama biblica", a translation from English with 12 colorful drawings, with explanations (A.S.S.C., no. - /1989, 3). It is also worth noting that those who led these activities were thoroughly prepared, consulting in addition to the manual, as it was in the Adventist cult, other materials, such as the books "Patriarchs and Prophets", "Prophets and Kings", "The Desire of Ages" and "The Acts of the Apostles". The children who could do so, also took notes.

There were, in some churches, in the annexes designed specifically for such meetings, sand crates, figures, molds, dolls and biblical scenes, instruments by which the instructors illustrated the Bible truth in front of the children. However, many times, for fear of the inspectors of religious cults, the instructors gave up such methods (A.S.S.C., no. 93/1960, vol. 8, Inv. 95, 1).

Also, at the Adventist Cult, in parallel to the regular activities of the Sabbath school, children were taught songs, poems, various stories so that on the 13<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the quarter, a festive program would take place, in front of the entire church, a program drawn up by the Community committee and approved by the district pastor (A.S.S.C., No. 57/2 June 1989, 2). At these programs, children presented in front of the audience poems, religious stories and singing (A.S.S.C., no. 57/2 June 1989, 1), after which they were given small gifts (A.S.S.C., no. 103/1958, vol. 1, inv. 122, 3).

## **2.2. The indoctrination hour**

In the case of the neo-Protestant cults, the catechisation was performed for church members, adults, children, and young people, as well as for sympathizers (relatives). Also called catechisation hours with friends (A.S.S.C., no. 15/6/1/1976, vol. 1, inv. 4, 2) or biblical study hours, these were the essential framework for preparing the sympathizers for baptism. There were also invited to attend the classes the young people over 14 years of age (A.S.S.C., no. 100/29 June 1989, 1; A.S.S.C., no. 273/26 June 1989, 2) for the purpose of their moral-religious training and for the purposes of baptism. Such biblical study hours were met at all four non-Protestant cults, which shows the interest in the in-depth and organized study of the Bible of both sympathizers and children and young people. Within them, at the Adventist cult, the pastors or the elders presented, from the "Book of Doctrines" (A.S.S.C., no. 100/29 June 1989, 2), certain specific doctrinal principles, using the interrogative method – questions and answers. After the end of the religious service in the morning, a number of 10 to 15 biblical verses were indicated, offering only the chapter and the verse on the tickets, and within the indoctrination hour, those who ran the religious service, they asked questions, and the young people gave the answer according to the texts they read during the break between religious services. At the Baptist cult, the training during these indoctrination hours took place on the basis of a theme elaborated by the cult leadership in 1951.

At the Adventist cult, such hours of religious education and training for baptism generally took place on Saturday outside the religious services program (A.S.S.C., no. 100/29 June 1989, 1) an hour before the beginning of the afternoon worship services (A.S.S.C., no. 170/30 June 1989, 3; A.S.S.C., no. 100/29 June 1989, 1) and were organized by an elder, assisted by two or three believers (A.S.S.C., no. 25/30 June 1989, 2). Often exceeding 60 minutes and being organized, especially for children and young people under the age of 18 (also attending adult members) (Popescu 1986, 19), the Bible study hours were times when the cult dogmas were presented. Emphasis was placed, as I mentioned before, on the Bible study, so that, until the age of baptism, the main books of the Holy Scriptures were read (A.S.S.C., no. 25/30 June 1989, 2). These sessions often started with a summary of the previous lesson prepared and presented by young people (A.S.S.C., no. 12/6/1975, vol. 1, inv. 3, 1), then followed by the study itself. In order to stimulate participants, those who carried

out the study asked for answers to questions exclusively from children and young people, and these were rare cases where they did not know the answer. Also, to stimulate youth, competitions such as “Bible book by book” or “Questions from Adventist History” were organized, offering prizes and incentives (A.S.S.C., no. 93/1959, vol. 8, inv. 99, 1).

When it comes to the Baptist cult, the hours of indoctrination took place on Sundays, the exact date for such moments being set by the wall calendar of the cult. With a fixed theme established by the pastor, the biblical hours included teaching, focusing on the biblical text, in the first part, and in the second part discussions were held, in which children and young people were mainly trained (A.S.S.C., no. 100/29 June 1989, 2). There was also a special role for prayer books, prepared annually, with believers of all ages being urged to learn prayers every day and to say it several times (Popescu 1986, 20).

