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Ph.D. THESIS ABSTRACT

**Aspects regarding antitrinitarian thinking of several
denominations. History, genesis and theological implications**

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Introduction

Going beyond rationality, the Sacrament of the Trinity exposes us only the reality of the triune God, without telling us *how exactly*, the Sacrament itself is possible; precisely this *how*- inaccessible to other and to all those who refuse it, except God – offers the dimension of supra rational character of Trinitarian dogma. To go beyond, to insist on that *how*, it always means to slip, to fall from the height of truth, as St. Paul the Apostle warned at Millet: "*And from your own selves men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.*" (Acts, 20, 30-31).

Therefore, we - unconditional supporters of our Church, of our missionary vocation - have proposed as main objective for our thesis to bring an extra knowledge about the genesis and the content of the teachings which are antagonistic to the Holy Trinity dogma, and which are professed by some of the contemporary denominations, namely by the confessional entities which represent "**the third anti-trinity wave**" (the first two "waves" being represented by the *ancient Antitrinitarianism* – institutionalized by the Aryan /Semi Aryan episcopate respectively, *the medieval* one - institutionalized by *Socinianism* and subsequently by *Anglo-Saxon Unitarianism*), namely of those contemporary groups: **(i)** that come exclusively from the north American *revival movements* of the early 19th century, and therefore having no origin in *the Unitarian Church* itself; **(ii)** they repeat/ reiterate the "classic" subordinationism thesis but, they always augment them through other categories of teaching or heterodox speculation and **(iii)** they incline to various forms of exclusivity, focusing on unilateral possession of truth in the theological knowledge.

Simultaneously, taking in consideration the missionary interests of the Romanian Orthodox Church, I have chosen to address those denominations that are both: **(i)** relevant as heterodox propagandistic activism, recording relevant dynamics to the coagulation of local communities - supporting points and **(ii)** less investigated by the Orthodox Missiology and therefore, less or insufficiently known.

Being given this trinomial - (a) the belonging to the "third anti-trinity wave", (b) the preaching dynamic and (c) the need of strengthening /supplementing the knowledge - **our thesis will focus** only on some of these denominations, namely the *Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints* - "Mormons", the *Unification Church* - "Cult of Moon", *Christadelphians* and the *Contemporary Modalism Movement* – the religious multinational societies with the profile of Sabellian doctrine, taking in consideration that in the case of *Jehovah's Witnesses* (also belonging to the "third anti-trinity wave"), our Missiology accumulations have become an increased relevance recently.

1

The contemporary AntiTrinitarianism

- Short synoptic insight -

The Holy Trinity is the supreme Sacrament of the existence, which explains everything, or without which you cannot explain anything. Therefore, although it is the supreme Sacrament, it is somehow understandable, conformable until a place of logic.

Dumitru Stăniloae

Placing it outside *the Creed*, and thus being in contradiction with the fundamental teaching and belief of the Church in Holy Trinity, the contemporary anti-trinity doctrines can be regarded as a new/ another stage in rejecting the dogma of the Holy Trinity, a "**third objector wave**", as argumentation and, of course, in terms of theological content itself, it is both different from the "classical" wording of the Christian Antiquity and from the "wave", which was mainly based on rationalism, of the revived Unitarianism in 16th -17th centuries.

In fact, theologically speaking, this "third wave" is largely something else than the ancient and medieval antitrinitarianism; something else, because it is not founded exclusively by Arianism and Pneumatomachi; these are its own themes, but they are not definitive, they modulate it, but they do not form it fully; thus the "third wave" is built mainly on the basis of certain particular resources, which are the product of some systems of heresiological thinking and theological speculation specific to the modernism, of which it can be distinguished:

- **The prophetic resource**, namely the doctrinal integration and valorisation of the "inspired" statements of certain so-called "prophets" (*The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Unification Church*, and certain Modalism fractions);
- **The extracanonical resource**, the one through which *the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* and *the Unification Church* used their own "Scriptures"-complementary to the Bible – which were considered to be "inspired", as long as they were written, by their own "prophets" who benefited from “revelations”.

When the denominations of the "third anti-trinity wave", based on these categories of resources, reject the Trinitarian teaching of the Church, they invoke: **(i)** the alleged incompatibility of the Trinitarian dogma with the revelation, including *the Holy Scripture*; **(ii)** the alleged similarities and causal links between the great ancient polytheistic religions and the Church's teaching about the triune God; **(iii)** the influence and the alleged harmful intrusions of the Greek philosophy, and especially, the influence of the Platonic thinking and **(iv)** the irrational / illogical presumed character of the Holy Trinity dogma.

A possible summary of these groups may be the following:

No.crt.	Denomination / Movement / Society	Followers	Foundation
0	1	2	3
1.	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	c. 15 million	1830 / Joseph Smith jr.
2.	Community of Christ	c. 500.000	1860 / Joseph Smith III
3.	Jehovah's Witnesses	c. 8 million	1870 / Charles-Taze Russell
4.	Bible Student Movement	c. 100.000	1909 – 1931
5.	Unification Church	c. 6 million	1954 / Sun Myung Moon
6.	The Church of Christ	c. 4 million	1914 / Felix Manolo
7.	Oneness Pentecostalism	2,4 million (?)	1913 – 1914 / John Schaepe, Frank Ewart
8.	Branhamism	500.000 (?)	1953 / William Branham
9.	The Adventist Church of Promise	c. 200.000	1932 / Joao Augusto da Silva
10.	The Worldwide Church of God	c. 200.000	1937 / Herbert Armstrong
11.	Church of God (Seventh Day)	c. 140.000	c. 1863 / Gilbert Crammer
12.	The Advent Christian Church	c. 60.000	c. 1860 / J. Cummings
13.	Christadelphians	c. 60.000	c. 1832 / John Thomas
14.	Church of God General Conference	c. 10.000	1888 / Joseph Marsh

When - subordinationists and pneumatomachi - are posted outside *the Creed*, rejecting it on the basis of "new alleged revelation" or of biblical exegesis that are claimed to generate exclusive and definitive truths, but which, in reality, turn out to be subjective, unilateral and ultimately aberrant, the analyzed denominations appeal as an additional argument in supporting their own positions, a higher level of rationality to their teachings, which, unlike the Sacrament of the triune God, it would prove perfectly understandable and in any case, possessing certain internal logics which are based on the Bible.

Though, to invoke the rational or the intelligible to the detriment of the Sacrament or to make them to prevail in relation to the indescribable, it brings the risk of compromising the faith and thus the alienation from God and from Christ's Church, a theologized way that leads *de facto* to the devaluation of revelation in terms of fructifying its ability to discover and to substantiate the fundamental truths of faith.

Definitely, the divine sacrament of Holy Trinity is not and it can never be attained by man in the meaning of its decryption and exhaustive knowledge; the sacrament of the three divine persons, will remain in eternity, an inaccessible one. The sacrament of the triune God will never be exhausted and therefore expressed by means available to human being. The incomprehensibility of the sacrament of the Trinity, that cannot be circumscribed and exhausted by the rationality of thought, it does not mean it is untrue, unbiblical, as some modern anti-trinity persons claim; although unspeakable, although it cannot be fully explained in words and completely understood in mind, the sacrament of the Trinity is precisely the one that can be only true; remaining forever mysterious in its essence and content, and therefore it is perfect.

2

“The prophetism”

- a resource of contemporary antitrinitarian thinking -

In contemporaneity, the antitrinitarian thinking and the theological systems, of this kind, they coagulate based on the particular specific mechanisms of generation, which, in the most of cases, cannot be reducible or equivalent to certain subjective attempts of imitation, of bringing in discussion or emphasizing the ancient or medieval conditions with similar content, context in which the "prophet", the "prophetic" institution and the statements / the thesis / the doctrinal teachings hence formulated, each of them receive not only privileged position, but also decisive ones.

2.1. „The new prophetism” – a general framework

A significant part of the denominations of the "third wave", namely *the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, *the Unification Church* and *Branhamism*, found their teachings on the "discoveries" of some "prophets" and on the statements/ "inspired" doctrines propagated by those, thus they retain only few common points with the traditional Christian teaching.

For us it is important that the religious successive “revivals” - which marked the North American continent, during the 18th – 19th centuries - favoured the appearance of the modern "prophets" and the development of the religious movements created by them, particularly through:

- the important diminution of the doctrinal / dogmatic component of the apologetic discourse and the promotion of Christian values, compressed on immediate / easy issues and focused on highlighting the messages with soteriological and moral-ethical content;
- the relativization of the role concerning the theological knowledge and specialized training, by creating artificial models of "efficiency" based on the bidding of the vehemence, attractiveness and of the pastor / evangelist personality;
- the stimulation of subjective, unilateral or incongruous interpretations of *the Holy Scripture* - immediate effect of faulty operationalization of the protestant principle of *Sola Scriptura* (Alone Scripture) and the quasi-generalized lack of the exegetical support and marks given by Church and hoarded by *the Sacred Tradition*;
- the increased prestige and the preferential social position of the preacher and of the evangelist, which are able to create aspirers and imitators in order to direct the ambitions of leadership/ exponent / religious figure.

In fact, we grant above a set of characteristics of the new "prophets” speech, action and statute, not only regarding the form and background – an additional argument for the connection between the specific generating mechanisms for the modern "prophetic" movement and some of the doctrinal and ecclesiological particularities and implications which were consecutive for the neo protestant "revivals" in the last two centuries.

