

Creating the Religious Identity and Affiliation in Neo-Protestant Children and Young People in Communist Romania

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ABSTRACT: There is no need to be a specialist in order to be able to see that progress, generally, whether it is the progress of a nation or of a church, is based on education, especially in today's Romanian society, when the past education makes its flaws obvious in a very clear manner. This is even more visible among young people who, for decades, have been deprived of religious, Christian education, and are now raising serious moral issues.

KEYWORDS: church, neo-Protestant, religious education, communism, choirs, brass bands, orchestras.

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from the Graduate Thesis titled *The Religious Education of Children and Youngsters in the Communist Period*, unpublished, presented in front of the Evaluation Committee at the University of Bucharest, Baptist Theology Faculty, in June 2007, in Bucharest.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 study, we intend to capture, in addition to the efforts of parents, the efforts of the pastors and churches to pass on to their children and young people their faith by means and methods that are as diverse as possible. In this article, we will specifically refer to the role played by "artistic bands" (choirs, brass bands, orchestras) in creating a religious identity and affiliation in children and young neo-Protestants. The article is unprecedented in that the information comes, in particular, from the unpublished documents in the files of the Archives of the State Secretariat for Cults (A. S. S. C.), as well as from the files of the Archives of the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives (A. C. N. S. A. S.).

1. "Artistic Bands" – Choirs, Brass Bands and Orchestras

Of all the means used by the neo-Protestant religious denominations to attract and retain young people in church, the "artist – religious" activity, as it was named by the cult inspectors, was on the front line. Although they were not, in themselves, methods of catechization, the choirs, the brass bands and orchestras had as a role the establishment of a reasonably solid spiritual relationship between the individual and the church (A.S.S.C., no. - , inv. 891, 4).

According to the reports of the cult inspectors, until 1964, the neo-Protestant cults had not had such diverse musical bands, churches practicing mainly singing altogether, there were rare cases when a church had a harmonium, an organ, or a choral group. Since 1965, religious activity began to diversify, by setting up musical bands, mainly in the Adventist churches, and then they were also to appear in the bigger churches of the Baptist cult. The cult inspectors said that the years 1968 and 1969 were years of organization, when the musical bands multiplied in number and varied in form. After 1969, they became something so common within the neo-Protestant churches that with their help, the cult services became, not just once, "religious – impregnated artistic performances." It was only after 1972 that the

Romanian neo-Protestant churches, at least at the European level, found themselves ahead of other churches in other states with different political-religious status. At the Baptist Congress in 1972, for the first time the President of the cult spoke publicly about these bands, saying that "different bands such as orchestras, choirs and brass bands enrich our services through their fine songs". Also, at this Congress, Gerhardt Claas, from the Federal Republic of Germany, commented: "What you have, we do not possess!" (A.S.S.C., no.- /1973-1974, 18).

Since 1907, the first choral formation had already been set up in the Adventist Church by the pioneer Nicolae Jeleanu. It is also to be noted that the choirs appeared first and then the instrumental bands.

In a study carried out by the Department of Cults in 1988 regarding the activity of the neo-Protestant religious groups, both the dynamics of the artistic bands and the numerical increase in members, were noticed as follows (A.S.S.C., no. - /1988, 23):

No.	Cult	1972		1979		1988	
		Bands	Members	Bands	Members	Bands	Members
1.	Baptist	630	13.985	708	17.817	734	18.775
2.	Adventist	380	7.930	503	11.544	472	13.380
3.	Pentecostal	188	5.235	306	8.136	321	8.905
4.	Christian Evangelical Church	18	752	70	1.894	85	1.855
Total		1.216	27.902	1.587	39.386	1.612	42.915

There are also some 6.000 vocal soloists and recitators not included in this record, as well as 12.356 musical instruments (pianos, accordions, guitars, violins, mandolins, instruments for brass bands).

