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The Philanthropical Dimension of the Expression „The Liturgy after the Liturgy in Ion Bria’s Thought

Abstract

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SUMMARY

The list of *abbreviation*

IRM – journal „International Review of Mission” (Geneva)

ST – journal „Studii Teologice” (București)

O – journal „Ortodoxia” (București)

EIBMBOR – The publishing House of the Institute of the Bible and Mission of the Romanian Orthodox Church

FR – *Philokalia*

GB – journal „Glasul Bisericii” (București)

BOR – journal . „Biserica Ortodoxă Română” (București)

MO – „Mitropolia Olteniei” (Craiova)

WCC – World Council of Churches

VO – journal „Vestitorul Ortodoxiei”

MB – journal „Mitropolia Banatului” (Timișoara)

MMS – journal „Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei” (Iași)

RT – journal „Revista Teologică” (Sibiu)

SOP – journal „Service Orthodoxe de Presse” (Paris)

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Key words:

- pastoral-missionary activity,
- missiology,
- parish,
- relation between clergymen– laymen,
- social theology,
- philanthropy,
- Liturgy and mission,
- „The Liturgy after the Liturgy”,
- Ion Bria

Introduction

From the missionary-ecumenical point of view, the professional, didactic and editorial activity undertaken by Father Ion Bria makes us affirm that we are dealing with the most important Romanian Orthodox missionary theologian and one of the most important orthodox missionary theologians of the 20th century. With an original and profound thinking, addressing the most up-to-date and difficult topics of the so tormented life of the Orthodox Church in this "century of totalitarianism", father Bria fully fulfilled what Father Dumitru Stăniloae "prophesied" in the two letters he sent to him, somehow delegating him as a "spiritual heir" to him, and wrote the following: " I believe that you are the only one able to make a level interpretation of my writing, for you are the only one who thinks personally, the author, the only Romanian theologian of generations after me, troubled by problems and with new, subtle, poetical expression resources. Perhaps if you undertook such a larger work, which would also be a further advance of the Romanian theological thinking, you would do a great job of the work to make known the creative spirit of the Romanian Orthodoxy. I always remain firmly convinced that you are the only theologian after me who thinks alive, original, capable of others and other insights and broad and personal synthesis. Each of the others has one attribute: industriousness, logic, sense. You have them all. You have the whole complexity of a theologian. "¹

This complexity spoken by Father Stăniloae is reflected in the variety of theological themes approached in his work - comprising 34 books, 19 post (university) courses and over 270 studies and articles, published into Romanian, English, French and German by father Ion Bria.

The state of research. Despite this impressive theological productivity, both in terms of quantity and qualitatively, the work of father Ion Bria was, in our opinion, not received into the Romanian theology to its true value. There is still no monograph to articulate its major contributions to the development of the contemporary orthodox missionary theology. It is true that important steps were made in this direction by the two homage books that were published in Arad and Sibiu.² The latter, coordinated by Prof. Dr. Nicolae Moșoiu, adds to the other contributions made by this brilliant apprentice of Professor Ion Bria to the valorisation of his thought by younger theologians.

1 Nicolae Moșoiu, Ciprian Iulian Toroczka, "Postscript", in Ion Bria, *Theological Hermeneutics. Her Dynamics in Structuring Tradition*, Second Edition, Andreiană Publishing House, Sibiu, 2009, p. 204.

2 Ioan Tulcan, Cristinel Ioja (coord.), *Pr. prof. dr. Ion Bria (1929-2002): The reception of his theological thinking and its relevance for the overpass of the ecumenical & missionary deadlock*, Editura Universității Aurel Vlaicu, Arad, 2009; Nicolae Moșoiu (coord.), *The Relevance of Reverend Professor Ion Bria's work for contemporary society and for the life of the Church. New Directions in the Research of Church Doctrine, Mission, and Unity.*: Sibiu, 14-17 mai 2009, the publishing house of „Lucian Blaga” University , Sibiu, 2010

Besides, this research has also had the impetus in the person of the father Professor Nicolae Mosoiu, who signaled to us the importance of the phrase "The Liturgy after the Liturgy" alike in the present Orthodox and ecumenical theological space.

The purpose of the research. The present paper aims precisely to highlight the relevance of the father Ion Bria's work in today's theology. It is no less true that the biography of the Romanian theologian, which put its mark on his thought, must also be taken into account. As a result, we will contextualize when we consider the framework in which Professor Ion Bria promoted his cultural, social and theological ideas. Thus, we believe, they will be better understood, and finally we will retain the directions that these ideas can enroll in the Romanian theology in the future.

Research methodology. In view of the above mentioned, it is understood that the methodology we use will be interdisciplinary. Among the methods we consider there are the following:

The historical method will help us evoke the most important stages in the missionary history of the Romanian Orthodox Church, going from the Middle Ages to the present day. This historical excursion is necessary in order to identify the fundamental principles and results that defined the Orthodox mission, namely the position of the missionary theology developed by father Ion Bria in continuity with his predecessors, while at the same time bringing his original contribution.

