

Challenges of Religious Education in Contemporary Romanian Schools

An Orthodox Perspective

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The current paper aims to present the trajectory of religious education in Romanian public schools after 1990, when the fall of the Communist regime made it possible again to include religious studies in the curriculum. A series of obstacles had to be overcome before this old traditional discipline could be reintroduced into the Romanian educational system, on the one hand due to the necessity to reconsider the curriculum and to inscribe it on a formative trajectory aligned with contemporary social expectations, and on the other hand because of the need to publish schoolbooks in the difficult economic climate which has characterised Romania during the last two decades. Recent pedagogical studies have opened a new path for the development of curricula for religious studies, beginning with the first years of schooling.

Keywords: *religion, religious studies, curriculum, Christian education, personality formation*

Introduction

For more than two decades, the issue of religious education in Romanian public schools has been frequently discussed in the press, in political debates and, last but not least, in a variety of educational studies. It is widely accepted and understood in Romania that the presence of religious education in schools is of interest across the social spectrum, given the significant role played by public and private religious aspects in the life of most citizens. Another way to raise public awareness about religious education in schools is in direct relation with the capitalist paradigm which increasingly affects society.

In neo-liberal social structures, there are no longer any taboo subjects and no “sacred” areas of life, requiring a discreet or reverent attitude. Not even the major impact of religious models on individuals and on society at large, which has been highlighted by sociological and educational studies, has

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