At the Christian Evangelical Church cult, where the Bible was studied, instruction was practiced through texts to be learned, through questions and answers (A.S.S.C., no. 412/4 June 1973, 6). Being isolated cases, they were quickly destroyed by the measures imposed by the leadership of the religious cult (A.S.S.C., no. 281/30 May 1971, 7).

Apart from Saturday and Sundays, there were also such meetings on Wednesdays at the Pentecostal cult, meetings lasting for two to four months, focusing on the study of the Scriptures (A.S.S.C., no. 100/29 June 1989, 2). The Bible study was in accordance with the calendar themes, like the Baptist cult, but within this cult there were no special themes fixed by the pastors (A.S.S.C., no. 74/26 June 1989, 2). Knowing from the calendar the topics to be addressed during study hours, each participant was expected to study the indicated biblical chapter beforehand, the role of the meetings being to clarify possible misunderstandings of biblical texts (A.S.S.C., no. 25/30 June 1989, 4).

### ***2.3. Youth hour or musical program***

The youth hour or musical program was considered by the inspectors of the cult to be “extremely harmful”, because of its mandatory, methodical and permanent character, because of the fact that lessons are taught in an active manner and because of the practical applications made by the organizers (A.S.S.C., no. 224/3 July 1989, 5). Musical hours were held, at the Adventist Cult, every second and fourth Saturday of the month, in the afternoon, (A.S.S.C., no. 78/19 February 1974, 6; A.S.S.C., no. 147/27 June 1989, 1; A.S.S.C., no. 88/ 28 June 1989, 1), and every Sunday morning or afternoon, at the Pentecostal and Baptist cults (A.S.S.C., no. 281/30 May 1971, 7). In many cases, special programs were being prepared and religious services were turned into true religious celebrations. Children and young people would prepare, during the week before, and learn poems and songs.

According to the assessment of the Securitate, the religious education of children and young people took the most systematic form within the Adventist Church (Modoran 2013, 177). For this purpose, in the Union of Conferences, which was the central leadership of the cult, the “Youth Department” was organized as early as 1924, later known as both the “Department of Missionaries” and “Music and Pastoral Care”, after 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1944. The slogan under which this department operated is also worthy of record, especially after 1944, namely, the “preservation of youth in the church” (A.S.S.C., no. 93/1959, vol. 8, inv. 99, 1). Very early on, Vasile Florescu, together with Indricau Gheorghe, who was the director of the Adventist Seminar, and with the help of the Union of Conferences, versified certain biblical topics and drew up material for the youth organized in the “Music Department” (A.S.S.C., no. 93/1956, vol. 8, inv. 99, 1).

During these musical classes were recited, either the religious poems, published in the cult’s magazine, “Curierul Adventist”, or compositions of some of the believers (A.S.S.C., no. 1/1974, 2). The musical classes were intended to guide children and young people in preserving the principles of the cult and encouraging them to attend churches. Parents were

also guided to raise their children in faith (A.S.S.C., no. 78/19 February 1974, 5; A.S.S.C., no. 124/14 April 1980, 1). Sometimes, the poems had a missionary character and moral pressure, in the sense that the young people leaving the cult were blamed, as well as the parents who let their children lose their faith (A.S.S.C., no. - /1971, 3). There were also played and sung religious songs, in solo, vocal groups or with the band or instrumental orchestra performance (A.S.S.C., no. 124/14 April 1980, 1). But to be able to interpret the religious songs correctly, they had to participate in the rehearsals organized by the conductors. This way, the young people were provided weekly with training and musical education, either together with all believers, within the services of the cult, or in coral or orchestral formations (A.S.S.C., no. 57/2 June 1989, 1).

Sometimes the musical hours were evangelistic in nature, in the sense that they were invited to take part young people from the Orthodox cult, but their attendance of the church was irregular (A.S.S.C., no. 147/27 June 1989, 1). The cult inspectors also noticed that, when youth hours were taking place, the number of children and young people missing from Saturday's courses was higher than on other Saturdays (A.S.S.C., no. 78/19 February 1974, 6).

At the Baptist cult, Sunday afternoon's religious service was turned into religious celebrations, suitable for and led by young people. There were many religious orchestra singing, solo singing and vocal groups with children and young people. Religious poems were also recited. In this way, in the Baptist cult, musical classes were a powerful attraction for both children and young people and for adult believers (A.S.S.C., no. 12/8 January 1980, 1).