The comparative method will also contribute to a better understanding of what defines the specificity of the Orthodox mission, especially in relation to other missionary paradigms, which are found in other Christian traditions and denominations. Active member of the ecumenical dialogue, theologian Ion Bria has closely observed the mutations produced in other Christian confessions. Thus, he was able to make a comparison with the missionary Orthodox line, based on the Biblical-Patristic tradition. Of course, this mission was and is determined by socio- historical conditions, but the ecclesiological principles that underlie the mission and which are unchangeable must never be forgotten. Consequently, every place and historical period determines discontinuities, without altering the essence of the Church's mission.

The analytical method helps us to identify and to analyze the levels on which the Orthodox mission takes place from the perspective of the father Professor Ion Bria. It also provides us with data to highlight the "strengths" and "weaknesses" of this paper, as well as possible ways to improve and develop it in the future.

The synthetic method will help us to bring together these missionary principles that are found in the theological work of Professor Ion Bria. Their synthesis value will be a necessary step for the generation of today and of the future to understand its importance in the various and difficult

historical contexts (1) the communist period in Romania, marked by the atheistic materialist-dialectical thinking; 2) ecumenical dialogue of the twentieth century, marked by great hopes and, at the same time, by the skirmishes and challenges of post-modern culture: secularization, globalization, relativism, syncretism, etc.; 3) the transition period after 1990, when the Romanian society in general and the Romanian Orthodox Church were in particular at the opposite of antagonistic tensions: traditionalism / renewal, conservatism / openness, continuity / discontinuity, and so on). Only in this way can the guidelines drawn, sometimes only sketched by father Ion Bria, be developed, and implemented by all of us, his followers, "actors" on the stage of the philanthropic and missionary work of the Romanian Orthodoxy. In a way, even father Professor Ion Bria pointed out that the role of "the bridge between the East and the West" that the latter must have is more a task, not a privilege. It is a task that Romanian Orthodox theologians cannot ignore - and this is a point over which the great Romanian missionary theologian stopped with reflections that were worthwhile to remember, assumed and applied.

Structure of the work. This thesis is structured in five major chapters. In the first chapter we will draw a bio-bibliographic sketch of father Ion Bria, in which we will mark the main stages of his life - one dedicated to the service of the Church - and the main books and studies that will constitute one of the most original and exhortative contributions brought by the Romanian theology in the second half of the 20th century - the beginning of the 21st century.

In order to better understand the place occupied by father Professor Ion Bria's thought in the recent Romanian theology, the second chapter will briefly provide a picture of the Romanian Orthodox missionary theology of the 20th century. It will be noticed that Professor Ion Bria, unlike most of his predecessors, made a critical theology, but did not fall into the temptation of "anti-sectarian" theology. Denouncing any kind of proselytism, he will at the same time promote a theology of openness to the Christian values of any Christian tradition and confession (emblematic, his manual is entitled "Dogmatic and Ecumenical Theology"). His intention was to distance himself from the temptation of a defensive orthodox theology "of middle" which used Catholic theological arguments against Protestant theology and vice versa. On the contrary, the great Romanian theologian fought for a specific Orthodox theology, both in method and content, which made it original. The prospect was a positive, not a negative one.

The third chapter will present philanthropy in the Romanian Orthodox Church until the middle of the 20th century. It is a necessary chapter to understand the realities from which Professor Ion Bria began to draw the missionary-philanthropic tasks for the Romanian Orthodox Church, especially in the new socio-historical conditions after 1990.

The next chapter analyzes the phrase "The Liturgy after the Liturgy" in the thought of Father Professor Ion Bria. It shows 1) the origin and the definition of the expression, 2) the guidelines and 3) the pastoral-missionary implications. This fourth chapter is the central point of the research project, materialized in this paper.

The last chapter, the fifth, is a prospective one: it refers to the posterity of the expression "Liturgy after the Liturgy" and the pastoral-missionary theology in the Romanian Orthodox Church today. Here are some predictions about the directions on which they would have their social-philanthropic and missionary activity, so as to use the principles set forth in his theological work by the great Professor Ion Bria.

At the end of our research, we have shown that through all his theological, pastoral-missionary and ecumenical activity, father Ion Bria remains a model to be followed for the generations of theologians today and in the future³ Positive appreciation in this respect is found in the two homage books, one appearing in Arad and the other in Sibiu, which I have cited many times along this thesis (see note 2). Here is one example: father Bria, through his intense and long-lasting activity - for almost thirty years - within the structures of the Ecumenical Council of Churches, "is one of the most dynamic and authoritative theological voices of our time regarding the presentation and the dialogue of Orthodoxy with the Western world "⁴.

It is no less true that there were also critical voices that questioned certain concepts and directions that father Professor Ion Bria has drawn. For example, Father Ioan Ica sn., referring to the Manual of Dogmatic and Ecumenical Theology compared to Father Staniloae's Dogmatics, wrote that although the former, "is to be on the same line of the Treaty of Orthodox Dogmatic Theology of Father Dumitru Stăniloae, but he uses for the Orthodox dogmatic theology the equivocal term of ecumenical theology, which in the author's view is a "Christian dogma" (!) that abstains from confessional symbolism and makes Christian theology valid "per se and for all". At the same time, the treaty no longer appears as the fruit of a long teaching experience of dogmatic theology, but "a scholarly floralegium" made up of various dogmatic studies published over the years, "in order to

3 Contribution brought by Ion Bria to the development of the Romanian Orthodox dogmatic theology is synthesized in Cristinel Ioja, *Dogmatics and Dogmatists. Prologomena, on the deepening of the Orthodox Dogmatic Theology in Romania in the second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century*, Marineasa publishing house, Timișoara, 2008, pp. 175-214.