From the above table it is noticeably clear that the Baptist cult, with more than 700 bands, had the biggest share, totaling over 18.000 members, and was closely followed by the Adventist cult. In 1971, the counties with the most musical bands were Bihor and Arad, with the lowest number being those in Oltenia (A.S.S.C., no. - /1971, 3). If in 1971 there was no "artistic-religious" band in Vaslui County, in 1988 there was no county with at least three such bands (A.S.S.C., no. - /1988, 24). In order to illustrate the share of young people in these musical bands, we mention a statistic carried out in Cluj County in 1973. At that time there were 32 orchestras, 13 brass bands and 35 choirs in this county, in total 80 such bands. Of the 2.120 members, 1.060 were under the age of 25, or 50%, for whom more than 750 musical instruments were available. In the same period, in 20 out of 25 localities where these bands were scattered, there was no such equipment in the community centers, nor did they have such musicians (A.S.S.C., no. 9371/2119/12 May 1975, 8).

2. The Role of the Music Bands

Organized initially for **the beautification of religious services and for attracting children and young people to religious music**, the musical bands were subsequently meant to make their participation in religious services more pleasant, to raise the interest of the listeners and, at the same time, to determine their parents, by praising or reprimanding the children in church, to "force" their children to participate regularly in these bands (A.S.S.C., no. 12/6/1975, vol. 1, inv. 3, 2; A.S.S.C., no. 264/15 June 1971, 7).

The cult inspectors also noticed **the deep missionary character** that was given to these artistic groups later on. As for the Adventist religious manifestations, the representative of the Department of Cults said: "The acts of worship are given a special fest by creating real performances through the well-established choirs, through the real chamber orchestras, in which they have the flute, the bassoon, the drum, the clarinet, the trumpet, the violin, etc., seconded by the harmonium. They can perform any creation of the great composers, and in particular through the brass bands, through the uniforms of their musicians, through the perfect execution of songs, through the fact that they are produced on the streets of the localities, at the funerals or in the open air at wedding parties, they attract many curious people in which arises the desire to do the same, especially in young people. This is how the Adventists manage to attract even non-Adventist youth. With the mysteries of music, they are imperceptibly indoctrinated with the so-called doctrine, and after all become convinced followers of the cult" (A.C.N.S.A.S., no. 141, vol. 2, 206 – 207). Also, in his report to the Department of Cults in August 1955, the trustee mentioned the avalanche of missionaries at the federalized Cults and especially at the Baptist one: "In Gura Honț district, Arad region, the travels of believers with brass bands are frequent, with all the prevention measures taken. Large-scale events are taking place throughout the district. In Zimbru village a gathering of over 300 people was organized with people from Arad and the communes of the county. They played from Gura Honț to Zimbru, where they traveled with a forestry train" (A.S.S.C., no. 103/1955, vol. 13, inv. 170, 1). At the same time, in Chiuești locality, Cluj county, the brass band of the Pentecostal cult passing as the National Romanian Railways brass band (C.F.R.), its members being "C.F.R." employees played, undisturbed outside the church on various occasions, even being admired: "Such a good performance of the C.F.R. brass band!". Also, on the 8th of September 1973, the brass band of the Church in Brașov was caught in the station in Brașov, playing in the middle of a large number of people of all ages and from all corners of the country. The cult inspector also noted, "they were not playing *Dunărea Albastră (Blue Danube)* but religious songs!" (A.S.S.C., Lungeanu 1974). It is also worth noting what happened on 13th January 1963, when a group of Pentecostal believers from the commune of Uriu, the district of Dej, went with their brass band to the village of Negrilești, and along the road made several stops playing religious songs, and in doing so, they drew attention of the population around them (A.S.S.C., no. 109/1963, vol. 2, inv. 99). The case of Baptist pastor Gavrilă Crișan, who went to church in Coșteiul de Sus with an IMS where he carried seven people with their instruments, is also worth mentioning. There they held a two-hour concert attended by 50 Orthodox believers (A.S.S.C., no. 800/12 December 1975, 3).

With the banning of playing religious songs outside the church building, the tape recorders became the main means by which artistic bands could be heard. In Mizil, Grigore Constantin, a sympathizer, came to the Christian Evangelical Church with a tape recorder to record religious sermons and hymns, and then to play them to his wife and parents. And Hrișcu Gheorghe from Girdoveni, Dâmbovița county, went to church in Ploiești with the tape recorder to record the songs of the orchestra, which he was to use in his home village (A.S.S.C., no. 1/1974).