As far as the modern “prophet” relates to the Saviour's work, as well as his action, he is declarative connected to the requirements of the New Testament prophecy, this being interpreted and considered as a model in most of the situations. Thus, all the relevant

"prophets" for the antitrinitarian thinking invoke as argument the authenticity of their own activities, "the gift of the Spirit," as it is shown in *the Peter's Speech* in Acts 2:17: "And in the last days, God said, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" Similarly, the new "prophetic" action is placed in the theological logic and in the sequence of the biblical vetero-testamentary prophecy, claiming directly/ explicitly its authenticity and its divine-human structure. The new "prophets" place their action and their speech under the auspices of the call of God (*Isaiah* 6, 8, *Jeremiah* I, 4-5 and *Amos* 7, 14-15), they consider and present themselves as mediators of divine revelation, and they improper the quality of being enlightened, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit in their activity.

In all cases, the "prophetic" action aims to reconsider and, if necessary, to reconfigure the Christian doctrine and the worship of the Church, actually this being the ultimate goal of the most of "prophets." From this perspective, the modern "prophecy" and its influence on the doctrinal level, especially on Holy Trinity dogma, highlights the fundamental problem of the authenticity calling of the "prophet" and therefore of the "prophecy" in question.

2.2. The "Prophecy" in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Mormon Church, founded by Joseph Smith (1805 - 1844), confers to the "prophet's" institution and to 'prophetic' practice, generally, a decisive position, using them to legitimize and to give authority which is claimed to be divine/ inspired/ revealed to a doctrinal, liturgical and moral-ethical difficult system, otherwise impossible, to reconcile with the traditional Christian teaching.

The "prophet's" institution in Mormonism is dogmatized in a strictly conjunction with the authentic Judeo-Christian history, being conceived as a continuance, as a memorial into actuality. The action of the Mormon "prophet" is set in the activity succession of the biblical prophets, claiming the authenticity of his speech and vocation. Every president - "prophet" connects and belongs to the "line of authority", which was opened by Joseph Smith and which was propagated/ updated by laying on of hands; thus the "Line of authority" claims both a divine instauration and a sacramental content.

Simultaneously, invoking God's will to "restore" the Church, the Mormon "prophecy" has as main objective the refoundation of the Christian doctrine, claiming that it "supplements" the dogmatic content of the supernatural revelation through:

- the writings that were discovered by divine intervention or "inspired" by the Holy Spirit: *The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants* and *Pearl of Great Price*;

- *The Official statements*, specifically the "revealed" taking position of the "prophets" - presidents on the strength of certain fundamental issues regarding the doctrine, ethics and worship
- the "prophets" teachings, respectively the "inspired" collections of considerations, judgments and formulations with doctrinal and moral-ethical resonance.

2.3. “Revelation” and “prophecy” in the Unification Church

The "prophetic" biography of Sun Myung Moon (1920 - 2012) began in 1936 with the so-called "Easter revelation" that consisted in a "meeting" (consumed in the North Korean Myodu massif) of the future reverend with Jesus Christ.

In the coming years the "revelations" of Sun Myung Moon became quasi-permanent, he gradually transformed them into the supernatural corollary of his religious activities. Like any other contemporary "prophet", Reverend Moon placed his "revelations" under the auspices of the divine call, claiming the role of providential person, chosen by divinity in order to restore the assembly of religious beliefs of the humanity, and also to constitute the unique “authentic” religious institution, *the Unification Church*.

The essence of Sun Myung Moon’s "revelations" is the "discovery" and the emphasis of the alleged failure in ontological and soteriological plan of the Incarnation, the sacrifice and resurrection of the Saviour, "failure" that would have imposed the reiteration of the messianic intervention on totally different coordinates and by another person - "the New Messiah", no one else than Sun Myung Moon - truly able to intercede, as unique bishop, the human salvation and the transfiguration of the created world. Following the "revelations" of its founder, the denomination has come to consider the offering as an "execution" that ended the Saviour’s incarnation tragically, but irrelevant in terms of soteriology, denying his interference with Christianity, that he actually considered inferior - a simple sequence of history salvation.

In parallel and on the base of the same "discoveries”, *the Unification Church* claims its particular vision/ perspective concerning the place and the role of religion globally – the so-called "godism" aiming the coagulation around Reverend Sun Myung Moon and around the *Divine Principle*, a new and a unique universal religion, a religion that aims to "unify" all the confessions of the humanity.

2.4. William Branham – „the prophecy” and „the healing”

The "prophet" William Marrion Branham (1909 - 1965) - less well known in the theological Romanian space - would have been the beneficiary of a long series of "revelations" on which he elaborated his theological speculation, centred on the dogmatization of a modalist vision towards Holy Trinity and on cultivation the imminence of millennium, aspects which, along with "the miraculous healings" represent the dominant subject of his "prophetic" speech and actions.

After a long series of "revelations" and miraculous events (which would have started in 1916, when he was only 7 years old), William Branham would have "rediscovered", during the 50s, the themes and interpretations which constrained him, at a certain time, to get away from the modalist Pentecostal groups in which he was included, respectively from the "sacrament" of the personal identity between God the Father and God the Son (in Sabellian meaning), "the sacrament of baptism" (with direct reference to the modalism baptismal formula) and "the sacrament of serpent seed" (namely the incomplete humanity and the condemnation from eternity of the "demonic" descendants of Cain).

From the point of view of his supporters and apologists, the prophetic work of William Branham is based on the text from *Jeremiah* 1:5 - "... I consecrated you, I have appointed you a prophet to the nations". His work was rated as being imperative because his activity would define a special "prophetic" institution, specific for "the last days".

2.5. The modern “prophetism”– a unitary perspective

Any alleged "prophet" of modernity is constrained by the logic itself of the claimed statute, to speak, to say, to proclaim identical things, essentially, he can only: **(i)** reject, condemn or discredit the religious realities around him – in order to justify his action, **(ii)** proclaim and describe his "visions" and "revelations" - for gaining prestige and audience, **(iii)** find and implement the optimal formula of dissemination / propagation, verbally and/ or written, of the teachings which are based on "the findings" from which he would have benefited and **(iv)** he can institutionalize his teachings/ doctrine based on the "revelation" in an informal or a religious organized framework.

Basically, the four points, namely **(i)** – the disavowal of the religious environment, **(ii)** - the proclamation of the "revelations", **(iii)** - the dissemination of the new teachings and **(iv)** – the doctrine institutionalization can form *invariants* for the extra-biblical “prophetism”, and obviously , for the modern and contemporary one. In fact, these return and are recognizable in

the performance of every "prophet" who claimed to reiterate the Bible prophecy and to reconstruct or to discover the true meanings of the *Gospel*; thus, the four invariants are recurrent coordinates for any extra-biblical and extra-ecclesial "prophetic" and for any "prophetic" action/ movement.

Actually, their permanence and the fact that the affirmation/ formulation and propagation mechanisms of "the new revelations" are uniform, repetitive, they highlight the strong *individuality* of every "prophet", their emphatic *subjectivism* that pretend to come from the same God - the God of *Scripture*, they also pretend that the "discoveries" which are consecutive to "revelations" are wide in diversity and heterogeneity.

3

The New “Scriptures” – syntheses of the new “revelation”

The establishment and the use of certain doctrinal *corpora* considered to be "inspired", of some new/ other "Scriptures", represents one of the most significant sources that sustain the speculation of two of the most important denominations from the "third antitrinitarian wave", namely the *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* and the *Unification Church*. The relevant *corpora* (*The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price* – in the *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, respectively *the Divine Principle* – in the *Unification Church*) tend to marginalize *the Holy Scripture* as a support of theological thought, gaining more values in the use of the following coordinates:

- the highlighting of the theological range and significance of the "revelations" from which the founders Joseph Smith and Sun Myung Moon would have benefited
- the legitimation and justification of the opinions, teachings, conclusions and doctrinal formulations (as well as certain religious practices or moral-ethical norms) which are antagonistic or are not based on Holy Scripture;
- the significant individualization/ spacing from other denominations or Neo protestant groups - aspect that might be able to confer higher valences of visibility and notoriety

3.1. The Divine Principle

For the *Unification Church*, *the Divine Principle*, firstly, represents the truth, the eternal truth of the purpose of creation, the revealed truth in its thoroughness for the first time and exclusively to Sun Myung Moon - chosen by God in order to be discovered by humanity

in a perfect manner, as no one else could have done from the founders of the great contemporary religions, including Jesus Christ. Thus, *The Divine Principle* is the revelation that transcends and surpasses all previous divine revelation; being the perfect revelation, it founds as a result, the perfect religion, encompassing all the contemporary forms of religious conscience - understood as truncated / incomplete expressions of authentic revelation.

The Divine Principle, under its written form, represents the "Scripture" of *Unification Church*, "the Bible" by its excellence, and a summary of the "discoveries" of Reverend Sun Myung Moon, who systematizes the force - ideas which this had assimilated during his "astral journeys". *The Divine Principle* is listed as an "inspirational" book from the point of view of an ideational content; therefore, when it is systematized in writing it may acquire different contents / forms, which, however, will not affect its consistent substrate of "revelations".