4 Vasile Vlad, "The Dynamics of Orthodoxy: Identity and Renewal - From the Prospects of Father Professor Ion Bria", in N. Moșoiu (coord.), *cited works.*, p. 449.

be part of a manual or a compendium for students and which constitutes the substance of the *ad hoc* course of "dogmatic and ecumenical theology," held at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Sibiu between 1995-1999. For this purpose, the author made the Geneva-Sibiu shuttle at longer time intervals "⁵.

His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel Ciobotea, then Metropolitan of Moldavia and Bucovina, said about the content of the work *Orthodoxy in Europe. The place of Romanian spirituality*: "Even if the argumentation of his claims is not always sufficiently developed, which may sometimes give rise to reservations from the reader, the author provokes us to reflect on the pastoral, ethical, social, missionary and ecumenical issues. The critical remarks of the author on some aspects of today's Christian theology and life, which the Trinitas Publishing House respects, even if they do not share them " and so on. (see p. 5-6).

Father Professor Gheorghe Dragulin in his review of the *Orthodox Theology Dictionary*, although welcoming some positive aspects - such as the method of integrating liturgical expressions, prayers in the *Dictionary*, and illustrating doctrinal statements almost exclusively through extracts from the Philocalia - also signals some inconsistencies of this work, on the basis that Father Bria "was not in a position to personally correct himself." Among these inaccuracies, he remembers: 1) the notion of the Kenosis understood as "annihilation" of the divine nature in the act of the Incarnation; the anointing of the ointment by the bishop and not in a solemn frame in the synod. At the same time, the text must "give up its many French words" and it is necessary for the Orthodox authors to emphasize their "sacred" dignity⁶.

In turn, professor Daniel Buda, in the introduction of a volume published in Sibiu, which included the translation of Ion Bria's studies, showed that there are issues in his work that are not, in our opinion, acceptable or present today: "the opening of the Orthodox cult "or at least some aspects of this concept otherwise interesting from ecumenical point of view; the enthusiasm of ecumenical prayers; Finally, the reconsideration of the position that only the full unity in faith allows the sacramental and Eucharistic communion⁷.

5 See Pr. Prof. Dr. Ioan Ică, Review at Prof. Dr. Dumitru Popescu, "Jesus Christ Pantocrator", in ST 2 (2006), no. 1, p. 224

6 According to father Gheorghe I. Dragulin, Review at Pr. Prof. Dr. Ion Bria, *Dictionary of Orthodox Theology A-Z*, Bucharest, 1981, 399 p., In BOR 99 (1981), no. 9-10, pp. 1130-1132.

7 Daniel Buda, „Introductory Study”, in Ion Bria, *Studies of Ecumenism and Mission*, p. XIX.

However, father Bria himself was perfectly aware of the role that the theologian now needs to play-as he was said to exert a true "harrism"⁸ - and the words spoken in his provocative autobiography can be regarded as a kind of "belief" that animated it throughout life:" Every generation has its "Ambiguous", especially the current generation living in a world without landmarks. Today, at a radical turning point in history, the turns are extreme and dangerous drifts. It is in the responsibility of the theologian to help students, priests, Christians, young people and adults to find out in the labyrinth of postmodern society and civilization the itinerary of personal salvation in the footsteps of Christ so that they reach the knowledge of the Truth. I am convinced that the Church suffers when it is not sustained and accompanied by a lucid, critical, and hopeful theology. "⁹

In our opinion, the above desiderate was embodied in the theology of Father Professor Ion Bria. His main quality was that of orthodox missionary theologian and lately his contribution to the development of pastoral-missionary theology is increasingly emphasized, a contribution that was paradoxically recognized more in the West than here.¹⁰

In a way, our doctoral project had the very purpose: the (re) discovery and (re) valorisation of one of the most original and provocative contemporary Romanian Orthodox theologians, as was the case of father Ion Bria.

Regarding the phrase "The Liturgy after the Liturgy", it must be said that it is met more and more frequently in the Orthodox mission studies, both in Romanian theology and in the Pan-Orthodox theology. Other ecumenical documents (such as *Together towards life*), as well as theologians from other Christian denominations and traditions, who have emphasized the importance of the Orthodox sacramental conception in exhorting and understanding the missionary work. Moreover, some theologians have expanded the meaning of the phrase, going in different directions from the

8 See in this respect especially Ioan C. Teșu, "Theologian and Theology, in the Thought of Father Professor Ion Bria", in Ioan Tulcan, Cristinel Ioja (coord.), cited works., pp. 291-314, and Ciprian Iulian Toroczka, "Father Professor Ion Bria and the Harisma of the Theologian", in N. Moșoiu (coord.), op. cit., pp. 535-549.

9 Ion Bria, *The Second Baptism. The itineraries of a faith and the theologians of openness*, Reintregirea Publishing House, Alba Iulia, 2005, p. 266.