Whether it was **a wedding, a baptism or a funeral**, the presence of the choir, the brass band or the orchestra ensured the beauty of the religious service in question, but also the possibility of the cult to attract new young people. For these purposes, the believers travelled a lot. Baptist pastors Gheorghică Nicolae and Negruțiu Paul, on some of the journeys they made through the country, were accompanied by groups of young people organized in choral and instrumental bands, using as a means of transportation "convoys of 25 – 30 cars" (A.S.S.C., no - /12 October 1983, 1 – 2). Also, when the weather allowed, real convoys of cars, motorcycles and bicycles were organized in the Adventist churches in Câmpina, Ploiești and Urleta, to travel with the choirs (A.S.S.C., no. 281, 30 May 1971).

Artistic bands from the areas the bride and groom originated were invited at **religious wedding ceremonies**, and they provided the musical framework during both the religious service at church and during the dinner celebrations (A.S.S.C., no. 17/8 May 1973, 2; A.S.S.C., no. 109/1961, vol. 1, inv. 103; A.S.S.C., no. 122/March 1974). At the Pentecostal Church in Mândrești commune, Vaslui County, a religious wedding ceremony took place on June 17th, 1973, in which participated the choirs of the churches in Botoșani, Dumbrăveni, Suceava County, as well as the mandolin orchestra from Bistrița-Năsăud County. This led the cult inspector to make the following remark: "A true inter-county contest!". On May 20th, 1973, at the Pentecostal Church in Bogofint village, Caraș-Severin County, took place the religious wedding ceremony of the daughter of the local responsible, Reda Dumitru. 500 people took part, guests from nearby churches and especially from Timișoara. The trips were made by buses, with them also having artistic bands, brass bands, and orchestras of the churches in the city, which made a real demonstration (A.S.S.C., Lungeanu 1974, 62). There were also situations, like the one in Tătăraști, when on 28th August 1954 at a Pentecostal religious wedding ceremony was brought to play and sing the brass band of the Baptist Church of Secaș, as well as the choir of the Baptist Church of Petriș (A.S.S.C., no. 94/1954, vol. 13/A, inv. 137). Such cases were also recorded at the Baptist Church, with pastor Weininger Andrei going to the village of Ser to officiate a marriage. Along with him, went the Hodod brass band which played religious songs in the village. Because he had no license as a pastor to officiate the marriage in the village of Ser, nor permission from the authorities for the brass band to play through the village, the pastor was detained by the Militia post for a few days (A.S.S.C., no. 93/1959, vol. 13, inv. 101; A.S.S.C., no. 94/1954, vol. 10/A, inv. 135). It is also worth mentioning the case in Valeapai village in Reșița district, where a wedding took place to which the Baptist believers from all the municipalities of the district and from the town of Reșița were invited. Pastor Curea Simion, together with the choir of the Baptist Church in Reșița, went to Valeapai. Having reached the Ramna commune, they stopped in the middle of the street and the chorus began to sing, and the deacon Achim and the pastor sent a few women to call people to church because that day was a holiday. Then they entered the church in Ramna, where they continued their song program. The next day, joining with the believers from this church, they left the village singing, going to the church where the wedding was to take place (A.S.S.C., no. 94/1955, vol. 13, inv. 144).

Also, on the occasions of **baptisms**, artistic trips were made in order to enrich the respective religious program. On 30th June 1957, a baptism was planned with the consent of the representative of the district, who went to assist on the appointed date. There he found that the baptism had been delayed for a later date, which was to be communicated to the trustee. On 14th July, the president of the Baptist Union, Vicaș Teodor, carried out that planned and postponed baptism in Calacea, without notifying the local authorities. On that Sunday, two trucks were seized, they had started with Baptist believers from other localities to reach Calacea. All the Baptist believers from the trucks fled to the corn fields with their instruments and went 15 km on foot to attend the christening (A.S.S.C., no. 103/1959, vol. 11/1, inv. 141, 115). At the Baptist Church in Breia Română, Hațeg district, a baptism also took place. 14 Baptist people from Petrila commune, Petroșani district, participated to this christening, and they came with a balalaika orchestra and an accordion. The baptism took place in the water of Strei river, the 14 people sang without instruments (A.S.S.C., no. 94/1955, vol. 13, inv. 144; A.S.S.C., no. 93/1959, vol. 13, inv. 101; A.S.S.C., no. 115/23 May 1980).