The first explanation of the doctrinal content of the personal "revelations" and "visions" of the Reverend was published in 1957 under the name of *the Explanation Principle* followed by *the Discourse on the Principle* in 1966 (editor Wyo Won Eu) and in 1980, by *the General presentation of the Principle* (editor Chung Hwan Kwak). In fact, through *the Divine Principle*, *Unification Church* achieves the following objectives:

- the establishment of a "material" composed of Christian themes (God, Christ, incarnation, sacrifice, salvation, etc.), because of dominant reasons of religious "marketing", themes that are immediately recognizable in the Western world and which are able to suggest the denomination affiliation to Christianity;
- the reinterpretation of these themes and their reformulation in terms of assimilating the philosophical *daoism* theses with sequential embracement - though in a rather random manner – of certain Gnostic approaches/ theses;
- summarizing the theological retraced themes and the unitary and systematic clotting of a new/ another interpretation, apparent inspired, about Christian teaching, including about God.

3.2. The Mormon “Scriptures”

I have observed that invoking God's will to "restore" the church – in the meaning of rebuilding/ redefining it – the Mormon "prophecy" has as main objective to rethinking the whole Christian doctrine, including redefining the foundations/ the fundamentals of the entire teaching of confession, through:

- the writings that are considered/ presented as being discovered by divine intervention, supernaturally translated or inspired by the Holy Spirit: *the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants* and *the Pearl of Great Price*;

- *the Official statements*, namely taking the "revealed" positions for the Presidents - "prophets" on the fundamental issues of doctrine, morals and worship;
- *The teachings of prophets*, respectively collections that include considerations, judgments and formulations with doctrinal and moral-ethical resonance.

"The completion" through addition of the *Holy Scriptures* is considered in Mormonism as the expression of God's will on rebuilding the assembly of the written revelation through and by the "prophet" Joseph Smith. The Christian Bible is regarded as only a fragment of revelation, which truncates and splits it, compulsory requiring the contribution and the extra value of three writings and especially of *the Book of Mormon*. Therefore, *the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* considers that the role of Joseph Smith in the "restoration" is particularly as relevant, as this would have been the only one who realized that the written form of revelation is not finished in and through the *Holy Scripture* and that he would require an external input, a set of determinant theological completions and additions.

a). *The Book of Mormon*, is the most famous from the Mormon "Scriptures" (its first appearance was in 1830), it represents the quantifiable element of the specific doctrinal theses regarding the multiplicity of written forms of the divine revelation, position that determines, in fact, the devaluation of *Holy Scriptures*. It is understood only as a particular segment, which is specific to the oriental sequence of salvation history, that cannot be exhaustive as long as it does not approach the presumed work of the Saviour in North America.

The human-divine authenticity of *the Book of Mormon* - disputed / denied practically by all Christian denominations - raises the following main categories of problems:

- the lack of vitality of assuming the existence of a Jewish civilization in North America, as well as the impossibility of sustaining the thesis regarding the Semitic character of Amerindian populations;
- the difficulties arisen from the authenticity and credibility of the source which represented the basis for *the Book of Mormon*, respectively the veracity of Mormon assertions concerning: (i) the existence of the golden plates, especially the reality of these being discovered by Joseph Smith; (ii) the written content of the plates; (iii) the plausibility of the idea of "translating" the texts that were engraved on the plates and (iv) the reference of the work to the religious manuscripts of Presbyterian Pastor - Solomon Spaulding which remained unpublished.

Today it is considered that the main Mormon "Scripture" is largely tributary to one of the remaining writings in the manuscript of Pastor Solomon Spaulding - the so-called revised *Story Manuscript*. Basically, Joseph Smith would have assumed certain narrative sequences from this script, adding to them the religious superstructure. Therefore, *the Book of Mormon* would consist of a narrative, pure fiction texture, over which there were superposed reports with doctrinal, liturgical and apologetic content in accordance with the particular way in which the "prophet" knew them, understood them and interpreted them based on his theological background and knowledge.

b). Doctrine and Covenants - D & L includes 138 sections divided into verses, to which the two *Official Statements* are added, on behalf of the denomination, by the presidents Wilford Woodruff (1890) and Spencer W. Kimball (1978). Actually the writing is a collection of "revelations" from which, in time, Joseph Smith (133 sections), his collaborator Oliver Cowdery (two sections), Presidents John Taylor, Brigham Young and Joseph F. Smith (one section) would have benefited from.

Doctrine and Covenants is considered "the Ecclesiastical Constitution" of *the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, a corpus of "inspired" and normative documents; asserting "revelations". D & L is considered an "open" paper that cannot be considered definitive in the meaning that – in the Mormon logic - there cannot be a limitation of the findings, or an acceptance of a "prophecy" ending. And from this perspective, along with the revelations "progress" (the first of them was recorded on 21st of September, 1823), D & L has experienced a long series of editions, its form in use being fixed only in 1981.

The statements recorded as "revelations" are quoted as having universal significance, beyond time and space; they are the carriers of "the fullness of the Gospel" and they come under the divine injunction to propagate "the restored Gospel" and to coagulate "the restored Church". D & L comes to support the efforts of the *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* for the foundation of "the kingdom of God on Earth" and in the same time it brings "revealed" arguments towards the "prophetic" status for its founder.

c). *The Pearl of Great Price* is the last of four volumes that constitutes the "restored Gospel" of the Mormon denomination. This became normative only in 1880, when it was declared as having an "inspired" origin from many writings with different characteristics, including the so-called "translations" of certain parts of *Holy Scripture* that would have been made by Joseph Smith, as it follows:

- **The Book of Moses**, namely " the translation" through "revelation", of the first six chapters of *Genesis*;

- **The Book of Abraham**, namely "the translation" of certain Egyptian papyri which included the writings that "the prophet" assigned them to the patriarch Abraham
- **Joseph Smith - Matthew**, another biblical "translation", "inspired" by Joseph Smith, regarding the 24th Chapter of *the Gospel of Matthew*;
- **Joseph Smith - History**, namely a collection of "evidence" and stories of "the prophet", which are considered to carry the endorsement of "divine inspiration";
- **Articles of Faith**, drawn up by Joseph Smith and published on 1st of March 1842 in the Mormon newspaper "Times and Seasons".

4

Between Yahweh and the Great Dao

- oriental recurrences in the thinking of the Unification Church –

Developing a system of theological thought modulated by the fusion of doctrinal Christian regulations with Oriental themes and approaches, the ideologists around Reverend Sun Myung Moon became tributaries of some theses and interpretations which were specific to the philosophical schools from ancient Chinese, approaches which were mainly visible in the way that *the Unification Church* formulated its conception about God - synthesis between the Judeo-Christian Personal God and the eternal harmonious duality, which was indescribable and unknowable to the Great Dao.

4.1. The God of the Unification Church

The Unification Church concept regarding God - essentially unbiblical one - is characterized by the following features:

- between the Judeo-Christian Personal God and the *Great Dao*, there is a complete identity, formulated and dogmatised by the corroboration of the *New Testament* with proto/philosophical resources - *Yi Jing* and philosophical - *Dao De Jing* enshrined in ancient China;
- the identification of God - Yahweh *the Great Dao* is achieved by forcing the existing incompatibilities between conceptions about divinity in Judeo-Christianity, respectively religious/ philosophical *Daoism*, and also by putting the two classical Chinese texts on the same axiological level – from the point of view of the revealed truth – the *Holy Scripture*;

- The identification mechanism described above subsists as a result of an exchange of qualities between God - Yahweh and *the Great Dao*; thus the Judeo-Christian God "takes" the permanent dynamic matrix of yang and yin dual principles and "folds" some cosmological themes of the Chinese Antiquity, while *the Great Dao* becomes, firstly and despite the vast majority of commentaries, a personal God, sequentially assimilating the way in which Jehovah supports his creation.

Based on the process of "fusion" of the two conceptions about divinity, the God of *the Unification Church* is characterized by a quasi triple polarity; therefore, the harmonic yang - yin duality is completed by a pair of oppositions made by the binomial *sung sang - hyun sang*, namely by the dynamic unity of nature/ internalness/ inner character and external form / substance/ external structure of the divinity.

In the same time, God is described as a dyadic God, a simultaneous God "the True Father" and "the True Mother", an "entity" that integrates/ synthesizes the complementary "essences" of masculine and feminine.

After the interactions with Daoism, the God of *the Unification Church*, though personal, eternal and self-determined in the Judeo-Christian sense, becomes devoid of his omnipotence, omniscience and immutability powers, a "deficit" with ontological valences, "compensated" by the action of the couple "New Messiah" - "New Messiah's bride", respectively by the action of Reverend Sun Myung Moon and his wife Hak Ja Han Moon - "the True Parents", that in contemporary they would have surpassed the alleged soteriological "failure" of Jesus Christ.

4.2. The syncretism logic of the Unification Church

The historical tentative of identifying *the Great Dao* with God - Yahweh descends to the early of 19th century, most of them having as common factor the particular linguistic considerations and interpretations made on the book of *Dao De Jing*. Thus, Remusat Abel (1823), Paul Carus (1898) and, contemporaneously, Yuan Zhiming (1997) considered that when *the Great Dao* was named *Yi* – the unseen, *Xi* – the unheard and *Wei* – the untouchable, the sequence of syllables *Yi - Xi - Wei* would have pronounced in the archaic Chinese in a phonetic way that approximates the pronunciation of Yahweh / Jehovah, that can be linked with the *Holy Trinity*, so that the Judeo-Christianity and the daoism would report to the same divinity, to the same God.