10 "The fame of the missionary of the right faith of Prof. Dr. Ion Bria far exceeded the boundaries of the Romanian theology, becoming already a corifeu of universal missiology." See David Pestroiu, "Father of Prof. Dr. Ion Bria - missionary of Orthodoxy", in N. Moșoiu (coord.), cited works, p. 447.

original meaning proposed by father Bria. Thus, another phrase, "The Liturgy before the Liturgy", has been made.

1. Regarding the contribution made by the Romanian theologian to the development of the Orthodox missionary theology in the second half of the 20th century, this was done on the following levels: the triadological character of all ecclesial and human existence. The Holy Trinity is the eternal source of communion. "God is love" (1 In 4,8). God is thus the absolute and perfect goal of human life, the culmination and model of perfection. The mission of Christians is to highlight the special importance of the trinity dogma on the destiny of Christians in particular and of all people and of all creation in general.

2. The Christological character of humanity and the mission of the Church, for it is nothing more than a confession of the Logos' centrality in all creation. The understanding of Christ as God's Logos was doubled by the rediscovery of the doctrine of the "cosmic Logos." Jesus Christ is the "central man" through who all are understood, the unifying basis of all humanity. This Christological character is doubled by the pneumatological one: the presence of Christ is one in a permanent dynamism, and this dynamism is made by the Holy Spirit. Thus, He is present in the words of Scripture, spoken by Himself in His Messianic ministry, repeated liturgical and sacramental words, and with the same evangelistic effect that penetrates the heart and converts to the divine mystery, but also in the words of prayer as a human response in love to the divine loving and saving intercession .

3. The work of evangelizing the Church - founded by the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and by sending the Holy Apostles to the Gentiles - is nothing else but the proclamation of the Person and of the work of salvation of Jesus Christ. The gospel has a universal character, and the work of evangelism is an incessant requirement of members of the Church at any time and space. The action of evangelism is essential to the building of the Church, the Body of Christ in history; the extension of the Church is the very purpose of the Christian mission. The incessant presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church since its founding reveals another dimension that it possesses: the eschatological dimension. It is the sign, the parable, and the anticipated presence of the Kingdom of God. Testimony through the quality and holiness of life is the most effective mean of mission, for it is the most favorable mean to show the living presence of God in the lives of men.

4. The mission coincides with the "extension" of the Church - the mystical body of Christ. Although apostolicity is most clearly reflected in the succession of the Apostles in the sacramental hierarchy of the three clerical steps, missionary work must also be lacking in laity. Thus Bria

speaks of an "apostolate of the laity". Especially in and through the Liturgy, the whole Church expresses its sacramental role, a role that can not be separated from its state of being "the people of God".

5. The liturgical orientation of the Orthodox mission represents one of the most important contributions made by Father Bria to the development of the 20th century missionary theology. He strongly emphasized the indissoluble relationship between the Church, the mission and the Holy Sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist. In this respect, he paid great attention to the phrase "Liturgy after the Liturgy", which brings together deacon, spirituality, theological education, social ethics, Christian political discipline. The formula "With peace to come out!" From the Byzantine Liturgy marks the symbolic and sacramental "sending" of believers into the world; At this time there is no "going" of the Church, but its "entry" into the world, a passage in another mode of liturgy, which is the "the Liturgy" after the Liturgy. Consequently, the relationship Liturgy - Spirituality - Mission is based on the richness of Church life in its sacramental aspects.

6. The mission cannot avoid the Church's relationship with the world, and the merit of Father Bria is that he has not avoided "the confrontation" with the secularized tendencies of the modern (post) modern world in which he lived. Challenged to give pertinent answers to the present problems of humanity, the Church must firmly reaffirm - in a true re-evangelism - some of its fundamental principles: the value of every human person, the universal character of the saving work of Jesus Christ, the purpose of man - "Deification" or the socio-ecclesial reality as being between "already" and "not yet".

7. The optimistic view of the Romanian theologian towards today's socio-cultural realities is also highlighted in his command for the realization of a "Christian culture". It is "the expression of the gospel and of the Christian faith in the intellectual thinking (philosophy), in the artistic manifestation (poetry, art, music), in the social organization (ethics, morals), in the historical view (political regime, state form). Christian culture is also said to be "all that gives the identity of a human community, by faithfulness to origins and openness to the future." The affirmations are the theological basis of recognizing the consistency and the value of creation, of humanity, of matter. The ultimate thing being to transfigure the world, Christian Revelation neither degrades matter nor destroys natural and human products.

8. The Christian mission also involves the issue of inculturation or the problem of transmitting the revealed content of the Holy Tradition in all times and to all people everywhere. The first aspect raises the issue of receiving the Gospel, meaning the interpretation of the biblical text according to

the cultural and social context of the mission. The second concerns the mechanism of self-criticism that maintains the synthesis, the metamorphosis function of Tradition. Here the Orthodox Church has a decisive role, whose "genius" lies precisely in its dynamic conception of Tradition. His "development" marks two other interdependent aspects: on the one hand, the entire work of Jesus Christ in time, that is, the message of the Apostles sent to the Church, and on the other hand, the mode of transmission of Divine Revelation in the history of the Church, from one generation to another, but as a succession in which the Church, at the same time, continues and renews the faith from the beginning (Jn 16, 13). There is an application and a deepening of the evangelical message in Tradition to meet the spiritual needs of believers in every new generation of the Church, and this work takes place as an ecclesial "charisma" under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the "Spirit of Truth". It is an act requiring discernment (*phronema*, "the mind of Christ") of the whole ecclesial body (it is done through *consensus ecclesiae*); is a critical act of continuous definition and reception, in freedom and unity in diversity.