Even if there were occasions of sadness, **the funerals** were not overlooked either. At the Baptist Church "Speranța", in Arad, on 6th March 1966, the funeral of a Baptist believer took place. On this occasion, 1.500 Baptist believers, choir and brass bands played and sang on the whole route between the house of the deceased and the cemetery (A.S.S.C., no. 441/16 March 1967, 4; A.S.S.C., no. 93/1959, volume 13, inv. 101).

Christmas and New Year's Eve also represented occasions when many believers, children, and young people, went to church, attending religious service until midnight, with prayers, religious songs, poetry recitations and sermons. On the eve of Christmas, the Pentecostals from Mestecăniș 52 even installed the amplifier station outside their church and then performed the religious service (A.S.S.C., no. 272/10 January 1987, 2 – 3). On such occasions were distributed among children and young people various gifts (clothing, school stationery, sweets, apples, biscuits), purchased from the voluntary contribution of believers (A.S.S.C., no. 12/8 January 1980, 2). At Baptist Churches in Dej, Iris and Ospătăriei no. 10, from Cluj – Napoca and the Pentecostal Churches in Dej and Turda, on the New Year's Eve in 1975, the children were given such gifts (A.S.S.C., no. 9371/2119/12 May 1975,9). At the Aradul Nou Baptist Church they also gave presents both to the children and young people of the church and to the poor guests of the Orthodox Church (A.S.S.C., no. 272/10 January 1987, 2 – 3).

But it was not these activities carried out within the churches that most alerted the local authorities and the Department of Cults, but that on such occasions the choirs and brass bands, smaller or larger, went caroling to the houses of the believers of the cult they belonged to, to Orthodox believers, sometimes even to Orthodox priests' houses (A.S.S.C., no. 6/16 January 1980, 3), hospitals or military barracks, assuming the measures that were to be taken against them. To illustrate, we mention that a Pentecostal brass band went caroling in the district of Gheorgheni, Cluj-Napoca, on the night of 24th – 25th December 1986, at a certain time even disturbing the public silence (A.S.S.C., no. 93/18 February 1987, 1 – 2). Also, at the Baptist Church "Speranța", at Christmas time, a lot of caroling happened. The religious program at church ended almost at 8 p.m, after which, in groups of hundreds of people (two choirs of at least 100 believers each) or in smaller groups, they went caroling around the blocks of flats, hospitals and the homes of believers. Thus, in Arad-gai, the Baptist chorus was out caroling until 11:30 p.m. The band played in the neighborhoods. After midnight, the brass band Segă Church, Scărișoara Street came to the area. The choir and the Baptist brass band from Segă church caroled at the blocks in the new Aurel Vlaicu district, wishing everyone "Happy holidays!". In Chișineu Criș, the Baptist choir caroled at their believers houses and at some Orthodox's until midnight, and in Lipova, the Baptist choir and the brass band sang and played carols until three o'clock in the new blocks of flats. At Radna, a group of 40 persons and instruments caroled up to 1 a.m., and in Soimș the musical instruments group caroled until morning (A.S.S.C., no. 272/10 January 1987, 2 – 3). In Constanța too, several people alerted the authorities, because a group of believers (later found to be Baptists) made up of 12 – 13 people, with private cars, were seen and heard in several neighborhoods of the city, playing more carols of a deeply religious nature on three voices. This was reported from 8 p.m. and continued until 3 a.m. One of the people who had heard the choir asked them: "Why do you walk in such a large number and disturb people? Do you have an approval from the municipality's management?". They answered: "We do not need the approval of anyone to glorify Christ. As you praise the party, we praise God." In order to confirm this, the cult inspector discussed with the Baptist pastor Dăduică Ion, who confirmed that a group of singers in Constanța County went caroling to believers, friends, neighbors and acquaintances. The pastor also stated that "it is not bad that the winter tradition is preserved, that the tradition is not forgotten" (A.S.S.C., no. 3/7 January 1980). Also, on Christmas in 1986, a Pentecostal choir went caroling outside the military barracks in Pitești Street, in Cluj-Napoca, and another choir went to the oncologic Hospital courtyard in the same city. A similar case took place in Turda, where the Pentecostal choir, with the help of the pastor, managed to enter and sing carols right inside the hospital. The local authorities intervened and evacuated the choir (A.S.S.C., no. 93/18 February 1987, 1 – 2).

