

## PROMOTING TRADITIONAL FAMILY BY THE CHURCH – RELIGIOUS MARKETING STRATEGIES

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### Abstract

*We live in a postmodern period where the old values or imperatives have lost the force as they were replaced by new values. Amidst this chaos, the Church opens its road by promoting values such as family and marriage based upon responsibility, understanding, compromise, etc. If the current trends move towards the personal satisfaction with everything this aspect involves, the Church is trying to preserve the traditionalism, the union between a man and a woman, the marriage.*

*In our work we aim to analyze the methods by which the Orthodox Church promotes the heterosexual marriage.*

**Key words:** religious marketing, family, values, Church, consensual union.

**JEL Classification:** M11

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Postmodernism has entailed a number of changes, leaving behind modern values and proposing a series of changes in the socio-cultural and economic environment. According to Gianni Vattimo, God's death triggered a crisis of humanism, linked to an increase of the technical world and a rationalized society (Vattimo, G., 1993). If we consider the two characteristics of postmodernism - on the one hand the diversity and fragmentation, on the other hand the fast social change, then we can consider that at the level of social groups, the nowadays family has already suffered these mutations.

Today we face new challenges as the social institutions in our country do not adapt quickly enough to the new demands of the society. An example is the school and the family. The current family has undergone a number of changes mainly due to influences from the West, given that increasingly more people travel to work abroad. There are quite many cases when one of the family members goes to work abroad to support the family, but once back home he or she returns with a set of values different from those existing in the home country; on the one hand there is the "gay" family and on the other there is the "consensual union".

There are also the new medical technologies and the opportunities that these technologies provide to us have paved the way to practices unacceptable from an orthodox standpoint: the in vitro fertilization and the artificial insemination. These practices, in addition to not being accepted by the Church, raise a number of moral why not bioethical dilemmas. An example of dilemma may be the one of Adriana Iliescu – the woman who gave birth to a child at a fairly advanced age. The ROC's opinion (Romanian Orthodox Church) on this issue was clearly expressed, arguing that the in vitro fertilization should not be practiced. For the Church, family and implicitly the union between a man and a woman are sacred, which is why the campaigns aim at promoting the respect for the traditional values.

In this paper we analyze the way in which the Church promotes traditional values regarding family and we will put an emphasis on the religious marketing.

## II. MARRIAGE AND FAMILY - RELIGIOUS AND SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

In the literature, family is defined as the group of persons which have rights and obligations stemming from the marriage act (Apostu, I., 2013). The family can be analyzed from many points of view; on the one hand from a structural perspective: the numerical component and the division of roles and statuses, or ..... In post modernity there are a number of changes related to the role and status of women, given that the women's empowerment and the women's movements contributed to a number changes. However, what is interesting from a theological standpoint, it is how the woman was regarded and treated within the conjugal relation, because the value conception of marriage and its value depends primarily upon this is, as this is the *fundamental* condition of the family unity. When one regards the woman as spiritually equal to the man, one also understands and unity in marriage. Otherwise the marriage is simply a social contract - as between the employer and the employee, in the best case - which expires *sine die*. And this not only for obviously metaphorical substrate, but for its deeper spiritual apprehension, recognizable in speaking of the Hebrew Book of Genesis: "*an aid to be face to face with him*," essentially a profound paradigmatic formulation crystallizing its intimate structure a series of ordering principles: equality, responsibility, mutual support and the identity of the identity orientation for reaching common goals and ideals.

Marriage means the physical and spiritual communion between man and woman to form a family, which is an institution ordained by God in the Garden of Eden and was designed to be indissoluble, i.e. a unique link between one man and one woman alone. As he was made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 26-27), "man is a community being living in a family, in a relationship of communion. The man accompanies the woman after the primary order of the Creator and founds a holy and blessed institution of the family for mutual aid, the birth of kind, obedient and God-fearing babies, for the perpetuation of the species and the human race "(His Beatitude Father Teoctist). The greatest wealth, even the most important blessing is the gift of life, the gift of fertility. (Meroz, C., 1982). The first blessing of Genesis refers to fecundity: "*Be fruitful and multiply*" (Genesis 1,22; 28 and 9,1). The classical blessing to brides is to have many children: "*Our sister, may you increase to thousands upon thousands; may your offspring possess the cities of their enemies.*" (Genesis 24,60, cf. Rut 4:11). So did God wish to the family of the first people and blessed them to multiply and possess the earth, taking the fundamental coordinates that should be at the core of each new family. This truth has become so important for the Hebrew people that monogamous family composition model was the basis of any social or religious-political organizations (Vaida, V., 1988). Thus, the very link between the leaders, the people and the people's monotheistic faith in God was regarded as a matrimonial bond, which must remain indissoluble based upon the devotion and affection involved. The family, as the fundamental institution, will enjoy a special attention from the new legislation (Răducă, V., 2001).

It is known that in the time of the prehistory, which is even today shrouded in the fog of the human's inability to investigate them in depth, there was the "institution" of the *matriarchate*. During this primary matriarchate, the man would have a secondary role. But the roles were about to change soon, so the *pater familias* receives the right to life and death over the woman and her children. And so the woman's fate became difficult. She was seen as a necessary evil for the gratification of men and to ensure continuity of the human race on the earth; she was seen an object that man could love or shatter as he pleased.