Another merit of father Professor Ion Bria is the alarm signal he drew: without orthopraxy, Orthodoxy risks falling into isolationism and sectarian exclusivity. *Lex credendi* is indissolubly linked to *lex orandi*. From a Christian perspective, the mission of the Church to eradicate poverty and remove social injustices brings about Christian philanthropy (and implicitly the role of the parish in today's world. Father Bria sees the unity and integrity of Christian life in the triangle of 1) spiritual life, personal mystic through prayer that makes the altar of self-sacrifice to God to make room for full grace and divine love to dwell inside so that we do not live anymore but Christ lives in us, 2) Eucharistic Liturgy and 3) "The Sacrament of the Brother", the social deaconship that establishes new community ethics, the evangelical one conforming to the divine and ecclesial will and work for the world. Also, the denunciation of social strata, of all kinds of injustice, is done simultaneously with the denunciation of missionary methods in contradiction to the evangelical spirit, in this case proselytism. (In the footsteps of Father Dumitru Stăniloae, among the proselytizing work of the 20th century, not only the activity of certain sects, but also the Uniatism promoted by the Roman Catholic Church.

The phrase "Liturgy after the Liturgy" appears in the vocabulary of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in the early 1970s, being linked to the name of the current archbishop of Albania, Anastasios Yannoulatos. At the World Missionary Conference on *Salvation today* (Bankog, 1972), he insisted on the sense of tradition and the dual movement in which the Church trains its faithful by worship: the public assembly for the Eucharistic Liturgy and other rites, namely the reference to the Christian testimony. The concept was resumed and deepened on other occasions

by Orthodox theologians, the most important moments being remembered by Father Bria: *The Orthodox Consulate Confessing Christ Today* (Cernica Monastery, 1974), *The Confession Testifying Christ through the liturgical life of the Church* (Etchimiadzin, Armenians, September 16-21, 1975), the Consultation *on the Ecumenical Nature of the Orthodox Testimony* (Valamo, Finland, 24-30 September 1977), the mission conferences in Melbourne (1980) and San Antonio (1988) from Nairobi (1975), Vancouver (1983) and Canberra (1991). The notion has also had an impact on the drafting of ecumenical documents of great importance: *Martyria-Mission. The Witness of the Orthodox Churches Today* (WCC, Geneva, 1980), *Go Forth in Peace. Orthodox Perspectives in Mission* (WCC, Geneva, 1982; 1986), and some chapters in the Eucharist section of the BEM ecumenical document also refer to the missionary aspect of the Liturgy. Specifically, these documents highlighted the double movement in which the Church engages its believers: on the one hand, it gathers them publicly for the Eucharistic liturgical celebration, and on the other hand sends them to testify in the world through the quality of their moral and spiritual life. Though little obvious at first glance, it is about a close relationship between missionary work and Trinitarian theology: the mission is the transposition of trinitarian theology into practice, for the sending of apostles by Christ is based on the fact that He Himself is sent by the Father in the Spirit (Jn: 20,21-23). Also, the missionary mission is essentially the sending of the Spirit (according to 14: 26) which reveals the life of God as a life in communion (I Corinthians 13:13). The Christian mission consists in attracting humanity and creation in general into this life of communion that exists in God.

The relevance of the missionary view of Liturgy after the Liturgy is a particularly important one for the Orthodox and ecumenical missionary theology. See in this sense the provocative study signed by Tamás Juhász, "Happy End or Happy Begin? Protestant remarks on Professor Ion Bria's book "Liturgy after the Liturgy", in N. Moşoiu (coord.), cited work, pp. 203-210. Other contributions are the reviews of the book by Father Ion Bria, *Liturgy after the Liturgy*: M. Blyth, "The Liturgy After the Liturgy, An Ecumenical Perspective," in *Ecumenical Review* 44 (1992), no. 1, pp. 73-79; James J Stamoolis, "The Liturgy of the Liturgy: Mission and Witness from an Orthodox Perspective (Review)," in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 23 (1999), no. 2, p. 84; Rev. J. van der Merwe, "Bria, Ion 1996 - The liturgy after the liturgy, mission and witness from an orthodox perspective" (*Book Review*) in *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 53 (1997), no. 4, pp. 1452-1453. Some contemporary exegetes have concluded that a "Liturgy after the Liturgy" must necessarily imply a "Liturgy before the Liturgy"! See, for example, Irina von Schlipe, "The Liturgy after the Liturgy", available at

<http://www.incommunion.org/2008/08/02/the-liturgy-after-the-liturgy/>. It says here: "There is no Liturgy after the liturgy without a liturgy coming first. That is: we cannot go out into the world and serve God without first joining other people in the Eucharist. But can there be a Liturgy without a committed service to God preceding it? Surely we must praise God in our work and our life, before we can suppose to come and be partakers in his glory at the liturgy. Unless we engage the Holy Spirit in our work, then whatever we do, however virtuous and useful, will not go beyond professionalism and be, at best, philanthropy. It will still be very useful and welcome to its beneficiaries, but it will not bring us into communion with God. "

This idea of "Liturgy before the Liturgy" is also defended by Bishop Geevarghese Mor Coorilos, "Mission as Liturgy before Liturgy and as Contestation," in P. Vassiliadis (ed.), *Orthodox Perspectives on Mission*, Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series, Oxford 2013, pp. 175-178.