Slowly but surely, children and young people have started to be attracted from other confessions, on the pretext of learning to play instruments, especially the wind instruments

(A.S.S.C., no. 170/30 June 1989, 5; A.S.S.C., no. 103/1959, volume 1, inv. 122, 4). There were choirs made up of children and young people, most of whom did not belong to neo-Protestant cults. In Darabani village, within the Pentecostal Church, there was a choir made up of students who did not belong to this cult, as they were pupils of the local music school (A.S.S.C., no. 2509/2 February 1973, 2). Also, in the commune of Vârfurile, Arad County, Baptist Pastor Oniga Gheorghe, in agreement with the General School Director Luluşa Pavel, himself a Baptist, organized an orchestra of the school pupils who regularly played at the Baptist Church in the locality. The pastor could also enter the school without problems where he was also teaching religious issues (A.S.S.C., no. - /1971, 2).

Starting from the variety of activities in which artistic bands were involved, a Baptist believer from Oraviţa addressed the cult inspector with the following words: "If these religious artistic programs were not to take place, our number would fall to less than half" (A.S.S.C., no. 80/14 September 1974, 5)

3. The Structure Of Musical Bands

Noting that young people and children were more receptive to music and had a great deal of skill in using musical instruments, the neo-Protestant religious denominations began to energize and rejuvenate the life of churches, encouraging children and young people to be part of orchestras, brass bands, choirs, and groups of recitators (Otovescu 1989, 83; A.S.S.C., no. 12/6/1975, vol. 1, inv. 3, 2). In most cases, out of the total members of these bands, between 70 and 80% had not yet reached the age of 25 (A.S.S.C., no. 437/12 July 1989, 2). There were, of course, cases where the musical bands were composed only of children who had not reached the age of consent. In the Adventist churches of Frumoasa and Peretu, Teleorman County, apart from the string orchestras, which included about 50 school-age children and "big" choirs, including young and elderly, there was also a choir made up of about 25 children from each church, these choirs, took turns in singing religious songs in church. The Baptist Church in Botoşani also had a choir of 30 children: 12 to the age of ten and 18 between 11 and 16. At the same time, the Baptist Church no. 1, in Constanţa, had an orchestra made up of 38 children aged between 10 and 17 years old. The Adventist Church in Cervenia also had an orchestra of 22 children. Such groups composed only of children also existed in other neo-Protestant churches in Bihor, Sălaj, Caraş-Severin and Bucharest (A.S.S.C., no. 219/22 July 1980, 1).

It is not surprising that the artistic bands included the U.T.C.s (young people who were part of the Communist Youth Union). At the Pentecostal Church in Simeria, a group of students, all of them U.T.C members, was part of the cult's musical groups. Although they were warned about this with tact and patience, the students did not want to give up and eventually risked being excluded from the organization (A.S.S.C., Lungeanu 1974, 66).

When children had musical skills, parents, especially the Adventists, sought to direct them to music schools, high schools, or popular art schools, where to learn to play an instrument or to conduct a choir, they were sending them to get more classes in private and were making available the most up-to-date musical instruments (A.S.S.C., no. 52/29 January 1973, 2; A.S.S.C., no. 46/7 July 1989, 2). Speaking with the Baptist believers in Vârcioara, Caransebeş district and asking them why they are doing musical education classes with the children of the church, the cult inspectors were answered: "We do this because we want to teach our children to play an instrument, and at school or at the community center they do not study this" (A.S.S.C., no. 441/16 March 1967, 5). Whether they were accordions, guitars, mandolins or violins, musical instruments were often acquired directly by the parents (A.S.S.C., no. - /1971, 3; A.S.S.C., no. 281/30 May 1971, 7). Other times, in order to make the musical groups permanent, musical instruments were acquired either directly from the funds of the churches or from the contribution of some believers and entered into the inventories of the churches (A.S.S.C., no. 78/19 February 1974, 4). In this way, when a child