It was not obvious that such musical classes for children and young people were organized in the Christian Evangelical Church. But there was such a religious service in the Pentecostal cult in many counties every Sunday morning. In the musical classes, children and young Pentecostals recited poems, played vocal and instrumental songs (A.S.S.C., no. 281/30 May 1971, 7).

### 3. Other Ways of Catechization

Another method of religious indoctrination of children and young people was that of **preachings** delivered by pastors and committee members, teaching young people and children and guiding them to listen to their parents, to attend churches, to keep the dogmas of the cult, to study and not adopt the "worldly" way of life (A.S.S.C., no. 78/19 February 1974, 6). Because religious services were compulsory, both for adult and young believers, they were offered chairs and benches specially designed for them in church. Also, in church, within the religious services, children and young people had to follow the example of adults in their attitude during prayer, and the songs, learning, through the example of others, how to pray and sing a large number of religious songs (A.S.S.C., no. 3683/1974, inv. 891, 3). They were also stimulated by questions from biblical texts, addressed directly from the pulpit (A.S.S.C., no 12/8 January 1980, 1). At the same time, the pulpit was the place from which parents were also presented the need to train and maintain children and young people in the religious sphere. For example, in a sermon at the Grand Adventist Church, Popa Dumitru told how the teacher first put the pen in his hand, which was not easy, the same should do the parents and present the Gospel to children and young people. At the Christian Evangelical Church, on Carol Davila Street, Bobora Simion, a member of the church's "brothers' council", speaking of the fact that he was brought up and educated by an old man, launched the idea that every elder should take under his religious protection a child so that the latter be redeemed by Jesus. At the Pentecostal Church, in Popa Nan Street, engineer Marinescu Constantin, a member of the church committee, in a presentation in which he referred to the faithfuls and the intellectual and religious training of the youth, implied that a good intellectual can only be a good believer (A.S.S.C., no. - /1982, 5).

The **evangelistic actions** were also opportunities for children and young people to participate (A.S.S.C., no. 100/29 June 1989, 2; A.C.S.S., no. 58/C/14 March 1986, 2). There were also cases, within the Baptist cult, when it was tried to have a monthly scheduling of some cycles of sermons specially designed for young people (A.S.S.C., no. 55/22 July 1989, 3).

Often accused by religious inspectors, in their reports to the Securitate, of cultural backwardness, of not knowing how to behave in society, the four non-Protestant churches, especially the Adventist and Baptist ones, often organized **lessons of ethics and social education**, on the behavior of children and young people in society. In this way, and not only for that reason, they were trying to annihilate the inspectors' unjust accusations. To illustrate, we recall the following churches: adventist – Țigănești, Brâncieni, Peretu, Dulceanca, Braniște, Oinacu, Pistrala; baptiste – Alexandria, Țigănești, Nenciulești. (A.S.S.C., no. 181/3 July 1989, 2; A.S.S.C., no. 170/30 June 1989, 7; A.S.S.C., no. 147/27 June 1989, 1).

Although they had not an educational character in themselves, but rather a recreational one, the four neo-Protestant churches frequently organized **trips** to attract and keep children and young people around churches. As expected, organized trips had a profound religious content (A.S.S.C., no. 178/3 July 1989, 2). Excursions were often organized and sponsored to reward children and young people the effort with which they gained the religious knowledge they were taught in church (A.S.S.C., no. -/1973 – 1974, 20).

Between 1980 and 1985, within the Adventist cult, they organized with children and youngsters **missionary trips**, this being the main means of attracting young people to church during this period, as this trips were used to train and invite to participate in such trips young people from other confessions (especially from the Orthodox cult) (A.S.S.C., no. 170/30 June 1989, 6). Adventist pastor Moldovan Wilhelm organized trips which lasted for nearly two weeks each summer in the Apuseni Mountains, with a large group of young adventists. Most of the Adventist churches in Transylvania organized such excursions in the mountains (A.C.N.S.A.S., no. 141, vol. 14, 5). It was also a habit in the Baptist cult to organize such camps or trips during the holidays for the Baptist children. Under the supervision of the organizers, children were taught lessons from the Bible, having a varied and pleasant daily program (Grossu 2006, 173). In the summer of 1982, Negruțiu Paul organized a camp for children and young people from the families of Baptist believers, in Tărcăița village, Tărcăia commune, Bihor County (A.S.S.C., no. -/12 October 1983, 1 – 2). Also, some neo-Protestant cults even organized balls (we do not have enough information to indicate the cult) (Otovescu 1989, 87).