Among the Romanian Orthodox theologians who analyzed (even tangentially) the expression "Liturgy after the Liturgy" Professor Aurel Pavel, *Critical Reflections on the Christian Mission*, 2 vol., Astra Museum Publishing House, Sibiu, 2014 and 2016, pr. Conf. Dr. Cristian Sonea, with the studies "The role and place of the laity in the mission of the Church in the view of Father Ion Bria", in Ioan Tulcan, Cristinel Ioja (coord.), *Homage to Father Professor Ion Bria (1929-2002). The reception of his theological thinking and his relevance for the overpass of the ecumenical & missionary deadlock*, Aurel Vlaicu University Publishing House, Arad, 2009, pp. 220-244; "Orthodox missionary paradigm and current state of research in the field of Missiology in our country", in *Faith and Life in Christ, the Directory of Salaj Episcopate*, Zalău, 2008, pp. 429-442., and assistant lecturer Ciprian Iulian Toroczka, with the studies "The Liturgy After The Liturgy": The Basic Principle in Rediscovering the Valences of the Orthodox Mission, in Prof. Dr. Aurel Pavel, pr. lect. Dr. Daniel Buda, lect. Dr. Ciprian Iulian Toroczka (eds.), *Making Mission from the Model of Christ. The specificity of Orthodoxy and Ecumenism today*, Astra Museum, Sibiu, 2013, pp. 292-307; "Role of the Parish in the Fulfillment of the Mission of the Church. Contribution of Professor Ion Bria (1929-2002) ", Laurentiu Streza, Vasile Vlad, Florin Dobrei, Radu Trifon, Alexandru Vlad (eds.), *Postmodernism - A Challenge to Contemporary Christianity*, Felicitas Publishing House / Publishing House of Deva and Hunedoara Episcopate, Stockholm / Deva, 2015, p. 415-435¹¹. There are also other summary articles, such as the one written by

11 See also the chapter "Orthodox missionary theologian's profile in the twentieth century: Pr. Ion Bria", from Ciprian Iulian Toroczka, *Mission of the Orthodox Church, yesterday and today*, Astra Museum Publishing House, Sibiu, 2016, p. 49- 57.

deacon Dr. Cătălin Radu, even entitled "Liturgy after the Liturgy"¹², or other Romanian theologians touching the issue (see, as an eloquent example, the contributions of Prof. Dr. Cristinel Ioja, "The Renewal" as a Pastoral-Missionary Desideratum in the Theological Thought of Father Professor Ion Bria, in *Homage to Father Professor Ion Bria (1929-2002) The reception of his theological thinking and his relevance for the overpass of the ecumenical & missionary deadlock, The International Symposium Arad 25-26 February Aurel Vlaicu University Publishing House, Arad, 2009, pp. 78-89, respectively "Father Professor Ion Bria and his specific contribution in the elaboration of a dogmatic theology with ecumenical implications", in the volume *The Relevance of Reverend Professor Ion Bria's work for the contemporary society and for the life of the Church. New Directions in the Research of Church Doctrine, Mission, and Unity*, coordinator Prof. Dr. Nicolae Moșoiu, "Lucian Blaga" University Publishing House, Sibiu, 2010, pp. 321-334 Also see Prof. Dr. Nicolae Răzvan Stan, The full exploitation of the Orthodox doctrine by the harshness of human existence: an evaluation of the theological thinking of Father Ion Bria "in *Homage to father professor Ion Bria (1929-2002). The reception of his theological thinking and his relevance for the overpass of the Ecumenical & Missionary Deadlock, The International Symposium, Arad 25-26 February 2009, Coordinators: Ioan Tulcan and Cristinel Ioja, Aurel Vlaicu University Arad, 2009, pp. 245-269, and "The Principles of Orthodox Spirituality Professor Ion Bria ", in the volume *The Relevance of Reverend Professor Ion Bria's work for the contemporary society and for the life of the Church. New Directions in the Research of Church Doctrine, Mission, and Unity*, Coordinator: Assoc. Dr. Nicolae Moșoiu, "Lucian Blaga" University, Sibiu, 2010, pp. 481-494).**

Interestingly, almost all of these authors refer to the expression without distinguishing between the ideas of Archbishop Anastasios Yannoulatos and those of Professor Ion Bria - yet another proof of the similarity of the vision and ideas of the two great Orthodox missionary theologians.