In the postmodern society where the individual rights and freedoms are the core of the general speech, the Church tries to keep the traditions and customs of old, pointing out that God created man and woman and that it would be immoral to try to built the family otherwise. According to the Bible, "*Be fruitful and multiply and possess the land*" is considered an imperative, given that the values promoted today no longer focus on the group, but on the individual.

However, the family has always been a stable form of human community (Apostu, I., 2013). The variety of marital cohabitation considered both culturally or historically has determined various approaches that have surprised the functional family structure in a constant evolution and adaptation (Apostu, I., 2013). Thus new forms of cohabitation have emerged, such as the "consensual union" imposed by the new postmodern standards.

In 2002, Romania organized the first Census to include questions about consensual union, the conclusion of which was that 3.9% of couples lived in consensual union (Apostu, I., 2012, Apostu, I., 2013).

### III. THE RELIGIOUS MARKETING AND THE PROMOTION OF TRADITIONAL FAMILY

The religious marketing as a sub-domain of the marketing is a technique of social change management, i.e. the design, control and implementation of programs aimed at enhancing the acceptability of an ecclesiastical idea or action by the target groups. Religious marketing is a part of service marketing. Service marketing numbers several fields, including non-profit marketing; religious marketing is included in this category (Juravle, A. I., Sasu, C., Spătaru, G.C., 2016). However some authors consider that marketing was used to promote religion in ancient times as the Bible is one of the greatest marketing texts of the world (Stevens, Loudon, Wren, Cole, 2006).

However there is some criticism to the marketing applied in the religious field, among which:

- The marketing wastes the money offered by the parishioners
- The marketing activity acts as an intrusion into the lives of individuals
- The marketing is manipulative
- The marketing militates against the spirit of leadership
- The marketing desecrates religion
- Larger churches need more communication
- The marketing applies the win-lose principle
- The marketing is consumer-oriented (Strâmbu-Dima, A., 2008).

However, we must underline that the introduction of marketing in the life of religious organizations is a necessity, since nowadays the religious values tend to be lost; the contemporary challenges such as: the secularization, individualism, the erosion of ideology, the changing demographics, the increased competition, the increased costs of operations, the scandals on the religious scene, the transmitting of religion from one generation to another, the privatization of faith, etc. (Strâmbu-Dima, A., 2008) determine the individual to separate from the Church, to live in sin, to be more concerned about his physical well-being (whatever that might be) than his spiritual well-being. In these circumstances, the Church needs to be increasingly heard and promote the Orthodox values. The role of the religious marketing is on the one hand to influence people's behavior, alongside the cultural, social, personal and psychological factors, and on the other to contribute to the market segmentation on religious criteria. The main beneficial effect of the application of religious marketing is the respect shown to the religious beliefs of each and every person and the religious communities in general (Guriță, D., 2015).

Regarding the religious marketing and promoting traditional values regarding the union between a man and a woman, we believe that the strategies used by the Church are welcome, whereas we are witnessing a series of changes in the social field as the individual freedoms and rights are considered to be more important than the values promoted by the Church.

On the other hand, the occurrence of new medical technologies allowed the development of experiments that raise a number of questions about family. So using new technologies one can store information in the cyberspace, one can socialize with other individuals who live in a different part of the globe, or we can have virtual relationships. There is a possibility that through new technologies, the postmodern family (understood as a couple consisting of two persons of the same sex) can have their own children; since we are on the brink of this occurrence, we must already state that since 2010 there are mice with two fathers of gametes produced in the skin. It is more than likely that in a not far future man will be able to create human gametes from different cell types.

Regarding the implications of new technologies in the private sphere of the individual, the bioethicist Julian Săvulescu of Oxford University published a study that raises questions about how we use the new technologies: the Romanian-Australian philosopher provides as example two deaf lesbian women living in a couple who want to give birth to a child conceived by artificial insemination with the same disability (Savulescu, J., 2002). Certainly, at bioethical level dilemmas are very complex, but what we want to highlight in this paper is that new scientific and medical discoveries cause mutations at the level of society and social group. If in our country the of the Orthodoxy influence on the family environment determines a behavior oriented towards traditionalism, in the developed countries are things completely different. In this context, the issues are quite different as in postmodern society morality has been replaced by the responsibility towards each other.

The issues outlined above raise a number of questions both in terms of bioethics and morality and implicitly from a Christian standpoint, since God created man and woman to form a family and in any case this type of (postmodern) family is not approved by the Church.

We believe that the strategies to promote the traditional family are welcome and that under no circumstances must we put the rights and freedoms of the individual above the word of God.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In this paper we wanted to bring into question some aspect related to the importance of family from the perspective of the Church. We considered it was appropriate to address this issue because the value mutations and changes and especially during the postmodern era contradict the sacred books and especially the perception of the Church. From this point of view we consider the religious marketing as a form of emphasizing the importance of the traditional family in a society where individualism and the cult of the individual prevail. We believe that strategies used by the Church to promote traditional family are welcome in the social sphere, as we witness changes as the traditional values are being overturned by the interpretation of the individual's rights and freedoms. We consider that the way in which the religious marketing is regarded should however not be negative.

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