

Missio Dei – the contemporary missionary paradigm and its reception in the Eastern Orthodox missionary theology

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The purpose of this paper is to analyse the reception of the missio Dei paradigm in the Eastern Orthodox theology of mission. We will start with a short presentation of the genesis of the concept, and we will continue with its reception in the Protestant and Roman Catholic theology, as well as in the Eastern Orthodox thinking. The paper attempts to demonstrate that the contemporary way to understand the missionary theology and practice is in accordance with the Orthodox traditional missionary theology. At the same time, the article emphasizes the fact that the reception of missio Dei is connected with the view that different ecclesiastical bodies have about church itself. The conclusion includes some practical remarks about ways of applying the concept in the contemporary ecumenical missiology and in the field of spiritual missiology.

Keywords: *missio Dei, ecumenical missiology, Eastern Orthodox missiology, indigenization of the gospel, spiritual missiology, mission from the margins, theosis.*

Introduction

An authentic Christian theology will always have the mission to integrate the godly Revelation and the human experience. This is why the missionary theology applies the content of the faith to the concrete realities of the time. From this perspective, the missionary theology is characterized by an innovative dynamic: it discovers new meanings of the revealed truth, unchanged and unique, in an attempt to communicate the content of the Revelation to the contemporary human being. „This implies that this type of theology should be responsible for the faithful living at a certain time in history, meaning that it has to be a present day theology, making the content of the Revelation accessible to the people from that period, and that it has to be open to the eschatological future, having the task to direct the faithful to their true accomplishment in that future.”¹

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¹ Constantine Skouteris, *Perspective Ortodoxe*, trans. by Ioan Marian Croitoru, Cluj, Presa Universitară Clujană 2008, p. 32.