Regarding the relevance of the missionary phrase, father Professor Bria himself emphasized that the expression "Liturgy after the Liturgy" had the merit of avoiding the danger of liturgical isolationism, which had overtaken Orthodoxy. On the other hand, it restores to its true dimension the liturgical service as a form of martyrdom. More importantly, however, is that the "Liturgy after the Liturgy" vision maintains the balance between personal holiness, asceticism and prayer, and the social and cultural context in which Christians and people in general live. Orthopraxy,

12 Cătălin Radu, „The liturgy after the liturgy”, text available at <https://www.crestinortodox.ro/religie/liturgie-dupa-liturgie-118518.html> (accessed on 12.05.2018).

asceticism, are intended not only for the bodily passions, but also for the social evil that manifests itself in institutions and ideologies that degrade man and detracts him from his destiny. We conclude our study with the criticism that Father Ion Bria made to a certain type of Orthodox theology: "Identified with the mystical theology of the Eastern Church, with apophatic gnosis, with the spirituality of the hesychasm, with the atonite monasticism, Orthodoxy seemed to concentrate in any way on theology - the mystery of God's being and its contemplation, leaving aside the iconomia, that is, the unfolding in history of the plan of God to save the world. Dualism between nature and person, the separation between the icon of the Son and the Holy Spirit, the complex character of the person, all these attributes preferred by certain Orthodox theologians ... gave the impression that theological reflection is incomplete. "What was lacking was the revelation of the socio-moral components that the notion of theosis possessed. But the mystical experience of deification cannot be deprived of the connection with the liturgy and everyday life of man. The economics of salvation takes place on several levels, and the values of the gospel must avoid past situations, when between theoria and praxis there is a rupture, not reciprocity. "From here, the blatant contradictions encountered in the former communist era: it was about theosis, but human rights violations were tolerated; were talking about Philokalia, but the eyes were closed to the destruction of creation with the weapons and nuclear technology "¹³. A lesson of the recent past that Orthodox theologians today cannot afford to ignore...

In fact, we can even see a "universalism" of father Bria's thought, both in pan-Orthodox and ecumenical plan. Father Nicholas Mosoiu rightly highlighted this aspect in a medallion that he dedicated to him in an "Orthodox Handbook of Ecumenism"¹⁴. (Some exegetes even spoke of Bria's "struggle" against "the hegemony of Hellenism and Slavonicism."¹⁵) A convincing example is the following.

In one of the ecumenical documents, *Together towards Life. Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*¹⁶, reference is made to pr. Bria and the phrase "Liturgy after the Liturgy", referring to the presence and the work of the Holy Spirit in the world, the source of the Christian mission

13 See Ion Bria, *Liturgy after the Liturgy*, p.30-32.

14 Nicolae Moşoiu, „Fr. Ion Bria”, in Pantelis Kalaitzidis et al. (eds.), *Orthodox Handbook on Ecumenism*, Regnum Books International, Oxford, 2013, p. 190-193.

15 Răzvan Emanuel Fibişan, "Hegemony of Hellenism and Slavonicism from the perspective of Father Ion Bria", in AB no. 10-12 (2015), pp. 90-97.

16 Jooseop Keum (ed.), *Together towards Life. Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, WCC Publications, Geneva, 2013, p.9. Text available at https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/publications/TogethertowardsLife_SAMPLE.pdf (accessed on 10.06.2018).

(Sections 16 and 17): „Biblical witness attests to a variety of understandings of the role of the Holy Spirit in mission. One perspective on the role of the Holy Spirit in mission emphasizes the Holy Spirit as fully dependent on Christ, as the Paraclete and the one who will come as Counselor and Advocate only after Christ has gone to the Father. The Holy Spirit is seen as the continuing presence of Christ, his agent to fulfill the task of mission. This understanding leads to a missiology focusing on sending out and going forth. Therefore, a pneumatological focus on Christian mission recognizes that mission is essentially christologically based and relates the work of the Holy Spirit to the salvation through Jesus Christ.

Another perspective emphasizes that the Holy Spirit is the “Spirit of Truth” that leads us to the “whole truth” (John 16:13) and blows wherever he/she wills (John 3:8), thus embracing the whole of the cosmos; it proclaims the Holy Spirit as the source of Christ and the church as the eschatological coming together (synaxis) of the people of God in God’s kingdom. This second perspective posits that the faithful go forth in peace (in mission) after they have experienced in their eucharistic gathering the eschatological kingdom of God as a glimpse and foretaste of it. Mission as going forth is thus the outcome, rather than the origin of the church, and is called “liturgy after the Liturgy.”¹⁷

The studies published by Bria priest in the *International Review of Mission*, and especially those in which the phrase "Liturgy after the Liturgy" is found, are considered by a Greek theologian as an essential contribution brought by Orthodox theologians in the contemporary ecumenical dialogue. Referring to the contribution made by Archbishop Anastasios to this effect, it is said: „The “liturgy after the Liturgy” was a new perspective, although rooted in the heart of tradition.