Moreover, the Chinese author - Yuan Zhiming proceeds to the completed Christianization of religious *Daoism*, and therefore to an absolute identification of God - Yahweh and subsequently, of the *Logos* with *the Great Dao* (therefore presuming the consubstantiality of the Father and Son) this on the grounds that one of the multiple meanings of the term Dao / dao is that of "word, speech, meaning, pronunciation", a term which, in fact, the Chinese Bible uses it for *Logos* - practically identical to the point of view of Wio Won Eu, the first editor of *the Divine Principle*. Wio Won Eu had used *the Divine Principle* since 1966 in order to highlight the same doctrinal thesis in terms of *the Unification Church*.

However, the exegesis, similar to those practiced by Abel Remusat, Paul Carus and especially Yuan Zhiming, remain isolated. Beyond the sustainability of the linguistic considerations which they establish, the presumed subsistence of the divine name in *Dao De Jing* would require: (i) the reiteration of the divine revelation, based on the component of the divine name, in the area of Chinese civilization, and (ii) the divine Biblical inspiration of at least one part of *the Dao De Jing* and of at least one/some of its authors.

4.3. The Judeo – Christian Monotheism and the Great Dao

Despite the attempts of argumentation made by the relatives of Reverend Moon, *the Great Dao* cannot be equated, through a simple modification of the theoname of the personal and transcendent God from the Judeo-Christian thinking.

a). As the American Oriental Alan Watts arguments, the attempts of placing *the Great Dao* in the theological and philosophical oriental logic is facing with the difficulties generated from the operationalization of the authentic sense given by the traditional Chinese thinking. The most correct interpretation seems to be the one through which *The Great Dao* is seen as the deity of a naturalistic pantheism. And, indeed, the fundamental meanings revealed by *Dao De Jing* converge to the ontological monism thesis founded by *the Great Dao*, to the conclusion of a pantheism in which the cause of creation is intermingled with the created world and in which the Cosmos cannot be distinguished from its Creator (any longer).

b). In parallel, *the Great Dao* is more immanent and impersonal, coming into contradiction, once again, with the Judeo-Christian theism, as its attributes can be easily assimilated to the principle of pre-Socratic philosophy, approach used also by the Chinese philosopher Feng Youlan, who considers it as the founding and forming principle of the world. Regarded as a principle, *the Great Dao* ultimately identifies with the nature itself, as George Vlăduțescu shows, as philosophy, the Daoism is a materialism similar to the pre-Socratic one, so *the Great Dao* loses its attribute of being. In the same time, though infinite and without any qualities, indeterminate as Anaximander apeiron, *the Great Dao* is also

dynamic and connected to certain cyclic processes, it may be connected to the interpretation of George Vlăduțescu, who considers that, seen as a principle, somehow it resembles *the fire*, such as Heraclitus of Ephesus valued *The Great Dao* philosophically.

c). In terms of supporting the creation, *the Great Dao particular* position discredits the interpretation of *the Unification Church* and still marks a distinction of substance towards the God of the Bible. *The Great Dao* cannot be the God who manifests and supports the material world continuously, though God generates the created world and "refreshes" it through the unbroken string of births, God does not interfere, it does not take part in and does not guide the becoming, God denies itself the attribute of Universe Master.

d). Finally, the soteriology of *the Unification Church*, founded, essentially, on accepting the "revelations" and individuals adhering to the Sun Myung Moon teaching, places itself more in the Daoism logic of the cycle of births and "the return to origins" followed by all of the created things and beings, *the Great Dao* is not only the one that gives birth, but also the one in which the beings are "returning", finding their own original condition.

4.4. Sun Myung Moon – „The new Messiah”

The alleged "failure" of the Christ the Savior postulated by the ideologists of Reverend Sun Myung Moon consists in the fact that, being crucified before building an "ideal family", he has not carried on the act of salvation completely, as Father entrusted to him, thus being absolutely "necessary" the reiteration and the completion of the Saviour work by another messianic figure, a "New Messiah". Imperative necessary, soteriologically, the "New Messiah" would coincide with the Christ of parousia, his appearance being equivalent to the Second Coming.

Therefore, for the Unification Church, parousia is not the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, but the coming of "New Messiah", identified with a simple human being - chosen by divinity and holder of an exceptional "prophetic" statute – respective with Reverend Sun Myung Moon.

4.5. The Christology and Pneumatology of the Unification Church

The Unification Church thinking on Christology and Pneumatology components is marked consistently through the particular mode in which this conceives divinity - free of omnipotence, omniscience and immutability, and free of the status that the Reverend - "the New Messiah" and his wife - "the New Messiah's Bride" have it in the divine plan of soteriology.

a). Claiming that being crucified before making an "ideal family", capable of having descendants released from the bondage of the original sin, Christ would not have carried on his work to the end. *The Unification Church* tends to reduce the theological significance of the Saviour's work to the disintegrated/ cancelled/ expelled consequences of the fall. Considering the original sin an "increase" that affects the external human nature, the Reverend Moon's doctrinaires sustain that, in order to be authentic, accomplished and perfect a soteriological work should solve the humanity, in a quasi mechanic way, from the negative effects of the fall, so that their reminiscences would highlight with clarity the alleged "failure" of Jesus Christ.

In fact, in the vision of Sun Myung Moon and his relatives, the sacrifice and the resurrection, though monuments of human history, they did not generate effects in soteriological plan, so that the Christ's death on the cross would have been, to a large extent, ineffective and meaningless.

b). On the other hand, through the classical categories of Christology, *the Unification Church* operates with a classic subordinationism formula, presuming that the incarnated Savior assumed an exclusive human nature. The Christ of denomination is therefore a creature, even if, in the spiritual world, "he is shining luminously" and, moreover, he is a spiritual being similar to angels, he is free of the original sin.

c). *The Unification Church* considers that *the Holy Spirit* is a spiritual created entity, a creature which is inferior to Son, but a spiritual feminine eon that possesses "a feminine nature". The postulation of this thesis is done by invoking the support derived from the updated "revelation" in and through *the Unification Church*, "revelation" according to which in the created world it is a must to reconstruct/ to rediscover, through the unity restoration of the *yang* male principle - Christ and the feminine *yin* - Holy Spirit, the Father's original duality - *the Great Dao*.

On this basis, the soteriologic role of the Holy Spirit is a very unusual one, that of "a real mother" namely the potential "Bride" for Jesus Christ the Savior. In other words, since Adam and Eve sinned, they failed to respect the constitution of the "ideal family" and the "Kingdom of Heaven" on earth; a second Adam - Christ and a second Eve - the Incarnated Holy Spirit, with a human female nature/ constitution, they had to retake "the evolution" which was interrupted by the fall of forefathers and through marriage (!), to give birth to a new humanity, free from the consequences of original sin, possessing "the heart of God", a fact that didn't have finality because of the Savior's crucifixion.

d). In fact, according to *the Unification Church*, the Holy Spirit assuming of a woman's body in order to become the "bride" of Christ and the "mother" of the "restored"

humanity which would have been the imperative condition and the true way of salvation, so that once again, the sacrifice and the resurrection of the Savior would not be relevant from the soteriological perspective.

4.6. The Holy Trinity from the Unification Church perspective

The reverend Moon claims that he performs - due to "the revelations" that would have allowed him to achieve a superior knowledge of the divinity – the reestablishment of the original meanings of Holy Trinity; thus, the "plus" of knowledge, that would have discovered miraculously, led him to suggest a multiple character of the Trinity (!), meaning that every "ideal family" would constitute a Holy Trinity (!) along with the person of Father. Practically the preferential relationship/ connection of the "ideal families" with the divinity would materialize in a form of ontological connotations, a "particular" Trinity, a measure of the divine ambitions of the "ideal families" – that would release individuals from the flaws fall, being born again and being "true parents" for a new humanity.

From this trinity crowd which is understood essentially as a form of communion with the divine, determined by soteriological factors and possessing an alleged ontological substrate, the doctrinaires of Reverend Moon extracted the following specific cases:

a). The relational connection between God-the Father, Adam and Eve, which would constitute the so-called *original unfulfilled Trinity*;

b). The relational connection between God-the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, specifically the so-called *Spiritual Trinity*;

c). The relational connection between God-the Father, "the New Messiah" / "the Third Adam" / Sun Myung Moon and "the Bride of the New Messiah" / "New Eve" / Hak Ja Han Moon, ontologically only this is the perfect one, which constitutes *the Spiritual and Physical Trinity*.

Obviously, the so-called *Spiritual and Physical Trinity* cannot have in common with *the Trinity of the Bible and of the Church*, being just a juxtaposition, a simple putting-together of the Creator along with two creatures. In fact, *the Unification Church* is not *the Holy Trinity*; none of the fundamental sense of the *Holy Trinity* is found in the set of trinities postulated by the denomination. The human individuals who compose them, although having presumed quality from the "True Parents", they cannot be a part and cannot restore anything from the Trinity of the Church. Thinking a Holy Trinity that is different from the Church Trinity, it can only equate with the automatic placement out of its work; substituting two divine persons with two human beings, husband and wife, it cannot reflect more than a

hypertrophied form of alienation of the religious consciousness, a substantial distortion of the Church vision about divinity, a serious disturbance of the ontological and axiological substrates specific to the relations between God – the Creator and person/ the created world.