In order to intensify the religious life of children and young people and to diversify the teaching methods of instructors, the Adventist and Baptist cults also tried some rather “bold” methods for that period. In Galați, the Adventist Church organized a **kindergarten for the children of the Adventists**, as manager it was appointed the wife of the first elder, assisted by three more believers. The program was designed so that children were familiarized with the principles of the cult through stories, poems and songs. As expected, at the energetic intervention of the religious Department, the kindergarten was soon dissolved (A.S.S.C., *Documentary Material on the Activity of the Cults*, no. - , 3).

In Caraș-Severin county, the Baptists organized special religious services with children every Sunday in the parish house, which they had declared to be a church, different from the legal one, in which they met without authorization. The children were taught religious songs, religious poems, and learned by heart biblical texts, which they then commented on under the direction of an adult. The artistic programs were also prepared here (A.S.S.C., no. 122/5 March 1980, 2).

Citing both the lack of pastors and the desire of young people to have a religious training, it has emerged the need to organize **biblical classes** for future preachers, sometimes led by people from the country, and sometimes by tourists coming from abroad. Such examples were reported at the Baptist Church “Speranța” in Arad, where about 80 young

people participated, Church no. 2, in Oradea, and the Pentecostal Church in Botoșani. In order to accommodate young people with the pulpit and the principles of preaching, in the Baptist churches of Beiuș and Tinăud, Pastor Vereș Teodor organized **homilethical courses** with young people (A.S.S.C., no. - /1989, 1). **Theological courses** for young adventists were organized at the Adventist cult. Starting with 1985, in the basement of the Adventist Church building in Cluj, Cuza Vodă street, no. 12, theological training courses were held for the clergy of the churches in the area, the teaching staff being made up of pastors Wilhelm Moldovan, Timiș Alexandru and Gyeresi Ernő. Three years later, the courses were interrupted following the intervention of the religious Department, which had learned about the courses (Orban 1997). Classes were also organized with selected young people who were trained for two years to be “helpers in ministry”. The courses were organized as a school, with teachers, on different specializations. Such a case was found at Baptist Church no. 2, in Oradea, the principal of the course being Paul Negruț, and among the teachers was Badea Pavel II and Bodor Alexandru (Orban 1997).

The pastors of the Christian Evangelical Church were not trained in a special educational establishment. Against this background, among young people who were more active in the church and wanted to become pastors, there was a desire to study more closely and organize certain theological issues. These young people asked the cult leadership to periodically organize meetings with such character at the headquarters in Bucharest, where they should be presented and debate certain theological issues. As expected, the cult failed to lay the foundations for such courses. Seeing this, young people took the initiative of organizing meetings every three months. To this end, about 60 young people, belonging to communities in Moldavia, Bucharest and Brașov, gathered for a long time in prayer houses without the consent of the cult leadership (A.S.S.C., no. 26/s/10 February 1982, 4).

A special feature of the four neo-Protestant churches was also the organization of actions with young people, particularly during public holidays: 1<sup>st</sup> May, 23<sup>rd</sup> August. There were also organized **celebrations in honor of the young people who went to the army**, always initiated, and organized by mature people, people with responsibilities within the church committee. On such occasions, advice on behavior was given to young people, and at the same time all believers were called upon to pray for their prompt return (A.S.S.C., no. - /1971 – 1972, 11). Celebrating **the age of consent** of young people was another pleasant practice, which was celebrated in a special way, and the moment was used very skillfully to prove to young people that the church adults are with them (A.S.S.C., no. - /1971 – 1972, 12). Although they were very rare, there were also situations when the birthdays of the children attending the catechism classes were celebrated, offering them candies and various gifts (A.S.S.C., no. 2573/21 July 1989, 3). Such a case was registered at the Baptist Church in Dămuc, Neamț County, at the initiative of the church deacon Dandu Ion. Other times, in the desire to show students that the church wants to keep in touch with school, at the beginning and end of the school year, in the church, were held **celebrations in honor of the children who went to school or who completed their studies** (A.S.S.C., no. 249/18 June 1971, 2). On 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1974, between 19:30 – 23:45, in the Baptist Church, on no. 10 Ospățariei Street, Cluj-Napoca, a feast was organized, followed by a potluck, in the presence of 80 – 90 persons, on the occasion of the end of the school year, to which participated young people from Baptist families. On this occasion, the graduates handed over the baton to the youngsters following them and held a toast for success and the living preservation of the Baptist faith (A.S.S.C., no. 9371/2119/12 May 1975, 8). Measures have often been taken to annihilate such activities.