17 Romanian translation by father Dr. Daniel Buda, "Together for Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Contexts. A new affirmation of the World Council of Churches (CMB) on Mission and Evangelism," in Pr. Prof. Dr. Aurel Pavel, pr. lect. Dr. Daniel Buda, lect. Dr. Ciprian Iulian Toroczka (eds.), *Making Mission from the Model of Christ. The specificity of Orthodoxy and Ecumenism today*, Astra Museum, Sibiu, 2013, pp. 24-56 (available at <http://teologie.ulbsibiu.ro/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/a-face-misiune-vol-1-320.pdf>, accessed on 10.05.2018): Biblical witness attests to a variety of understandings of the role of the Holy Spirit in mission. One perspective on the role of the Holy Spirit in mission emphasizes the Holy Spirit as fully dependent on Christ, as the Paraclete and the one who will come as Counselor and Advocate only after Christ has gone to the Father. The Holy Spirit is seen as the continuing presence of Christ, his agent to fulfill the task of mission. This understanding leads to a missiology focusing on sending out and going forth. Therefore, a pneumatological focus on Christian mission recognizes that mission is essentially christologically based and relates the work of the Holy Spirit to the salvation through Jesus Christ. Another perspective emphasizes that the Holy Spirit is the “Spirit of Truth” that leads us to the “whole truth” (John 16:13) and blows wherever he/she wills (John 3:8), thus embracing the whole of the cosmos; it proclaims the Holy Spirit as the source of Christ and the church as the eschatological coming together (synaxis) of the people of God in God’s kingdom. This second perspective posits that the faithful go forth in peace (in mission) after they have experienced in their eucharistic gathering the eschatological kingdom of God as a glimpse and foretaste of it. Mission as going forth is thus the outcome, rather than the origin of the church, and is called “liturgy after the Liturgy.”

The meaning of this outlook is that the vision of the kingdom, which is revealed in the Divine Liturgy, concerns the whole world, and that it has to be diffused as witness and service to the whole of society. The witness that is given after the Liturgy is an organic part of it, not something added on and therefore of secondary importance. The formula "liturgy after the Liturgy" was first articulated by Anastasios Yannoulatos in 1975 in Etchmiadzine, Armenia, and since then, along with the valuable contribution of Ion Bria, has become an established phrase that is used often in the IRM¹⁸.

And other theologians, of various denominations, took over the phrase "Liturgy after the Liturgy." For example, the Greek Orthodox theologian Petros Vassiliadis, also involved in the ecumenical dialogue, uses it to recall the "cosmic dimension of liturgical theology"¹⁹. Even when the Roman theologian is not quoted directly, Vassiliadis echoes his ideas about the indissoluble relationship that exists (and must be exercised through missionary work) between liturgical life and social-philanthropic life.²⁰

These were just some of the most important contributions made to emphasizing the importance of the phrase "Liturgy after the Liturgy" today. Without any claim of exhaustiveness, we note that his posterity is increasingly brilliant. On the other hand, there are still many aspects that seem to be in-depth. For example, it would be interesting to make a parallel with the movements of "liturgical revival" both in Orthodoxy (perhaps in future a PhD thesis to compare the works of Ion Bria and Alexander Schmemmann?²¹), as well as in other Christian traditions would be that of Roman Catholicism, promoted by Odo Casel and Lambert Beauduin²²). In fact, in neoprottestantism, echoes the missionary conception of Priest Ion Bria, where the central position is occupied by the missionary phrase "Liturgy after Liturgy"²³.

18 Athanasios N. Papathanasiou, „Tradition as Impulse for Renewal and Witness: Introducing Orthodox Missiology in the IRM”, in *IRM* 100 (2011), no. 2, p. 203-215, here p. 209.

19 Petros Vassiliadis, „Apocalypse and Liturgy”, in *SVTQ* 41 (1997), p. 95-112, here p. 112 nota 56

20 See idem, „The Social Dimension of the Orthodox Liturgy: From Biblical Dynamism to a Doxological Liturgism”, in *RES-Sibiu*, 9 (2017), nro 2, p. 132-153.

21 It is also interesting the thesis sustained by Elizabeth Newman at Duke University in 1990, „Alexander Schmemmann and Orthodox Theology: the liturgy as sacred *Sprachspiel*” (mai ales cap. „An ethical approach: the liturgy as public space”, p. 267-279). Unfortunately it remained unpublished.

22 It is also interesting the study of Slavko Krajnc, „Liturgy and Mission”, in *Bogoslovni vestnik* 74 (2014), nr. 3, p. 435-448.

23 See the example Corneliu C. Simuț, *Traditionalism and Radicalism in the History of Christian Thought*, Palgrave, Macmillan, 2010, p. 37-66 (cap. „Traditional Christian Thought in Postmodernity: Ion Bria and Pastoral Ecclesiology in the Twentieth Century”).

Coming to the end of our research on Prof. Prof. Ion Bria, we emphasize the particular importance it has had to the crystallization and the development of an orthodox missionary theology in the second half of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st century. Thus, Father Bria, since the late 1970s and early 1980s of the past century, has attempted to develop a "genuine Orthodox missionary theology" that would bring a refreshment and dynamism to the pastoral-missionary work of the Church in the midst of the people of God. Being a "wonderful expert on mission themes" ²⁴, the Romanian theologian integrated the concept of "Liturgy after the Liturgy" as being organically related to the life and the mission of the Church²⁵.

24 Christoph Tapernoux, „The Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the World Council of Churches (WCC) – Background of a Process as Reflected in some Contributions by Father I. Bria”, in Ioan Tulcan, Cristinel Ioja (coord.), cited works, p. 287.

25 Ioan Tulcan, Cristinel Ioja, „Introductory word”, in *Ibidem*, p. 10.