4.7. The Pitfalls of Christocentrism abandonment

Declaring Sun Myung Moon as "the New Messiah", *the Unification Church* ceases, *de jure* (legally), to be a Christocentric community, giving up deliberately, through its own will and dogmatic and ecclesiological positioning, at the Christocentric dimension of the Church, at the secret quality of mystical body of the Saviour.

a). As a matter of fact, *the Unification Church* ideologists do nothing else than to circumvent the foundation of Christian thought itself which is represented by the Christocentrism and after its abandonment, to innovate, to create a "theological" system that is circumscribed to the presumed soteriologic role of Reverend Moon; overlooking the fact that the indubitable reality and the complete character of Jesus Christ work excludes the alleged necessity of resuming it. Actually, the complete and final salvation is in Christ; an epigonic reiteration of His work, the one that Reverend Moon claims to embody it, this is no longer necessary – because it is fulfilled by Christ, the High Priest "*who has passed through the heavens*" (*Hebrews* 4: 14), - neither possible beyond the human - divine person and the sacrifice of Christ.

The Saviour sacrifice is not, in substance, a "failure"; it is exactly the quintessence of the saving work, the death becoming the cause and preamble of life in Christ, it is the Saviour's love response towards the fallen creation. Precisely through His death on the cross – that became the sacrifice altar for the new one - Christ accomplishes the work of salvation, integrally assuming the human condition in order to open for humans the path through transfiguration, through perfection, respecting their freedom and their own will. The Saviour's work was not and could not be otherwise than perfect; True God and true man, Christ, in the hypostatic union of the two natures, could not "fail" in his work and, therefore, he did not need a "supplement" to his own action.

The incarnation of the Word, His death on the cross and His Resurrection equals with the exhaustive safeguarding of the human condition. The death and the cross cannot be and they are not the measure of His "failure" and they do not require a corrective corollary, neither a human nature one, nor adding a factor that can bring a plus -value from the outside, as long as God-the Father and God- the Son cannot "fail" in their soteriologic work.

On the other hand, the Creator cannot be dependent or conditioned by creature, and the creature - which, after all, Sun Myung Moon has not ceased to be - cannot complete the work of the Creator. The human cannot restore, ontologically, the original relationship between God and his creation, action – exclusive attribute of the Saviour, because "... *the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins*" (Mark 2:10). Actually, an alleged soteriological work charged to a creature cannot have, in reality, any consequence, because the "selected" creature needs salvation itself.

b). In parallel, *the Unification Church* has built its own system of *docket thinking*, system – that is desired to be independent and to possess its own rationality - which omits the biblical references which are able to dismantle its assumptions. The denomination does not seem to realize that denying the resurrection of the Saviour's body, compromises the sacrifice and the resurrection incidence regarding the human nature, the humanity itself. As long as Christ did not resurrect with the glorified body of His sacrifice, the human nature enhypostasis in His person did not materialize the soteriological potential. The human remains stuck within the limits of its own humanity, humanity that, once with the Docetism, does not pass through Saviour's death and resurrection in order to be, in turn, resurrected and deified.

c). As a conclusion, we observe that, ultimately, subordinatian Christology and Pneumatology of *the Unification Church* are dependent on its particular vision regarding the salvation, implicitly regarding the significance of the sacrifice and resurrection; the salvation is not acquiring the human resemblance with God and with deification - *theosis* of this, as in the East, there is no restoration, legally, of the honour due to God, as in the West, but it would consist in the establishment of a certain family relationships in order to transform the man, to make him "reborn", drawing upon him the "love" of God-the Father. Obviously, such an understanding of the sacrifice excludes the role of resurrection and salvation; these lose their soteriological significance, therefore they can be considered no more than certain "spiritual" symbols or referential, as *the Unification Church* considers.

The deification of matter

- Divinity vs. Matter in Mormon speculation -

Despite the traditional view which is suggested by the first *Article of faith*, namely: "*We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit*", the conception of divinity developed and practised in and by *the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* departs considerably from theological approaches practiced by the historic Churches and by the traditional neo protestant denominations.

5.1. Divinity in Mormonism

The thinking of *the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* describes a God who, rapidly, is found to be noticeably different from the God of Christianity: a God - Father identified with Elohim from the related report of *the Book of Genesis*, a God - Son, respectively the Saviour, identified with Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament and a God - Holy Spirit, three different divine persons who, in Mormon vision, are not and cannot be consubstantial but at least "similar" with Jesus Christ - Jehovah and the Holy Spirit are "the spiritual sons" of Elohim, possessing the same material constitution, the same "perfect" human form and the same "goals" as God - the Father.

Practically, relating to Orthodox teaching regarding the Holy Trinity, the Mormon concept about deity can be characterized as being simultaneously: (i) subordinationist, as postulates the ontological superiority of Elohim - the father of "the spiritual sons" Jehovah and the Holy Spirit (ii) tritheistic, as Jehovah and the Holy Spirit, although created persons, they are ranked as Gods and they do the subject of a worship cult, (iii) anthropomorphic, as the three Gods subsist in bodies with material consistency, "from meat, bones and blood".

This view, claims its absolute truth value that it possesses, since it is based on "revelations" from which the founder Joseph Smith would have benefited; thus there are three Gods in Mormonism, Father - Elohim, Son - Jehovah and the Holy Spirit, three different persons representing the divinity, "the godhead". Though the Son and the Holy Spirit are considered individually, as one God, the Father is God par excellence, the only source of divinity. Father existed before the Son and the Holy Spirit, to whom he is cause and principle; therefore, the Son and the Spirit are in a certain sense "created Gods" (!), "followers of the Father" subordinated and dependent upon Him; the Son - Jehovah and the Holy Spirit are thus considered Gods equally with the Father, although only the Father is the uncreated God.

5.2. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – the Gods

a). God the Father is the God par excellence of the Mormonism; his divinity is the source of the “secondary divinity ” of the Son and Spirit. Father - Elohim is God the Creator, even if the denomination understands the creation in the sense of organizing a pre-existent matter. For the followers of "the Prophet", God is omnipotent, omniscient, infinite and eternal. God - Elohim is the absolute ruler of the universe, and also the Father of spirit children - spiritual beings that incarnate in every human individuals and who were "designed" previous to Cosmos.

b). The Mormonism proceeds to the identification of Jesus Christ with Jehovah - in the sense of the own divinity of the Old Testament, both based on its own "Scriptures" and on its own "revelations" from which Joseph Smith would have benefited, so at least for the Old Testament era, every theophany is interpreted as a christophany.

The Subordinationism of *the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* is manifested primarily by the inclusion of the Saviour between the spirit children of the Father-Elohim; even if he is positioned separately from those entities, he is considered "the first spirit child" of the Father (inclusive in chronological sense), Christ is a creature in Mormonism. This construction comes to overthrow the whole doctrine about the consubstantiality of the Father and of the Son and it placed itself in contradiction with many biblical references that show/support it; perhaps to circumvent/ to shade this kind of antagonism, Mormonism declares its Christ as God based on His unity of will and action with the Father and beyond the ontological distinction which it claims insistently.

c). The Holy Spirit is seen in *the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* as God, the third person of the Godhead. The spirit retains the same human shape / constitution as Father and Son, having a "spiritual" identity, consisting of a "pure and refined" variety of matter (which makes him unnoticeable in/ for the created world), but possessing the same material as Father and Son. Like Christ - Jehovah, with whom he would be "brother", the Spirit is one of Elohim's spirit children, that placed outside the soteriological cycle of His "brothers" (incarnation - death - judgment -ascension) received a material body (from a fine variety of matter), he became the third person in the structure of the Mormon deity.

Seen as a whole "from spirit", the Spirit is the only person of the Mormon Godhead that is regarded as omnipresent. The spiritual consistency determines the Spirit to transcend the space, to which, in contrast to Father and Son, he does not circumscribe to it.

5.3. Mormon anthropomorphism

Crucial feature of the theological speculation of *the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, the anthropomorphic vision regarding God and, actually, regarding the three persons who compose the Mormon deity is based - as expected – on the content of the "revelations" from which the first leaders of denomination would have benefited, and especially the founder Joseph Smith. The anthropomorphic vision of God (implicitly of the Son and the Spirit, being given the logic of Mormon subordinationism) is also highlighted simultaneously by the "prophet's" successor, the President Brigham Young, who insists on the perfect human nature and form of the Father and of the Son, and also by the doctrinaire James K. Talmage, who considers anthropomorphism as the only possible way – theologically and philosophically - of existence of the divinity, the traditional meanings regarding this being deeply incompatible with the "revealed" truth which is in the possession of its own denomination. In fact, in Mormonism the traditional teachings of the churches regarding the divinity are placed in "abstractions" generated by the deforming intrusions that were caused to the Gospel message by the philosophical thinking, this interaction with Christianity being likely to "maculate" the truth that would have been revealed to Joseph Smith and to his followers.

5.4. The deformed premises of the Mormon conception regarding divinity

Mormon thinking uses and improves a series of concepts, mostly of its own, but also taken from theology/ philosophy and adapted to its specific doctrine, whose brief review we consider crucial for understanding/ analyzing on substance the denomination vision regarding God .

i). *The matter* is a key concept in Mormon speculation, because according to "the revelations", from which Joseph Smith and his successors would have benefited, it is considered uncreated, eternal, and coeternal with God - the Father. Such an approach leads to the rejection of the thinking regarding the creation *ex nihilo*, considered impossible theologically and philosophically and that reduces God - the Creator at a status of a simple demiurge, who limited by his own condition, bends over the matter only to organize it.