or young man left the instrumental band, he was replaced by another, the latter no longer being obliged to buy an instrument. The churches also invested large amounts of money in the amplification stations (A.S.S.C., no. 306/22 December 1980, 2). At the same time, the members of the neo-Protestant churches also dealt with the places where the children were to repeat. Adventists in Macea village even built a special rehearsal room on a land bought without approval. Also, members of the Adventist Church of Curtici bought a house and fined it as a rehearsal room (A.S.S.C., no. 13/1969 – 1970, vol. 7, inv. 17).

3.1. The conductors

Most of the information revealed that young people and children were musically trained by people who had training in the field, sometimes even specialized training. At the Adventist Church, the following graduate instructors of the Conservatory were identified: Cristescu Lucian, Ion Gabriel, Tolici Constantin and Necea Marian. The instructors were mostly members of the cult, sometimes sympathizers, and of the most diverse professions, mostly workers (in the Christians Evangelical Church, conductor Ciurciu Valentin was a doctor, and Savu Dumitru was a photographer. In the Baptist and Pentecostal Churches, the conductors were civil servants, technicians, or workers) (A.S.S.C., no. 36/1982, 5). At the Adventist Church in Drobeta Turnu Severin, there was a choir of 20 people, led by the deacon Goia Pavel, accompanied by the piano. In order to be able to lead the choir, Goia Pavel, although he was a construction worker, took conductor classes at the Popular School of Arts in the municipality. Most of the participants were young people who had attended the music courses or were still students (A.S.S.C., no. 111/6 August 1979, 1). The conductors were aged between 25 and 50 years old, and because of their membership or sympathizers of the cult, they were not paid for their work. The inspectors reported that it was difficult to determine whether some of these instructors were paid in one form or another, because the justified cost documents did not include this form of payment (A.S.S.C., no. -/1973, 3 – 4).

There were also cases when retired music teachers organized such artistic bands. In Moisei commune, Maramureş County, retired professor Kiss Mari, from Timisoara, was seen to organize a brass band at the local Pentecostal Church, causing young people to buy musical instruments (A.S.S.C., Lungeanu 1974, 61). Sometimes, leaders of such groups came from amongst the young people members of the group (A.S.S.C., no. 52/20 January 1973, 2). Other times, when in some churches there were no instructors trained to provide music training to children and young people, music teachers from other cities were brought in, for whom transport, meals and appropriate payment were offered (A.S.S.C., no. 5127/1973, inv. 1477, 2). There were also cases when members of the church of one cult invited a conductor from another cult to train young people from a musical point of view. The leadership of the Christian Evangelical Church in Târgușorul Vechi, Prahova County, invited a member of the Baptist cult in Timișoara, called Sava, to teach the young people in their church to play musical instruments, especially the accordion. The Union of the Cult did not agree with the move. The church was also accused of violating the principle that singing accompanied by musical instruments was prohibited. Another aspect condemned by the Union of this cult was that the instrument players traveled through other Christian Evangelical Churches, where "they manifested themselves noisily, which is not advisable, because these manifestations do not contribute to the spiritual growth of the believers, such instruments being more natural than spiritual" (A.S.S.C., no. 1029/21 July 1970).

3.2. Scores and rehearsals

To set up such musical bands, a series of literary and musical productions had been produced by anonymous members of the four religious' groups. In most cases, old song books were used from the elderly believers. New books were also used, these books had entered the country illegally. In this way, the Adventist cult used "Imnurile Creștine" (Christian Hymns). The Baptist Cult used

"Cântările Creștine" (Christian Songs), "Cântările Evangheliei" (The Gospel Songs), "Harpa Evanghelică" (The Evangelical Harp) and "Sunetele evanghelice" (Evangelical Sounds). The other two churches did not make special efforts to organize the musical bands, and where they existed, they used the same books of general character as all the neo-Protestant cults (A.S.S.C., no. 2531/1989, 4).