Another method, specific to the Pentecostal cult, was **fasting and prayer**, in which many young people were involved, who, even though not baptized, by persisting in prayer, considered to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit, thus being received by God (A.S.S.C., no. 3683/1974, inv. 891, 4). In these “hours of persistence”, every believer prayed on his own, louder and louder, getting closer to yelling. Such acts created, within the church, a climate

that was hard to withstand psychologically. The inspectors for the cults, recording such acts, noted: "A general moaning, a general sobbing, and an oppressive, desperate atmosphere that certainly had a significant influence on the psychic of all those present". However, the most affected were children and young people (A.S.S.C., no. 85/D/5 March 1973, 2; A.S.S.C., no. 109/1962, vol. 1/A). The children, who were kept in long „perseverance” and forced to fast, according to reports of the cult inspectors, were dizzy at school, could not answer the teachers' questions and sometimes even slept in their benches (A.S.S.C., no 85/5 March 1973, 6). In many cases, teachers filed a lawsuit against children's parents because of this (Nicoară 1960, 43; A.S.S.C., no. 103/1957, vol. 13, inv. 143, 52).

The neo-Protestant parents also prohibited children and young people from watching films, with many of them having no TV at home. As for the use of radio, we must add that, when allowed to listen to programs, there was a rigorous selection, with the emphasis on **religious broadcasts** from abroad, thus these becoming important means of religious education for children and young people (A.S.S.C., no. - /1971, 3).

#### 4. Consequences Of Catechisation

The intense and continuous indoctrination of the children and young people in the church resulted in the fact that most of the descendants of the families of believers, once becoming of age, were baptized and became active members of the respective cults (A.S.S.C., no. 170/30 June 1989, 8; A.S.S.C., no. - /1971, 5).

Another consequence of the catechism classes was that after taking part in such activities and taking notes on special notebooks, children and young people were trying to share their notes with their school colleagues. There were cases when some Adventist students from different schools, such as Deleni, Albești, Rebricea, Bacani and even in Bârlad, had in their bags, along with textbooks and various books, religious materials, some of them trying to give them to their colleagues (A.S.S.C., no. - /1 March 1974, 4). Many students were also interested in inviting their colleagues to their churches (A.S.S.C., no. 412/4 June 1973, 3), "the neo-Protestant cult's excellence in the christening of young members of the Communist Youth Union" (A.S.S.C., no. 2509/2 February 1973, 3).

Despite all the above mentioned cathetic methods, however, children and young people were also reluctant to the idea of religious education. Although there were isolated cases, however, sometimes the parents' attitude towards their children went too far, with some children being beaten to follow the parents' faith. In a report to the Securitate, the representative of Dobrogea region reported on a case in Tichilești village, Tulcea county, where a Baptist believer was beating his daughter so that she would follow his faith. Contact was made with the pastor Eremia Pavel, who was asked to investigate the case and take appropriate measures against the believer (A.S.S.C., no. 109/1961, vol. 1, inv. 103, 38). In other cases, parents were aggressive in proselytizing amongst their children. In Telești village, Târgu Jiu district, the believers brought the school children to Iordănescu's home during their religious practices. Terrified by the way the religious service was carried out, the students did not go to school the next day (A.S.S.C., no. 103/1958, vol. 1, inv. 122, 20). Last but not least, it should be remembered that sometimes families with children who were reluctant to the idea of religious education intervened through young people from other families of believers, seeking to bring them to the path the parents had chosen. For example, when Ioniță Dumitru's two children, a pentecostal believer from Reșița, were indecent in following the path of "faith", he allowed some meetings to be held with young people in his house, where they prayed and sang, and managed, according to his statement, to bring them back "from the world". Being found by the state authorities, in a meeting in a private house, in the evening, they were penalized with a fine (A.S.S.C., no. 3683/1974, inv. 891, 4).



## Conclusions

In communist Romania, religious education was perceived as a necessity to keep children and young people in the religious sphere. Either through the Sabbath or Sunday School, indoctrination time, youth time or coral and orchestral groups, through lectures, fasting and prayer, hours of social education or lessons of ethics, trips, biblical courses and even through the setting up of kindergartens, the neo-Protestant cults have largely succeeded to keep their children and their young people in churches. Even more so, the religious education they were given, grew in them the missionary spirit, through them many other young people came to know God.

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