Constituting itself in a myriad of shapes, the matter includes - as specific variety – the spirit, understood as a quality, as a particular form; the spirit is therefore a private matter, the fine, delicate or pure matter. Therefore, God- the Father and God- the Son, material and anthropomorphic entities, are eternal in the same way in which the matter constitutes them; similarly, the Holy Spirit, spiritual entity, so ultimately a material entity, it is eternal due to the variety of spiritual eternity of the fundamental matter.

ii). The spirits pre-existence implies that every human individual existed as spiritual entity – *spirit child* before its corporal birth; in the existence of every human being, the *spirit child* stage is between *premortal life* or *pre-existence of the spirit*. *Spirit children* have human form, but they are not consisting of common matter, but of the same delicate material that constitutes the spirit; they are individual existences, differentiated by sex and intelligence, they are literally *the spirit children of the Father* and of *the Mother*.

iii). The concept of *Mother /heavenly Mother*, respective the female divinity associated to Father as a wife and mother of the spirit children, was formulated by Joseph Smith in 1839, even though "the inspired Mormon Scriptures", surprisingly, do not approach it except under the formula of the "heavenly parents", a term which reveals every time, the coexistence of the *Father* and *Mother*. The two Gods, *Father* and *Mother* are, in fact, co-eternal and consubstantial, possessing the same deity. So, ontologically, *the Mother* is God in the same way that *the Father* is God.

iv). *The pleroma of intelligences* is one of the most ambiguous concepts developed by *the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, founded exclusively on the "inspired" writings and teachings of the "prophet" Joseph Smith; *the intelligences* may designate either **(i)** the pleroma of the uncreated spiritual entities (in the meaning of subtle matter), co-eternal with God the Father, or **(ii)** *the spirit children* of the Father and of the Mother, who, following *the premortal life*, they get human bodies on Earth, from the perspective of salvation and *exaltation*.

v). In Mormonism *the rapture* is the maximal soteriological and ontological destiny of human (consecutively to resurrection and judgment), but exclusively reserved for the married persons within the community, destiny based on the work of Jesus Christ and conditioned by the compliance to doctrine, the ritual practice and the specific ethical and moral landmarks. Mormonism presumes that the rapt telluric husbands will become the parents of some *spirit children* to whom they will report similarly as they do nowadays, Father and Mother report to their own descendents, thus there will be a new Father and a new Mother, so a new divine creative and continuous pair.

vi). *The panpsychism* reveals the Mormon conception according to which every object, every plant and every animal is "a living soul"; in fact, all these, as humans, pre-existed as spirit entities, in similar forms to those that they hold on earth, as the "revelations", from which Joseph Smith would have benefited.

vii). *Time* and eternity are confused in Mormonism, placing God outside/ beyond time is considered an "obscurantism" approach (!), because it would make His inclination over the created world impossible. Time is the measure applied by man to eternity, being considered

coeternal with Father, uncreated, eternal in the same way as matter; thus, God is not the creator of time, but He exists in the eternity-time.

viii). *The Light of Christ* is understood as a divine energy that emanates from God through Christ and gives life to all things, it animates them. *The Light* "fills the immensity of space", "gives life," "is the power of God", the conceptualization of light is founded and "inspired" normatively by the writings of Joseph Smith.

ix). *Mormon Cosmology*, through the theological peculiarities which it includes, constitutes a relevant element that influences the speculation of *the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* about divinity.

The decisive factor in this respect is the multiple thesis of the *extraterrestrial life* in identical forms to the terrestrial one, the respective planets and their human inhabitants make the creation object (in fact, demiurgic actions of organizing the existing matter) of God - the Father through God - the Son; "the emergence" of the planets inhabited by humans would be an ongoing, extended process into eternity.

5.5. The true Mormon God

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints admits that it builds its theology around two coeternal "principles" - God and matter - vision based on the unity of "substance" of Father and Mother, who constitute a single dyadic divinity.

a). The alleged coexistence of the two "principles" generates a real deficit conceptually, since the description of matter, implicitly of the created world, in terms of co-eternity with God, not only it limits, circumscribes the godhead, but also it assimilates the godhead to the creature. In addition, understanding the matter as uncreated, *the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* only subordinates its own Godhead, so that Mormon God, limited by the matter that surrounds Him and from which He derives, He cannot be the God of *Scripture*, of Tradition and of Church.

b). At the same time, the proclaimed God of Mormonism is not the immutable God of *Holy Scripture*; being a "rapt man", a man become through "rapture" a demiurge and providential God at the end of a "development" supported by an unknown God and a Christ, the Mormon God is subjected to evolution, to transformation, therefore He has a past - a temporal measure of His own journey towards perfection - and being subjected to cosmic lawfulness (assumed by Mormonism) to "eternal progress", He has a future - projection of His own becoming.

c). Conceiving the divinity in anthropomorphic terms, describing its human constitution and limiting its nature only to a superior humanity that surrounds us, Mormonism practically denies the transcendent, lingering into an imminent reality which God Himself is a tributary to it. The denomination proposes a connected God with space and time, a God who actually subsist in time and space without transcending them; a God who – similar to the man from whom he derives - has a body, physical dimensions thus it seems that Mormonism disregards that, in reality, the living God is beyond all these.

d). Denying the divinity of the Son and the consubstantial rapport with the Father, the denomination is strengthening its exclusive immanent dimension, refusing the human individual's ascent through the transcendent, through his authentic archetype, through the communion with God, through sharing the grace from the uncreated light. Meanwhile, the pneumatomachian vision of *the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, leads to the same impossibility of overcoming the immanent reality. Being a creature, the work of the Mormon Spirit has no sanctifying effect on the creature, refusing its sanctification.

Being considered as simple creatures, Christ and the Mormon Spirit cannot bring an ontological addition to creation and to man himself, whom it does not elevate through communication and through sharing the divine nature; in the lack of the work of a Christ and of a Spirit consubstantial with Father, the man remains equal only to himself, tributary to his own conditions and limits, without fulfilling his authentic destiny. The communion between man and God cannot be fulfilled without the true redeeming and sanctifying work, the man remaining isolated from his Creator.

In fact, as long as Mormonism considers the Son as being created, Mormonism could do nothing else but teaching about the Spirit similarly; the fact that the Son and the Spirit are considered as Gods and they make the subject of a worship cult, it does not diminish the subordinationism of the denomination, namely a clear and indisputable one.

5.6. Mormonism in search of the living God

Mormon speculation about the divinity is seriously affected by the denomination teaching regarding the Father past, respective His identity of 'rapt man'; therefore, God - the Father must have been, possible in another coordinates of space and time, *a spirit child* of an unknown God and of a heavenly Mother, "supreme beings" of another cosmic space, spirit child incarnated on a similar planet on Earth in a man with the same humanity as ours, a saved and rapt man until becoming a Father as a result of the work of an unknown Christ.

Obviously, the unknown Father and Mother were born as *spirit children* (in order to incarnate in human hypostases), having their own "heavenly parents." Regarding at the past the succession of divinities seems to descend uninterrupted in eternity, without foreseeing a starting point. The new rapt Gods - on origin *the spirit children* of certain "heavenly parents" – incline identically over the same eternal matter which they organize in order to build "worlds", to born *spirit children* and to *heighten* them according to the interlude of the mortal life. Each such God is uncreated and eternal only in relation with His own universal space; thus the Gods eternity is relative, truly eternal seems to be only the matter from which they actually derive. The only element that goes beyond Mormon Gods chronology is the matter. Understood as eternal, the matter possesses a quality eternity other than the Gods one; if it exceeds – and it does – we can conclude that similar to the most optimistic cosmogonic scenario, the matter itself has evolved - without and outside any external causality by itself and only through itself – till it gave life simultaneously/ parallel, to the first Father and first Mother from the Mormons Gods sequence (!) the sources/ the future causes of the successive theogonic denomination. By default, the matter would be the necessary and sufficient cause of the first Mormon God; the matter itself coagulated, it self-organized to become the first God - Father and the first God - Mother; the self-converted matter stands at the basis of the theogonic process suggested by denomination; thus the matter evolved as far as it deifies, it gives life to a living entity - the first Mormon God is able to work even upon the matter, in order to organize and to transform it. *Where is God?* We suppose this is the fundamental interrogation raised by the Mormon doctrine regarding divinity. None of the Gods that precede, in time and space, the today acclaimed Father of the denominational doctrine is not his sufficient cause; the apparent endless sequence of Mormon Gods is actually a succession of "created" Gods, demiurgic deities that multiply in geometric progressions according to the same theogonic scenario, the material deities of some pure material worlds.

If, somehow, the Mormon logic defies this presumption, then, it would be forced to accept that beyond sequence of its own Gods, there is someone else, the One who has not been created, the One who is in eternal truth, the One who does not have a heaven Father and a heaven Mother, the One who is not caused but He is a Cause for everyone, namely the Living God, the God of the Church, *the Scripture and the Tradition*, the true Father.

However, accepting this fact, *the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* will have to admit, simultaneously, that its own God is not - and cannot be, being given the coordinates of its own thinking, the Living God, in the same way that the Christ and the Holy Spirit of its own "Gospel", are not, and cannot be the Saviour and the Comforter, the Gods of the undivided Trinity.

The Christadelphians

- Unitarian “tradition” and innovation -

The Christadelphians continue to be representatives for the way of thinking and speculating regarding the faith and *the Bible* in America of 19th century, in that era of "revivals", of continuous agitations and feverish searches, all of them aiming the truth and, all claiming to be in possession of the true, though, in a tragic way, each of them being far from having it.