The variety of programs run by musical groups forced members to intense weekly rehearsals and more. Where the choirs rehearsed, it was necessary to learn the text of the songs and the scores. In the case of orchestras, it was necessary, first of all, to learn the musical notes and to make the instruments work. Whether it was about choirs or orchestras, children and young people found a place of refuge, satisfaction, and entertainment (A.S.S.C., no. 412/4 June 1973, 2).

Rehearsals always began and ended in prayers. There were not few cases where, after the end of the rehearsing moments, guidance was given to participants on how to behave and preserve the principles of faith specific to that particular cult, lessons were given on how to pray, certain biblical texts were explained, and their religious knowledge checked. In this way, on numerous occasions, the hours of rehearsal were turned into hours of catechization of the participants (A.S.S.C., no. 78/19 February 1974, 4).

Being highly trained from a musical point of view, children and young neo-Protestants were often called upon to play in school or in community centers, and those choirs or orchestras were made up of children and young neo-Protestants (A.S.S.C., no. - /1971, 5). In the Cehei commune, Sălaj County, the school leadership asked for the support of the Baptist Church in various events with the children orchestra of the cult (A.S.S.C., no. - /1971, 2). To the total dissatisfaction of the Department of Cults, there were situations when, in localities where the community centers did not have orchestras, brass bands or choirs, people, who normally did not attend the non-Protestant churches, sent their children to learn to play instruments at these religious denominations (A.S.S.C., no. - /1971, 1). We must also mention that cult inspectors often regretted that artistic bands, organized by the neo-Protestant churches, were much better than the artistic bands organized by community centers. At the Baptist Church in Bucharest, Talazului street no. 16 (Ferentari), out of 253 members, 50 were chorists and 41 were part of the orchestra. This prompted the cult inspector, who had witnessed the religious services, to make the following remark: "What community center has 41 instrumentalists?" (A.S.S.C., no.- /1971, 8).

In the Adventist cult, Nicușor Gheorghită, from Constanța, a graduate of "Ciprian Porumbescu" Conservatory, showed a special interest in forming a choir and an instrumental band. The songs performed by his choir and instrumental band have changed "something" in the advent tradition. The songs have become livelier, more melodic, changing the slow and sacred rhythm to the dissatisfaction of some more conservative members. Even if for the time being, he was stopped by the church pastor and by various religious members, he continued to be in charge of the music education of young people. According to the cult inspector, the music which Nicușor Gheorghită tried to introduce resembled the folk style. But we do not have information about the cult inspector's musical culture. (A.S.S.C., no. 61/3 March 1980, 3).

At the Christian Evangelical Church, there was a tendency to organize choirs and orchestras only for the sake of the affirmation, so that the young and the children would be better known. And at the Pentecostal cult, many of the texts with religious content were put on the music of ballads, doinas (traditional Romanian song), folk songs and even on the rhythm of soft and romantic music (A.S.S.C., no. 412/4 June 1973, 6). In Cluj County, Tudorache, a member of the Pentecostal cult, together with his children, set up a musical band performing ballads with religious texts (A.S.S.C., Lungeanu 1974, 61). Despite these more liberal trends, the conservative elements, who oversaw the religious training of

children and young people, continued to educate them both religiously and musically in a Christian spirit.

Conclusions

Due to the steps taken, the neo-Protestant churches managed to keep their children and young people in the sphere of religion, and this was done in a context where, at a national level, in 1989, the highest proportion of unbelievers was concentrated in the most intellectual occupations such as pupils and students. Although they were not, in themselves, methods of catechization, the choirs, brass bands, and orchestras played the role of establishing a strong spiritual link between the individual and the church. Organized initially for the beautification of religious services and for the attraction of children and young people to religious music, the musical bands subsequently performed the role of making their participation in the worship services more pleasant and have been of a deep missionary character, being used in religious wedding ceremonies, baptisms, funerals, as well as on caroling occasions.

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