6.1. Genesis and the formative influences

The British physician John Thomas (1805 - 1871) was the *Christadelphians* historical founder, established on the North American continent since 1832, he "dedicated his entire life to the study of religion" in the virtue of God promises.

In a certain way, Christadelphians are the product of their era, in the attempt of finding the complete and authentic sense of *the Scripture*; *the Christadelphians* attracted an important part of heterodox themes conveyed in America in the middle of the 19th century.

6.2. The conception about God

John Thomas was concerned to identify and formulate the fundamental truths of the Holy Scripture, those truths maculated by "the religious traditions", undiscovered or ignored effectively. In addition to reviewing a relative large number of doctrinal themes, John Thomas reconsidered - with priority and on background - the entire teachings regarding the divinity.

a). The God of Christadelphians is different from the God of Church, because it is understood and described as a material God, with an anthropomorphic bodily constitution, which would be revealed by the humanity of the incarnate Son. But, *Christadelphians* understand the materiality of Father as being another than the one of the created world, meaning that the cosmic matter is not the matter of the Father's body, that matter that makes Father to be noticeable. In fact, the matter of Father's body - other than the matter which constitutes the world, but that makes Father tangibly - is called spirit, which would make the biblical text from John 4:24 to be useful ("*Spirit is God ...* ").

God having a material constitution (from that special matter called spirit) and a bodily constitution, He relates not only to formal requirements, but also to space ones. In fact, the God of *Christadelphians* is circumscribed in space, thus limited, limitation that the denomination interprets it as less acute/ relevant towards the one in which God would be immaterial, intangible, untouchable, especially when such a God would not be the most appropriate to communicate with his own creation. At the same time, the body of *Christadelphians* God is in the human body form, but an infinitely greater physical size, which is somehow similar to the vision about divinity that was circulated by Kabbalah and by Jewish mysticism - a sense rejected by the official Judaism.

b). The same God - a God of material constitution, anthropomorphic and limited/ circumscribed in space until He is not pervasive – represents both the origin and the cause of evil, as a number of biblical texts indicates which the denomination understands and interprets them faultily. Obviously, the literal exegesis (and unilateral) of denomination comes to challenge the divine archetypal kindness; a God in which evil would have its origin, would amount to a God who oscillates between good and evil, alternating them and offering them ontological consistency simultaneously. We fear of the simultaneous good and evil God because He would appear as a God who abandons his simple nature, as in his being it would exist two principles in eternity, principles that are united in the same coeternity. In fact, *Christadelphians* omit the purely good nature - in the meaning of good and archetypal infinite - is the authentic nature of divinity, as shown by *Holy Scripture* and by our entire patristic.

6.3 The conception about Jesus Christ

Christadelphians belong to the great Unitarian family, and they also reject the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son; therefore, the Saviour is a simple man, a man on whom the burden of original sin presses and which he surpassed it only because he chose to do those of Father's.

a). For *Christadelphians*, Christ is a mere man, another vision/ understanding of His nature is considered inappropriate, because any discussion about the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son should be excluded as this would lead to *ditheism*, and in addition to this, a Christ, nothing else but a simple man would not be a veritable Saviour. The purpose of salvation itself – as divine-human process conducted in and by the person of Saviour - would be conditioned by the exclusive humanity of Christ.

Obviously, the “biblical” argument of *Christadelphians* is, firstly, unilateral; it relies on invoking certain verses whose correct interpretation imposes necessary that these to be

corroborated with the Scriptural texts which are apparently contradictory, but actually complementary. Thus, for example, the denomination omits that a biblical unbiased reading, without a priori subordinationism assumption, reveals that Jesus Christ is God (*Hebrews* 1:8), God above all (*Romans* 9:5), one with the Father (*John* 10:30), simultaneously having the fullness of God (*Colossians* 2:9); in the same time, the Saviour is like the Father, all-pervasive, omnipotent, immutable and omniscient so that the subordinationism becomes itself unsustainable.

b). Unlike Arians, who taught that Christ was the creature that preceded the creation of the material world, of the cosmos and of the man, making God communicable to the world in the platonic meaning, *Christadelphians* sustain that the Saviour would not have existed before the Annunciation, so previous the Holy Spirit descent over Virgin Mary.

In supporting this thesis there are invoked as main "arguments": **(i)** the existence itself of the Old Testament Messianic prophecies; **(ii)** the birth act itself of Saviour from Holy Virgin and **(iii)** the presumed incompatibility of the content of the messianic expectations of Judaism with the divinity of Saviour and therefore with the eternity/ co-eternity of Christ with God - the Father, "argument" that comes in contradiction with the reality of Messiah eternity, Jesus Christ who is above creation (*Colossians* 1:17), the Living One (*Revelation* 1:18), Alpha and Omega (*Revelation* 1:8) and, last but not least, "I am" (*John* 8:58).

c). *Christadelphians* being faced with *the prologue* of the Gospel of John, namely with the teaching regarding the Logos - Son, coeternal and consubstantial with the Father, they identify (and propagate) a radical solution, denying the identity and personal subsistence of the Word.

In these circumstances, the denomination considers that the Logos of the Gospel of John designates the thought / the thinking, the mind or the rationality of Father, actually *the divine rationality* learned by Philo of Alexandria. Thus, *Christadelphians* are obviously also *Alogians* because they deny the hypostatic being of Logos, that, without having a personal and distinct subsistence apart from the Father one, it cannot be understood as a personal identity.

6.4 The conception about Holy Spirit

Consistent Unitarians, *the Christadelphians* are (also) *pneumatomachi*, denying the divinity of the Holy Spirit, but as long as they repudiate the personal character of the Spirit, considering It as a power, a force, an impersonal created emanation, they profess another *pneumatomachianism* than the one of their ancient precursors.

a). This form of pneumatomachianism - comparable with the one of *Adoptionists*, *Socinians* or *Jehovah's Witnesses* – is based on the entire biblical texts that reflect the divine presence and work of the Holy Spirit in the world, an inspired work and full of divine power, as *Luke 1:35* - "*The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you*" *Romans 15:19*, *I Thessalonians 1:5* or *Acts 10:38*.

b). Another sense of the Holy Spirit that is used by *Christadelphians* is that of "force of life", "breath of life" in *Genesis 2:7*, which, in circumstances in which the soul is nothing more than the personal identity of individuals, it animates the bodies of all creatures, not only of the humans, in the meaning that it vitalizes and makes them alive, "returning" to God once with the death of the body, as *Ecclesiastes 3:19* would suggest.

6.5 The lost meanings of divinity

Accumulating and integrating a large part of heterodox teachings about the God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, which were in circulation in North America in the mid - 19th century, *the Christadelphians* are exposed to the risk of not worshiping the true Father, of losing the Son and of not imparting from the divine wealth of the Spirit.

a). In opposition to the material God, with an anthropomorphic constitution and with commensurable physical dimensions preached by *Christadelphians*, *the Holy Scripture* – and also *the Holy Tradition* - teaches unquestionably about a God who is beyond space, super-spatial, because He is the origin, the cause of space. Therefore, God cannot be bowed to the space, constrained or limited by His own physical measures. In reality, God transcends the space, thus localizing Him, circumscribing Him in order to develop a personal relation with Him, from a man to a God with a similar form and materiality like that of a man - as *Christadelphians* believe - is completely impossible.

Being circumscribed in space, the God of *Christadelphians* is also circumscribed in time, during which He would exist similarly to the created beings, in the same way as He would exist in the space that would cover, encircle and separate him by man and creature, physically through distances and not ontologically. The God of *Christadelphians*, functioning in space-time, from this point of view, He would not have a different life than the one of the aware being that He created. God would "fold up" to space and time; time would be eternal for Him because the divine eternity would not exist, the one that preceded time and that will replace Him at the eschaton.

b). Turning to the Christological speculation of *Christadelphians*, we remark, firstly, that through the refusal of personal identity of the Logos, and thus, through the non –

identifying of word with Christ, the denomination refuses the Saviour coeternity with Father, and thus the consubstantiality with Him. Thus, a Christ who, besides the fact that He is not consubstantial with the Father, coming into existence only at the moment of the Annunciation, it does not show - as *Christadelphians* think and argue their positions - a rational interpretation, so a more credible one of *the Bible* or an uninfluenced exegesis by the interferences of ancient philosophy, but it shows a partition of the revelation content itself, a sequential and unilateral assumption of *the Holy Scripture*.

Through this radical subordinationism, *Christadelphians* reject the God - Man transition through human life, seeing it non-conformable with the written revelation, the Scripture, and impossible through their own deductions and reasoning. By default, they reject the God-Man as Saviour (preferring a human substitute), forgetting that with the Incarnation of the Word, the saving work of the undivided Trinity started, and humanity exceeded the separation from God in order to find its interpersonal relationship with the Creator .

The lack of divinity of *Christadelphians* Christ leads immediately to the lack of divine wealth from their soteriology; the Saviour of denomination, a mere man, traces the eschatological horizon limit of denomination: the forgiveness given to people by God, not from love, but as a consequence of sacrificing the best of them. Therefore the sacrifice and the rapture exist for the human forgiveness, and not for his transfiguration or for his deification.

Once with the subordinationism, the *Christadelphians* man is not the authentic Christianity man anymore, the one called to transcend his own humanity once his humanity had united with God in Christ, but a man who possibly after death, he can arise, without becoming a co-sharer at the divine love, without turning into the "God by grace" of St. Athanasius the Great, the one called to the communion - eternal *Koinonia* with God.

c). In parallel, *Christadelphians* do not take into account the fact that, as Father and Son, the Spirit must be, in turn, another person and not a created one, as Arius and Macedonius believed, but a divine person. Denying the personal and divine Spirit, *Christadelphians* refuse the love of Spirit, which it bears us along with the Father and the Son and they also refuse its *kenosis* which makes possible the saving work of the Spirit in us, that work which deifies, communicates and makes our uncreated energies close, energies that restore the human communion through grace with His Creator.

In fact, a Holy Spirit reduced to the size of a simple impersonal power, to an energy which is not able to love and to share love, it would condemn the man to stagnation and it would limit him to his own condition, making impossible his deification.

d). *Christadelphians* place themselves outside the Trinitarian doctrine, thus they refuse their hope to restore the love communion with Holy Trinity, the ascent, in grace and faith for

plenary fulfilment of human nature, for deification. On this background, "the dissatisfaction" of denomination towards Trinitarian dogma, namely towards tritheism or, where appropriate, the modalism they claim that this would disguise, not only generates a similar attitude towards the Church, to which it is imposed acceptance and subsequently to generalize the teaching of Holy Trinity, the "proof" of "poisonous" role which this would have held throughout the history.

7

Rediscovering the modalism idea

- Sabellianism and „prophecy” -

A century ago, during the Pentecostal meeting in Arroyo Seco - California, RE Mc. Alistar and John G. Schaepe have "rediscovered" the baptism only "in the name of Jesus Christ" and "the unique name" - "Jesus Christ" of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, contemporary modalists exist in two major religious groups, namely:

(i) *Oneness Pentecostalism* movement – non-institutionalized pyramidal structure, which brings together organizations, companies and independent religious entities, which consist of networks of autonomous local congregations;

(ii) The so-called *branhamism* – namely the religious areas which are under the influence of the teachings of "Prophet" William Branham, including their European segment - the organization "Freie Volksmission" in Krefeld - Germany.

7.1. The „Oneness Pentecostalism” Movement

The modalism Pentecostals profess a classical formula of Sabellianism, teaching that God - one in being and one in person, is discovered, successively, as Father, when He creates or when he is the legislator of Jews, as Son, when incarnated, He sacrifices himself and He rise, and as Holy Spirit when He is the Comforter. Actually, the same God is revealed, He manifests, under the mask, the image or under the appearance of the Father in the *Old Testament* era, under the guise of the Son, during the Incarnation of the Word and, finally, under the guise of *Spirit*, after the Rapture of the Saviour, in the era of the Church . For modalism Pentecostals, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not the three divine persons that posses through *perichoresis* mystery, the same deity, interpretation which in order to be

sustained there are invoked verses. Actually these verses refer to the consubstantiality of the Father and of the Son. The "Oneness" movement considers that these verses would be sufficient to certify Their personal identity, as the identity by nature would entail also the identity by person, as *John 10:30* suggests - "*I and my Father are one*" or *John 5: 43* - "*I have come in my Father's name ...*".

Understanding Father, Son and Holy Spirit as simple masks, simple faces, appearances of a single personal deity, the "Oneness" movement considers that God, the indivisible personal monad can manifest in an unlimited number of forms, so that the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit would not deplete by far "the titles" of divinity, the faces, the masks which the One God could assume them.

However, assuming that Father, Son and Holy Spirit do not consume the transitional aspects in which God would reveal and manifest, the "Oneness" movement will have to admit that the new divine aspects would correspond, in turn, to some conjectures of soteriological order, other than the creation, the incarnation and the salvation – specific to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit "titles". In addition, if the divine soteriology would assume somehow something else than what God has achieved and continues to achieve, in some way, the Holy Scripture – the one that offers the measure of divine revelation itself – should indicate it, in the sense of making a biblical transparent theme from "that" soteriological thing, thus it can be considered that the presumption of the "Oneness" movement is a problematic one regarding the theological side.

7.2. The Branhamism

The *Branhamism* itself constitutes nothing else but a kind of "subspecies" of the "Oneness Pentecostalism" movement (to which it was affiliated *de facto* since about a decade), it has jointly with this movement the modalism programmatic options, such as the subsequent "argument" of these. As distinctive features, the *branhamism* is characterized, as expected, through the given pre-eminence of the "prophetic" work of William Branham, but also through the doctrinal "innovations" of him. He was hardly approved by traditionalist and conservative Neo Protestants, actually the modalists Pentecostals, in order to generate the separation from their groups of the founder's followers and supporters.

In fact, William Branham proclaimed an identical Sabellian conception to the one of modalists Pentecostals. He also describes a single personal divine reality, which would discover and manifest in three consecutive and transitional "titles" or "faces" according to some well defined stages in the history of salvation: as Father - the *Lord Yahweh*, in the *Old*

Testament era, as Son - *Jesus*, from the Annunciation to the Rapture and as *Holy Spirit* after Pentecost, every "title": Father, Son and Holy Spirit is a particular manifestation of the unique God, called Jesus Christ.

7.3. The contemporary Modalism in the light of Orthodoxy

Unlike their ancient predecessors, the current modalism ideologists do not see in postulating the identity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit an "answer" to the challenges of the docetism and subordinationism, as present in contemporary as well as in Noet, Epigone and Sabellius time. The modalism, not being connected to this substrate – the adherence to entire humanity, including in suffering, sacrifice and resurrection of Christ the Saviour, wholly God and wholly man – the today modalism builds its own (other) doctrinaire rationalities, opposable but explicit for the Church, because:

(i) Modalism disputes the authority of Church in order to express the theological truth, to dogmatise and to explain / to interpret the *Holy Scripture* based on its own marks;

(ii) Modalism challenges the fundamental teaching of Holy Trinity, which it describes as *tritheism* and therefore it considers the Trinity as an "unfortunate" consequences of the the alleged intrusions of the philosophical Hellenism in the life and faith of the Church of the fourth century.

Actually, the difficulties encountered by modalists of the "third wave" derive from their inability to explain *how* and *in what way* the distinct / particular hypostases of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit may have, simultaneously, the same divine essence or they may be in the same time, three different Persons and the Unique God.

a). In fact, conceiving Father, Son and Holy Spirit as mere "titles", invoking as argument the need to preserve the monotheistic idea which would have been prejudiced by the alleged *tritheism* of Church, it ignores the fact that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are God without sharing their divinity, this remaining one and the same indivisibly in all of the three distinct hypostases though united in One God, precisely because the Son is Other, being born from the Father, and the Spirit being Other than Father and Son, though being derived from Father. Modalists, losing Christ, they refer to a solitary God and that is why a God who does not surround Himself with the Son and the Spirit love, a God who does not share to Son and Spirit from everlasting, the same love. Theologically speaking, the modalists are in the situation of losing the salvation itself, because a Christ who, being one with Father by nature, he can be confused with Him, he is not the Christ of *the Bible* and of the Church, he is not the Saviour announced by the prophets, the Christ who refuses the human nature uniting it with His own divinity.

b). Simultaneously, *Christadelphians* overlook that the Trinity is the life itself of God in three hypostases, love being the one that joins perichoretic the divine persons and that is established in the being substrate of the Plenary Trinity. Only in the three hypostases love becomes a supreme one, truly divine, the undivided love which cannot be separated, love as a way of life. Only when near the Father, in the eternal unity of divine being, the Son and the Spirit are found, love gets its truly divine meaning, the really one with the triune God of the Church, the archetype of love. A God who is not Father, Son and Holy Spirit - Father being that Who gives birth and proceeds, the Son being the begotten one and the Spirit being the proceeded one - does not fulfil the mystery of love in the way that the triune God does it. An alone God as the modalists God seems to be circumscribed by his own unrequited love in the eternity of the intra-trinity personal relationships. Moreover, only for the triune God, love is truly infinite, excelling the personal biunique relation of a God-Father and of a God - Son who would not have alongside God the Holy-Spirit, consubstantial and coeternally.

Conclusions

Considering the main objective of our research, namely bringing a cognitive and analytical plus in the problem of **the genesis** and of the theological/ doctrinal **content** of the **antagonistic teachings towards the Holy Trinity dogma** professed by some denominations of the "**third wave**" – *the Unification Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Christadelphians, Oneness Pentecostalism Movement* and the groups that follow the "prophet" William Branham – we assess that at the end of our approach, there can be retained the following categories of general accumulation:

a). the analysis of the main causes that generated the contemporary antitrinitarianism (especially "the prophetism" and "the new Scriptures", but also the exegeses/ subjective, one-sided or mistaken Biblical interpretations) and the evaluation of their impact and consequences regarding the formulation, preparation and the content of heterodox teachings professed by the denominations regarding the divinity;

b). the identification and evaluation of influential vectors that led to the current configurations of the subordinationist and pneumatomachian thinking (ancient and medieval heresies, themes/ Gnostic theses or philosophical ideas);

c). the synthesis and diagnosis - from the perspective of Orthodox Missiology – of the essential coordinates and the relevant theological details specific for the teachings and for the doctrines of the denominations that compound the "third wave", especially of those less surprised/ approached in the special literature published in Romanian;

d). the surprise and the analysis of the negative impact of antitrinitarian speculations regarding the soteriology and anthropology professed by the concerned denominations (including the problems of evil and original sin);

e). the reference of the certain teachings to the biblical references (particularly to the passages / verses from *Holy Scripture*) and to the patristic references in order to reveal their subjectivism, through the indubitable highlighting of the Orthodox teaching regarding the Holy Trinity.



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